

# The Catholic Lighthouse

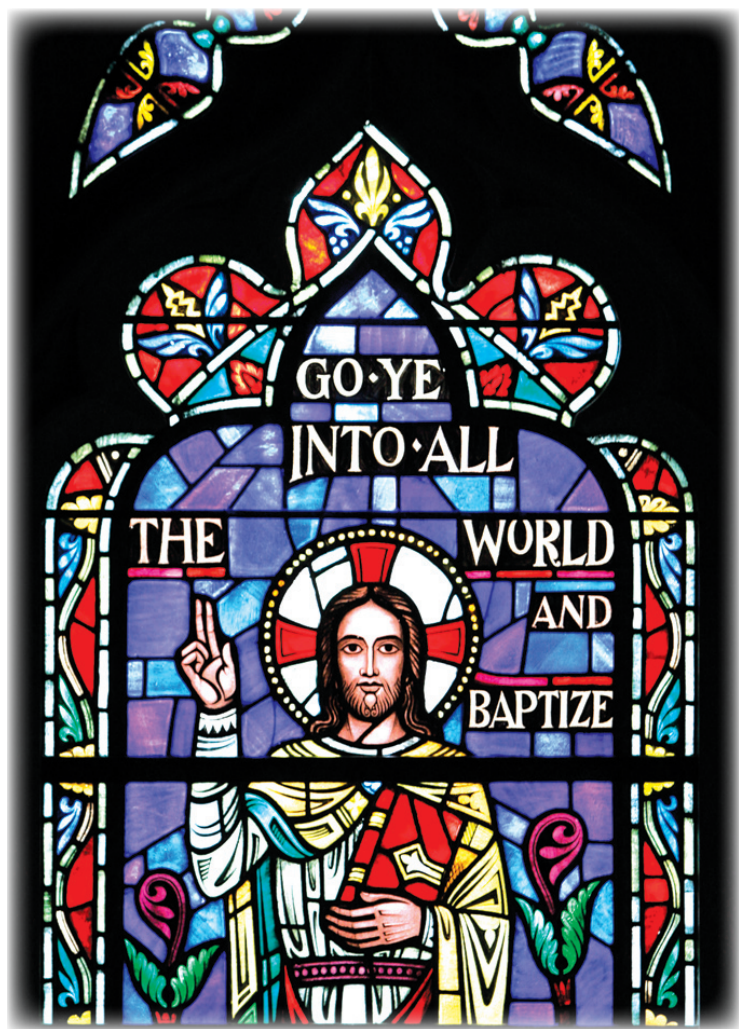
The Cradle of Texas Immigration



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January 2008



A window at Washington National Cathedral depicts Christ and his call to spread the faith. A new Vatican document reminds Catholics of their obligation to share the Gospel with others. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

## Document reminds Catholics of duty, right to share Gospel with others

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When Catholics fulfill their right and duty to share their faith with others, they are not engaging in proselytism or showing contempt for the beliefs of others, said a new document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Sharing the Christian faith with the hope that another may accept it is a command given by Christ to his followers and is a natural result of wanting others to share something special, said the “Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization.”

Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the doctrinal congregation, presented the document at a Dec. 14 Vatican press conference.

In addition to reminding Catholics of their obligation to share the Gospel with others, the document harshly criticized Catholics who believe that every religion offers salvation, and it defended Catholics in some Orthodox countries from charges of proselytism when they welcome into the Catholic Church people who freely ask to join.

“For a long time, the reason for evangelization has not been clear to many among the Catholic faithful,” the document said.

“It is even stated that the claim to have received the gift of the fullness of God’s revelation masks an attitude of intolerance and (is) a danger to peace,” it said.

In reality, the document said, when Christians share their faith with another they are responding to the right and the need the other has to hear the truth and to accept or reject it.

Cardinal Levada said the document, which already was being prepared when Pope Benedict XVI was still prefect of the congregation, was the result of a growing “confusion about whether Catholics should give testimony about their faith in Christ,” particularly to people who already belong to another religion.

Respect for another, he said, absolutely forbids any use of “coercion or tactics unworthy of the Gospel,” but it also means sharing one’s blessings, the greatest of which is the good news of salvation in Christ.

Indian Cardinal Ivan Dias, prefect of the Congregation for Evangelization and a member of the doctrinal congregation, also participated in the document’s presentation and spoke about the need to balance respect for other

*See Document reminds Catholics, p. 14*

## Capital Campaign Block II results are in!

Parish	City	Campaign Goal	Total Pledged	% of Goal	% of Participation
St. John the Baptist, Ammansville		\$19,947	\$33,020	166%	49%
Holy Cross/Sacred Heart, Bay City		\$326,976	\$499,082	153%	31%
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bay City		\$144,438	\$172,590	119%	20%
St. Peter, Blessing		\$56,384	\$139,021	247%	33%
Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Cistern		\$39,932	\$37,303	93%	25%
St. Anthony, Columbus		\$237,050	\$279,020	118%	18%
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Cuero		\$85,269	\$16,038	19%	8%
St. Michael, Cuero		\$211,802	\$171,359	81%	25%
Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Dubina		\$20,060	\$33,945	169%	65%
Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake		\$106,677	\$94,606	89%	29%
St. Agnes, Edna		\$222,893	\$307,226	138%	27%
St. Philip the Apostle, El Campo		\$593,919	\$579,404	98%	37%
Sacred Heart, Flatonia		\$95,047	\$76,541	81%	21%
Sts. Peter and Paul, Frelsburg		\$150,767	\$167,661	111%	59%
Assumption of the BVM, Ganado		\$165,228	\$181,328	110%	22%
Immaculate Conception, Goliad		\$58,300	\$104,325	179%	15%
St. Mary, High Hill		\$43,057	\$57,350	133%	22%
St. Wenceslaus, Holman		\$13,440	\$13,305	99%	39%
Queen of the Holy Rosary, Hostyn		\$113,194	\$179,410	159%	40%
St. Joseph, Inez		\$63,647	\$106,890	168%	37%
St. Theresa, LaSalle		\$22,644	\$13,450	59%	20%
St. Robert, Markham		\$23,793	\$37,751	159%	75%
St. Roch, Mentz		\$108,456	\$127,775	118%	38%
Sts. Peter and Paul, Meyersville		\$62,670	\$91,150	145%	40%
St. Ann, Nordheim		\$3,220	\$1,250	39%	4%
Sts. Peter and Paul, Plum		\$54,742	\$73,934	135%	36%
Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca		\$286,245	\$168,680	59%	7%
St. Joseph, Port O’Connor		\$28,221	\$17,100	61%	24%
St. Ann, Point Comfort		\$26,299	\$37,850	144%	22%
St. Rose of Lima, Schulenburg		\$247,191	\$183,683	74%	17%
St. Patrick, Seadrift		\$17,116	\$8,910	52%	35%
St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt		\$37,186	\$15,900	43%	13%
O. L. of Sorrows/Holy Trinity, Victoria		\$417,057	\$268,130	64%	14%
St. Michael, Weimar		\$157,733	\$359,025	228%	29%
St. Aloysius, Westhoff		\$17,730	\$10,900	61%	28%
Holy Cross, Yorktown		\$97,988	\$157,563	161%	40%
San Luis Mission, Yorktown		\$27,360	\$17,553	64%	11%
<b>Block II Totals:</b>		<b>\$4,403,678</b>	<b>\$4,840,028</b>	<b>110%</b>	<b>24%</b>

Amounts as of 12/18/07

## Campaign totals

Block II results are in and they have exceeded their goal! The 40 Block II parishes have followed their predecessors in Block I and have taken the campaign to a new level. There are 20 parishes (50 percent) that have exceeded their parish goals, and 28 parishes (70 percent) have over 20 percent participation. Block two was completing its follow-up phase as the Christmas holiday arrived.

If any parishioner has not yet had the chance to consider his or her participation in the campaign, he or she may still do so. The Guidance In Giving (GIG) staff is still trying for 100 percent participation.

The GIG staff is preparing to close the active portion of the campaign. They were thrilled

about the response and generosity of the people of the Diocese of Victoria.

Reminder statements will be sent at the beginning of the year in hopes of getting on a regular schedule. If you wish to make a payment prior to that time, you may send it to: Diocese of Victoria, A Reflection of Faith, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903.

“The campaign staff and I are impressed and touched by the faith and hope of the people in this diocese. It has been our pleasure to work with such amazing pastors and committees as well as the chancery staff. You have been blessed with an amazing shepherd, Bishop Fellhauer, who has led this campaign. Congratulations to the people of the Diocese of Victoria. See Campaign totals, p. 2

## Candlelight March for Life

The speaker for the Candlelight March for Life has just been announced. He is Eric Whittington, the executive director of Youth Outreach for the American Life League in Virginia. He is also the director of Rock for Life, the organization that is so popular with youth. The annual Candlelight March for Life will be held on Thursday, January 24, 2008, starting at 7:00 p.m. and beginning at the Jerusalem Family Praise Center at 208 North Ben Wilson (south of Stroman High School). The march will leave from the parking lot and go south on Ben Wilson and

*See Candlelight March, p. 2*





Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

January

**13-17** First Week of Diocesan Priests retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria

**20** 11:30 a.m., Mass, installation of Father Stanley DeBoe, OSST, as pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Victoria

**20-24** Second Week of Diocesan Priests retreat, Spritual Renewal Center, Victoria

**24** 7:00 p.m., Candlelight March for Life, beginning at Jerusalem Family Praise Church, N. Ben Wilson, and ending at Holy Trinity Chapel, Pleasant Green Drive, Victoria

**26** 10:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Roch Church, Mentz

**27** 11:00 a.m., Mass and dedication of Historical Marker at KJT Hall, Holy Cross Church, East Bernard

**30** 4:30 p.m., Diocesan Building Board Meeting, Chancery Office

February

**2** 4:00 p.m., Mass, Catholic Committee on Scouting Boy Scout retreat, Camp Mauritz, Ganado

**10** 3:00 p.m., Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral

IN MEMORY OF ...

Father Wolfgang Bruno Mimms, OSST, 82, who served as associate pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church for 20 years, died on Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2008 after a lengthy illness.

Father Wolfgang was born Sterling Mimms Jr. on March 28, 1925, in Chicago, to the late Sterling and Ray Pickens Mimms. He was baptized conditionally Sterling Joseph Mimms in the Roman Catholic Rite on May 19, 1940, and confirmed by Samuel Cardinal Stritch on June 3, 1941.

He entered the Benedictine Community at Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, Ark. in 1963, making his profession of vows on Sept. 8, 1964. He made Final Vows at Subiaco in 1967. He was ordained a deacon on June 8, 1969. On Dec. 12, 1970, Father Wolfgang was ordained a priest at Subiaco Abbey. At the time of his ordination, Abbot Michael Lensing noted that Father Wolfgang was the first African-American to be ordained at the Abbey. On

Feb. 2, 1979, Father Wolfgang received the habit of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity. He made his Solemn Profession of Vows on April 24, 1980, at Holy Trinity Monastery in Pikesville, Md.

During his time with the Trinitarians, Father Wolfgang lived in residence at St. Ann's in Bristol, Pa., and Holy Trinity Monastery, Pikesville, Md. He was an associate pastor in Trenton, N.J. from 1982-84, and Toronto from 1984-85. He lived in residence at the Trinitarian Provincialate Community in Pikesville, Md. from 1985-87. He was an associate pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria from April 1987 to 2006. He was in residence at Trinity House, Victoria, from 2006 to 2007. Since September 2007, he has been a resident of Texan West Nursing Home, Victoria.

Father Wolfgang will be remembered for dedication to pastoral ministry. He was sought out by many for spiritual guidance,

See in memory of, p. 4



Father Wolfgang  
Bruno Mimms, OSST

Capital Campaign Block I results

Parish	City	Campaign Goal	Total Pledged	% of Goal	% of Participation
St. Joseph, Boling		\$48,652	\$76,614	157%	25%
Holy Cross, East Bernard		\$306,499	\$458,635	150%	37%
St. Robert Bellarmine, El Campo		\$166,422	\$95,681	57%	23%
Sacred Heart, Hallettsville		\$293,582	\$462,796	158%	45%
St. Ann, Hochheim		\$17,276	\$21,350	124%	46%
St. John the Baptist, Hungerford		\$123,823	\$287,771	232%	61%
St. John the Baptist, Koerth		\$39,751	\$61,185	154%	50%
Ascension of Our Lord, Moravia		\$27,666	\$40,170	145%	51%
St. Joseph, Moulton		\$87,194	\$119,415	137%	28%
St. Mary, Nada		\$88,854	\$113,640	128%	37%
St. John Nepomucene, New Taiton		\$73,075	\$156,412	214%	40%
St. Anthony of Padua, Palacios		\$142,729	\$246,449	173%	35%
Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Shiner		\$413,481	\$420,239	102%	27%
St. John the Baptist, St. John		\$21,607	\$40,420	187%	49%
St. Mary, St. Mary		\$28,698	\$45,381	158%	30%
Queen of Peace, Sweet Home		\$66,045	\$66,045	100%	56%
Our Lady of Lourdes, Victoria		\$163,782	\$363,915	222%	47%
Holy Family of J.M.J., Victoria		\$757,222	\$1,280,885	169%	29%
St. Mary, Victoria		\$270,965	\$523,773	193%	23%
Our Lady of Victory Cathedral, Victoria		\$639,747	\$1,466,081	229%	20%
Holy Family, Wharton		\$177,803	\$451,705	254%	41%
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Wharton		\$130,087	\$142,523	110%	18%
St. Joseph, Yoakum		\$132,486	\$281,630	213%	23%

Block I Totals:	\$4,217,446	\$7,222,715	171%	30%
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Amounts as of 12/18/07

Campaign Results  
(as of 12/18/07)

Diocesan Goal	\$9,000,000
Number of Parishes	68
Number of Potential Donors	23,248
Total Number of Donors	6,138
Total Amount Pledged	\$12,861,125
Percent of Diocesan Goal	143%
Percent of Diocesan Participation	26%
Average Gift	\$1,975

Included in this total are the parishes that chose to guarantee their diocesan portion: St. Patrick, Bloomington; St. Procopius, Louise; St. Andrew, Hillje; and Assumption of the BVM, Praha.

Save The Date!

The Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament is scheduled for April 4, 2008, at Colony Creek Country Club in Victoria. Please save the date and watch for updates in the coming months of *The Catholic Lighthouse*.

Campaign totals

Continued from p. 1

Diocese of Victoria. Your success is not measured in dollars and cents, but by the community through which these funds were raised. We wish you all the best," said Jackie Perry, GIG executive director.

Please see above for Block I and total campaign results.

Candlelight March for Life

Continued from p. 1

then East on the Port Lavaca Hwy. to Pleasant Green Drive. The new Holy Trinity Chapel on Pleasant Green Drive will be the host for the completion of the March. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Tasin (361) 578-2002.

2007 DSA MONTHLY REPORT

The 2007 Diocesan Services Appeal officially closed on December 31, 2007. Final totals will be printed in the February issue. Thus far \$752,656 has been given toward the \$1,237,250 goal.

Project start-up for the 2008 Diocesan Services Appeal is just around the corner. Pledge cards will be mailed out during the last week of January 2008.

Have a Blessed and  
Happy New Year,  
Jeri Joseph  
DSA Coordinator

Stewardship Thought:

It's important to measure our generosity not by what we give, but by what we have left.

amount given

Half  
way

\$1,237,250

\$752,656

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**DEADLINE IS THE THIRD TUESDAY OF THE PRECEDING MONTH.**

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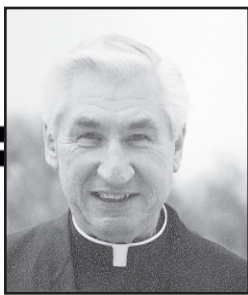




## FAITH POINT

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

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



### St. Paul in Turkey

**N**ovember 5-16, 2007, I had the privilege of leading sixteen persons on a pilgrimage retracing some of the steps of St. Paul in present-day Turkey. The pilgrimage took us to Antioch (now Antakya), Tarsus, Paul's birthplace; to Lystra, Iconium (now Konya), to Colossae, Laodicea, Philadelphia (Alasehir), Sardis (Sart), to Smyrna (Izmir), to Mary's House, to Ephesus, to Pergamum (now Bergama), to Thyatira (Akhisar), to Alexander Troas, and finally to Istanbul.

We visited several cities of importance in Paul's missionary journeys and the seven cities to whom the writer of Revelation sent letters in the second and third chapters of that book. A letter carrier would have followed the order of cities listed in Revelation: Ephesus to Smyrna and Pergamum is

100 miles north; *This is the entrance into Mary's house near Ephesus. It is believed then southeast to be the last residence of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus.* Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia;

then finally to Laodicea 150 miles; then west 100 miles back to Ephesus. The trip was a sequel to a journey I made to sites in Greece affiliated with St. Paul: Thessalonica, (Thessaloniki), Athens, Corinth, Boerea, and Philippi. Herewith is a report on the Turkish trip.

After landing at Adana we drove to Antioch where the three priests on the tour, Fathers Joseph Hybner, Wayne Flagg, and I, concelebrated Mass for the group in the Turkish Catholic Church, the name carved on a stone plaque above the arched entrance. We were told that seventy-five parishioners attended that church. There were signs in Turkish and English explaining the statues, icons and other objects in the church. It is visited by Turkish Muslims. Paul taught at Antioch for a time and began his first missionary journey from that place. It was at Antioch that followers of Jesus were labeled Christians for the first time. Important people in Antioch included Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Agabus, and Ignatius, third bishop of Antioch martyred in Rome about 106.

After a compulsory drink of apple tea we then visited Peter's grotto in Antioch. Peter was the first bishop of Antioch, which became a place of refuge for many Jewish Christians. Behind a stone façade against a mountain there are to be found a stone altar as well as a stone throne. Tradition identifies this place as the spot where Peter preached.

Tarsus is the birthplace of Paul, and seemingly he was proud of his hometown. After passing through Cleopatra's Gate (apparently she visited the city) there were two Christian locations of interest.

The first of these is St. Paul's well, supposed to have miraculous powers, and St. Paul's church.

The next stops were the biblical sites of Lystra, where some ruins remain, and Iconium (Konya). In addition to the Christian sites, we made a visit to the Mevlan Mausoleum, the shrine of Celaleddin Rumi or Mevlevi, founder of the sect popularly known as the Whirling Dervishes. We offered Mass in a moderately imposing Catholic church in Konya, cared for by



a young Italian nun. We were informed that the local congregation consists of five Catholics in a city of over a million.

Near Pamukkale we visited Colossae to which Paul wrote a letter. It is now a large, unexcavated hill. We next saw the impressive ruins of Laodicea, chided by John for attachment to its wealth but spiritually poor. Laodicea exported a powder used for eye salve. John referred to this in recommending that Laodiceans purchase salve to cure their spiritual blindness. The city was wealthy enough to support two theaters whose ruins we surveyed.

Next we saw Alasehir, the site of the Philadelphia ruins and the Byzantine church. The next Revelation church we saw was Sardis where there is an extensively restored Roman gymnasium and next to it an ancient Jewish synagogue. From there we went to Smyrna (present-day Izmir), which contains a few ruins surrounded by a city of three million.

The ruins of Ephesus are impressive and by themselves worth the trip. Near Ephesus we were privileged to offer Mass in Mary's house, (Meryemana in Turkish), located in a nature park between Ephesus and Seljuk. It is believed to be the last residence of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. The peaceful site is sacred to both Christians and Muslims who honor Mary as the mother of the prophet Jesus, and is visited by many tourists and pilgrims.

Ephesus, which used to be a seaport but is now about 6 miles from the sea because of silting, boasted a great library and a theater which is spectacular to this day. Built into the slopes of Panayir Dagi (Mt. Pion), the 100-foot high theater required 60 years

of digging to clear out a space large enough to accommodate 25,000 people, which was about one-tenth of the city's population. This theater is the only one mentioned in Scripture, see Acts 19:23-40. It was there the silversmiths rioted to protest the preaching of Paul against idolatry, which adversely affected their lucrative business of making miniature shrines of Artemis. The area also has the ruins of the basilica of St. John and a notable archaeological museum.

Ephesus hosted a great ecumenical council in 431. Decided there was the question whether the Virgin Mary can properly be called Theotokos, or bearer of God. The term had become popular in devotion and worship but was controversial. The bishops held that it was an appropriate title, reasoning that since Christ was both truly man and truly God, one could say Mary gave birth to God.

We then drove north to Pergamum to visit the acropolis containing the ruins of the temples of Trajan and Athena and its steep theater. Next we saw Akhisar, the modern city surrounding a few ruins of the Revelation city of Thyatira.

From there we traveled to Alexander Troas to see the acropolis there. The place was visited by Paul and there he received a vision to go to Macedonia.

The last stop was Istanbul which boasts the Blue Mosque; the breath-taking church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), an early architectural experiment in building churches with large open spaces covered by a dome; the underground cisterns of Istanbul; the Topkapi Palace containing treasures of the Ottoman Empire; the Archaeological Museum containing the Gezer calendar, the Titus Inscriptions, City Walls from Babylon, the world's oldest surviving peace treaty, and innumerable other important historical items.

We also took a cruiseliner on the Bosphorus, a passage from the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea, which allowed us to view both the European and Asian

parts of Istanbul. We also visited the Grand Covered Bazaar, an internationally famous shopping center.



*A view of the theater in Ephesus from the port road. Silversmiths rioted to protest the preaching of Paul against idolatry, which adversely affected their lucrative business of making miniature shrines of Artemis. This theater is the only one mentioned in Scripture, see Acts 19:23-40.*

The trip was enjoyable from a touristic point of view but it had a spiritual value. We celebrated Mass each day, sometimes in bars, and we read the portions of the Scriptures that pertained to the places that we visited. The Church obviously has its roots in Jerusalem but it is not too fanciful to say that the Gentile portion of the church is rooted in Antioch. We achieved an appreciation of the tremendous feat accomplished by Paul and the other preachers of the Gospel in converting a world absolutely wedded to idolatry and emperor worship and willing to resort to all sorts of torture to eradicate Christianity.

For us pilgrims this was a memorable, lifetime experience. Even the Turkish cuisine was a delightful surprise. There was one complaint—not enough time for shopping. An analysis reveals that all the complainants were females.

We took thousands of pictures. You may see over 700 of them online by going to fototime.com. Once there, look for Guest Login. In the space provided, type [didache@suddenlinkmail.com](mailto:didache@suddenlinkmail.com) and click on Go. There you should see a number of thumbnail photos. Click on the first one to get a larger picture. Read the captions underneath each picture. To advance to the next photograph, click on NEXT above the photograph.

The trip was spiritually rewarding and enjoyable. Next October I hope to lead a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Next year in Jerusalem!

### Note of Thanks

#### Your Excellency:

With sincere gratitude I wish to acknowledge receipt of the check in the amount of \$38,004.52, representing the Peter's Pence contribution from the Diocese of Victoria for 2007, which you had forwarded recently to the Apostolic Nunciature.

As I assure you that this sum will be duly transmitted to the Secretariat of State on your behalf, permit me to offer an initial word of appreciation in the name of the Holy Father for this valuable assistance.

In addition to sharing in the material responsibilities facing Pope Benedict XVI, this expression of generosity by your people reveals their deep awareness of the bonds of faith, hope and love which they share with the Universal Church and God's people, especially the poor, throughout the world.

May God, who is infinitely generous,

reward you and continue to bless you and the faithful under your pastoral care.

With prayerful regards, I am  
Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Archbishop Pietro Sambi,  
Apostolic Nuncio

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Today's Convenience"

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## Seminary Burses

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

As of December 17, 2007

	TOTALS
<b>— General Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$91,379.00
In memory of Joe Nevlund Sr. by M/M Robert Bochat	25.00
<b>Total</b>	\$91,404.00
<b>— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Seminary Burse No. 3</b>	
Previously reported	\$7,237.50
In memory of Joe Nevlund Sr. by KC Council 1329	100.00
In memory of Ignacio S. Ybarbo by KC Council 1329	100.00
<b>Total</b>	\$7,437.50
<b>— Rev. Charles Kolek, OSB, and John and Mary Kolek Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$2,080.00
In memory of Rev. Charles Kolek, OSB, and John and Mary Kolek from the descendants of the John and Mary Kolek Family Reunion	300.00
<b>Total</b>	\$2,380.00
<b>— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik &amp; Rev. Vincent Verdame Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$8,387.00
In memory of Lillie Janis by Frances and Vencil Janis	10.00
<b>Total</b>	\$8,397.00
<b>— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$5,948.00
In memory of Mary Popp by Larry and Delores Dornak	20.00
Gift from Knights of Columbus Council 3371, Nada	250.00
In memory of Rev. Joseph Koebel by Ervin and Catherine Buchta	10.00
<b>Total</b>	\$6,228.00

### Additional Burses for Donations:

- Catholic Daughters of Americas Court Our Lady Queen of Peace No.1374
- Rev. Jerome J. Stryk
- CDA Court St. Ann No. 369 Burse No. 2
- Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse No. 2
- Rev. Joe Levya
- Rev. Marcus Valenta
- Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
- Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
- Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas KJZT Burse #5
- Sophie Schmidt
- Rev. Sean Donohue Burse No. 2
- Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Vaclavic Bily
- Rev. John C. Bily
- St. Mary Church – Praha
- St. Mary Church – High Hill
- Holy Rosary Church – Hostyn Burse No. 2
- Rev. Charles Kram
- William L. Schmidt
- Deceased Priests of Praha
- Sister M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS
- Jim Vacek Burse No. 2
- Knights of Columbus Council 3204 – Ganado Rev. Joseph Hybner

•To find other burse that have been started, call the Diocese of Victoria Business Office at (361) 573-0828.

Those wishing to begin a burse or to contribute to an existing seminary burse may do so by sending their contributions with the appropriate burse designation to:  
**Seminary Burse, P.O. Box 4070,  
Victoria, Texas 77903**

## Cutting Edge

By Sister Margie Lavonis, CSC



## No one ever asked me . . .

Many dioceses celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week during the month of January. It is a time set aside to reflect on God's call.

It is the mission of all the members of the Church to pray and actively promote religious, priestly and lay vocations. This was the main theme of the North American Continental Congress on Vocations to the Ordained Ministry and Consecrated Life held in Montreal, Canada, several years ago. Pope John Paul II called this meeting because he was concerned about the decreasing number of religious and priestly vocations.

The congress stressed the responsibility of every Catholic, no matter what age, to foster, encourage and support religious vocations. I had the honor of being one of these delegates. Our mission was to develop a plan to do this in North America.

The plan consisted of five actions to be practiced, both individually and communally, to promote Church vocations. These actions were: to pray, evangelize, experience, mentor and invite.

Prayer for vocations and the grace to do God's will are vital. It is most often in prayer that we hear God's call for our lives. Each baptized person is called to holiness. Prayer, listening to God, is an important element in discovering how to live out that call.

Evangelization is another component of fostering vocations. We need to find ways to make Catholics, especially the young, aware of the different ways an individual can live out his or her vocation. Most people have a vocation to the beautiful sacrament of marriage. Some are called to live their lives as dedicated single people and still others are called to give themselves to God as brothers, priests or sisters.

Another important way to promote religious and ordained vocations is to

provide the young with service experiences and opportunities to get to know priests and religious personally. One reason why few young people consider the option of religious life is many have little or no contact with sisters, brothers or priests (except at church). It is hard to answer a call to a life you know little or nothing about!!!

Young people also need mentors and wisdom figures to help them discern and discover God's call, whatever it may be. They need someone to help them make good decisions.

Several years ago I read something by Father James Griffin, a Holy Cross priest, who wrote a column for many Catholic newspapers. The title of this particular article was "Nobody ever asked me." His point was that God often works through the invitations of other people. Father Griffin told of asking several young men that he considered good candidates for the seminary if they had ever considered the priesthood and often got the answer, "Nobody ever asked me." We all need feedback and sometimes all it takes to plant or develop the seed of a vocation is to tell a person that we feel might have the qualities needed, "You would make a good sister, brother or priest." When I was in high school, a Sister of the Holy Cross said something similar to me that made me start to seriously discern whether or not God wanted me to be a sister. Her invitation affirmed something I had thought about even as a young girl but never dreamt I was cut out for the life or that God could possibly want me.

It is important to emphasize that those invitations do not have to come from the clergy or religious. All of us have the responsibility to invite others to consider a possible call. It is not uncommon to hear vocation stories of how parents, grandparents, coaches, or friends were the biggest influence on people who eventually became priests or joined religious congregations.

Perhaps you know someone you think would make a good priest or religious. Take a chance and say it. It can't hurt and it might be just what he or she needs to hear. Don't be afraid to let God work through you.

## Fifth graders to attend Vocation Awareness Days

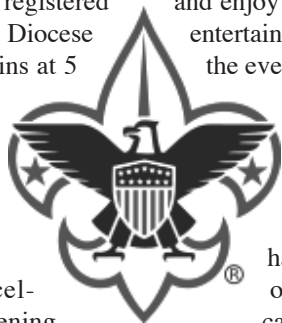
On January 15 and 16, 2008, the fifth graders from the Catholic Schools in the diocese will attend Church Vocation Awareness Days at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria. The students will hear a number of religious and priests talk about their own experience of religious life and the priesthood. They will compete in a "Meet the Religious" game and visit the gift shop and the Hall of Memories at the convent. The day will culminate in a Prayer Service that highlights the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These Vocation Awareness Days are sponsored by the Vocations Office of the Diocese of Victoria, the Serra Club, Knights of Columbus Council 1329 and the Catholic Daughters of Court St. Ann No. 369.

## Camp Mauritz Boy Scout Retreat Feb. 1-3

The Catholic Committee on Scouting for the Victoria Diocese (CCS) is sponsoring the annual Boy Scout Retreat at Camp Mauritz February 1 – 3. All registered boys of troops in the Victoria Diocese are welcome. The retreat begins at 5 p.m. on February 1 and will end after a Sunday morning service about 10 a.m. The meals will again be provided by the Knights of Columbus and some local merchants.

Bishop Fellhauer will celebrate Mass on Saturday evening and a Protestant minister will conduct services for those who wish to attend. The Saturday morning program will consist of five different religious sessions



and a camp-wide game is planned for the afternoon. There will also be time for the boys and leaders to make new friends and enjoy each other's company. A very entertaining campfire is also planned for the evening.

The cost for the weekend is only \$12.00 for each boy or adult. There will be no charge for two leaders for each troop. All adults should have a current Child Protection, or Safe Environment certificate.

For more information, please contact Dave Kouba at (361) 575-6693 or Gary Rangnow at (361) 573-0828 ext. 33.

### Reporting Abuse

*If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by a member of the clergy or other church personnel, you can register a complaint.*

- Call the Chancery at (361) 573-0828 and ask to speak with the bishop or the chancellor;  
or
- Call Rev. Gary Janak (979) 543-3770 or Sr. Emilie Eilers (361) 575-7111, Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach;  
or
- Write to: Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer  
Diocese of Victoria  
P.O. Box 4070  
Victoria, TX 77903  
Mark your letter "Personal and Confidential"

We will also help you bring your concerns to Church officials outside the diocese if the abuse occurred elsewhere and you now reside in the Diocese of Victoria.

If you are unsure about bringing a complaint or would like further information, please contact: Rev. Gary Janak at (979) 543-3770.

## In Memory of Father Wolfgang Mimms

*Continued from p. 2*

confession and blessings. Father Wolfgang was noted for his ability to befriend people and greet them as if they were Christ. Even during his illness, Father Wolfgang was active as a confessor and spiritual director. He had a love and passion for languages, particularly German, and had a noted collection of African and Egyptian artifacts which were displayed at venues in the Victoria area. He was also a talented pianist and enjoyed classical music and the opera.

Father Wolfgang is survived by a brother, Jackie of Chicago; a sister Irma Payne, formerly of Chicago, now of Oregon; a nephew, Michael Payne of Chicago; cousins, JoAnne Williams of Malin, Ore., Cynthia Faith Harris of San Jose, Calif., and Barbara Sagerman of San Jose, Calif.; and his Trinitarian brothers.

Visitation was held during the day on Friday, Jan. 4, at Our Lady of Sorrows. Funeral Mass was celebrated at 7 p.m. on Friday. Burial will follow at the Trinitarian Community Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Our Lady of Sorrows/Santisima Trinidad Catholic Church.





## Twenty Something

By Christina Capecchi



### Keep your heart and your year wide open to God

Somewhere along the line, optimism got a bad rap. It was linked to Pollyanna, and it never escaped the association. Over time it morphed into a synonym for naiveté and ignorance.

Meanwhile, cynicism was married to the “Simpsons” and hence, became cool. To be cynical is to be savvy and witty, a wisecracking pessimist, nobody’s fool.

American public life, with its steady string of scandals, molds this cynical disposition. We, the onlookers, learn to expect the worst. If a politician is peaking in the polls, we wait for the other shoe to drop. “He’ll butcher the debate,” we predict. “A skeleton will come out of her closet.”

We’re equally cynical of actors and athletes. “She’ll be back in rehab,” we say. “I wonder how the Vikings will blow this lead.”

And we apply this thinking to our personal lives, making cynical remarks to provoke chuckles and to prepare ourselves: low expectations make for minimal disappointment.

When we fall into this mode of thinking, we don’t fret; cynicism appears to be a choice like any other. Are you a Coke or a Pepsi person? A glass half-empty or a glass half-full?

But that cliché strips outlook of its spiritual essence. Optimism is not a casual preference; it is a belief in an infinitely generous Lord who repeatedly fills the cup ‘til it overflows.

This idea was a cornerstone of the preaching and writing of St. Francis de Sales, a 17th century French bishop. He identified it as a virtue and gave it a wonderful name: joyful optimism.

St. Francis didn’t lead a charmed life. He knew suffering and injustice. But he also knew the greater power of God’s redeeming love and the greater possibility of God’s inspiring hope. And he worked to help others know it.

When his friend St. Jane de Chantal was recovering from illness, he wrote her an encouraging letter: “Keep your heart, my dear Daughter, wide open before God; always go joyously in his presence. He loves us, he cherishes us, he is all ours, this sweet Jesus...Even if we have bitter waters up to our neck, while his mantle lifts us up, we have nothing to fear.”

Francis and Jane founded a school called Visitation. Across the ocean and centuries later, Visitation students still

learn about joyful optimism. It blossoms in various ways.

Take Mary Engelbreit, who attended the Visitation in St. Louis. If you don’t recognize her name, you’ve seen her greeting cards with her signature checks and cherries. Joyful optimism is infused in her illustrations. They are, as St. Francis would say, “full of joy, brimful of God.”

Mary’s art has been given a label that makes her bristle: cute. The half-compliment seems to insinuate, “What an idealistic little world you draw.”

Mary’s response: “What’s wrong with that? Don’t you wish you lived there, too?” Besides, she has said, “What I draw is taken from my life. I honestly had a wonderful childhood.”

Despite the sorrow Mary has known, she chooses to focus on the joy and to share it with others.

We are all called to practice this virtue, and the New Year offers a perfect chance. We must tackle that blank calendar with joyful optimism, keeping our hearts wide open before God.

Yes, 2008 will bring changes and challenges – in public and private spheres. We’ll have a new president, new addresses, new jobs and new relationships to navigate.

But the year also holds surprising blessings from a creative, generous God. So begin moving toward them.

Joyful optimism begins simply: Rise each morning, inhale deeply and whisper, “Here we go, God!”

*Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at [christinacap@gmail.com](mailto:christinacap@gmail.com).*



**Ash  
Wednesday  
Feb. 6**

### Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow could have been a victim of abortion

By Steven Ertelt LifeNews.com Editor

NEW YORK — University of Florida quarterback Tim Tebow became the first sophomore in the history of the NCAA to win the coveted Heisman Trophy as the best football player in the nation. However, Tebow’s accomplishments may never have been supported had his mother followed a doctor’s recommendation to have an abortion.

With 29 passing touchdowns and 22 rushing touchdowns, Tebow displayed the kind of versatility that has become more valued at the quarterback position.

Pam Tebow and her husband were Christian missionaries in the Philippines in 1985 and they prayed for “Timmy” before she became pregnant.

Unfortunately, as the Gainesville Sun reports, Pam entered into a coma after she contracted amoebic dysentery, an infection of the intestine caused by a parasite found in a contaminated food or drink.

The treatment for the medical condition would require strong medications that doctors told Pam had caused irreversible damage to Tim — so they advised her to have an abortion.

As the Sun reported, Pam Tebow refused the abortion and cited her Christian faith as the reason for her hope that her son would be born without the devastating disabilities physicians predicted.



Tim Tebow, Heisman Trophy winner.

Pam ultimately spent the last two months of her pregnancy in bed and, eventually, gave birth to a healthy baby boy in August 1987.

As she told the newspaper, Pam was not surprised that her son would be up for the Heisman despite no underclassman receiving the award since its inception in 1933.

“The combination of Timmy’s God-given talent, hard work, character and leadership have made a mark on and off the football field,” she said.

As prominent researcher Joel Brind writes in a new LifeNews.com editorial, doctors are frequently telling women they should consider abortions when confronted with various medical situations affecting their health.

Yet, as he notes, physicians can successfully treat both mother and child without suggesting that the baby be killed to spare a mother’s life.

Because Tim Tebow was spared, he’s wowed a nation by his athletic skill and, at his younger age, has an opportunity to become the second person to win two Heisman awards.

Visit [www.lifenews.com](http://www.lifenews.com) or receive the LifeNews.com Pro-Life News Report via e-mail daily or weekly at no cost. E-mail [news@lifenews.com](mailto:news@lifenews.com) with the message “subscribe daily” or “subscribe weekly.”

### Young man drives 3,000 miles to save the life of stranger he met on Internet

Canton, Mass. — Alex Batenko, a father of three children from Chicago, Ill., received a life saving kidney transplant recently from an altruistic stranger, Munetsi Mupindu (nicknamed Simba) a 27-year-old man from Ann Arbor, Michigan. They found each other on MatchingDonors.com. The transplant took place at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland.

Alex put his profile on MatchingDonors.com telling his need for a kidney. Simba, an administrator for Aria Healthcare, found Alex’s plea for a kidney and after writing to Alex through MatchingDonors.com he decided that he would be tested, and if matched would donate his kidney to Alex.

There was only one problem - Simba lived in Michigan, Alex lived in Chicago and Alex’s transplant center was in Maryland. Even though MatchingDonors.com does arrange free airfare for donors and patients, Simba’s last plane flight was when he moved to the United States from Zimbabwe, Africa, and he had no intentions of ever getting on a plane again. Alex thought this would be a problem because of the traveling distance, but Simba said “That’s no problem, I’ll drive to the hospital for testing and for the surgery as long as you drive with me as my passenger.”

So last month Simba drove 240 miles to Alex’s house then 704 miles to Johns Hopkins in Maryland to be tested, it was a 20-hour-long trip; they were tested and found out they were a match. Simba then drove Alex and himself home. Recently Simba again drove to Johns Hopkins for the surgery and then drove himself back to Michigan the following week.

This is the 61st transplant surgery in little over two years from a patient and altruistic donor that found each other on MatchingDonors.com.

Alex did not say much in his profile on MatchingDonors.com — he wrote: “My name is Alex and I desperately need a kidney. I am the father of three children. If there is anyone who is willing to donate please contact me. I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you.”

Alex had over 8,250 people view his profile on MatchingDonors.com and many people were tested, and Simba was the best match.

Simba did not say much either — he wrote: I would like to help if I can, really not sure if our age difference would matter. Feel free to call me on my cell - just ask for Simba, God bless you.

MatchingDonors.com was launched in January of 2004 as an Internet service based in Massachusetts. Patients on transplant lists put their profiles on the Web site, and potential donors browse the site for a life they want to help save. Donors are not compensated, since it is against the law to have any financial benefit from organ donation.

Dr. Jeremiah Lowney, one of the Web site founders, said “Patients are asked to pay a membership fee, but there is a sliding scale if they can’t afford it, and now patients can get a lifetime membership for only \$25 per month.” Many praise MatchingDonors.com as a creative, entrepreneurial response to this deadly disparity, and 100 percent of the money

See *Young man drives 3,000 miles*, p. 8



#### The College of Saint Thomas More

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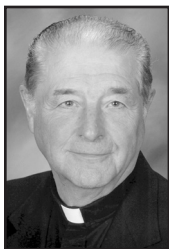
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## Question Corner

By Father John Dietzen  
Catholic News Service



### Still married after a civil divorce?

**Q.** My friend had her first marriage annulled after meeting a widowed man who became her second husband. The second marriage was at Mass; both were practicing Catholics. She soon found it impossible to live with her new husband's children and a civil divorce followed.

Though they are keeping separate households, she claims they plan to remarry when their children are grown. In the meantime they spend a night or weekend together in her home whenever they feel the need. This upsets her teenage daughter, who has started to be a behavior problem. My friend says it is OK to sleep with her ex-husband since they are still married in the eyes of the church. What is the church's view of this situation? (Illinois)

**A.** She is correct. According to church law, they are still married. And I assume they still believe they are married in the eyes of God. They still apparently have a sexual, emotional and intimate sharing of their lives, except that they don't live together, which, under the circumstances, seems the only way they can continue their relationship.

I wonder first of all why they got divorced. If their present situation and future plans are as you describe, there was no need for civil action. They could have lived separately without that, and possibly avoided all the problems they're encountering. So maybe there is something more involved that she hasn't told you, or perhaps that she herself does not know.

Perhaps her daughter has a strained relationship with her new stepfather, and her acting out is her way of expressing her unhappiness with her mother for continuing that involvement. Or maybe she is, as you indicate, unaware that her mother and the new husband are still in a sacramental marriage and, from that aspect at least, acting in a morally permissible manner.

Whatever the reason, the problem your friend faces is a human problem, not an ex-

plicitly religious one, and she needs to find out why the daughter is reacting the way she is, and deal with that. The daughter may need some counseling, maybe along with her mother, to help her deal with her feelings about the stepfather.

It's also possible she needs to understand more clearly the reasons why what her mother is doing is not morally wrong. Depending on where she is in the teen years, she may not be able to assimilate the gray areas present here.

You're either married or you're not, and if you're not you shouldn't have this kind of intimacy. Period. In this case, she may be more ready to accept an explanation if it comes from someone other than her mother, like an adult friend or priest, someone she trusts.

Your friend surely realizes she and her "ex" are in a most unusual arrangement. They need to deal patiently with anyone who is puzzled by it.

**Q.** I have opportunities to join bus tours where the schedule does not coincide with Sunday Mass times along the way. Is it permissible to go on these tours when that is the case? (North Carolina)

**A.** Participation in Sunday Mass is an essential part of Catholic life, as it has been throughout Christian history. If one otherwise faithfully participates in Sunday Mass, however, church law does not prohibit occasionally missing in the situation you describe.

(A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612.)

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

### Disciples on the Journey 2008 available

Everyone is invited to journey the six weeks of Lent by reflecting on the Sunday Scripture readings with *Disciples on the Journey*.

Lent is a special liturgical season for conversion and renewal. *Disciples on the Journey* offers the means for reflection and faith sharing in small groups for adults, teens, and families with children.

This is the fifth year for the Diocese of Victoria to produce this Lenten faith-

sharing book in English and Spanish.

Call your parish to see how you can participate in this diocesan-wide Lenten program. For more information or to order, call (361) 573-0828 or e-mail [dj@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:dj@victoriadiocese.org).

DJ Lent 2008 books are sold in packs of 10 for \$35.00. There is no postage for parishes in our diocese.

*Disciples on the Journey* books can be picked up at the chancery.



**20,000 copies of DJ sold in Lent 2007!**

### Lenten Retreat

The Diocesan Office of Catechetical Ministry is sponsoring a Lenten Retreat at the Spiritual Renewal Center on February 8 - 9, 2008. The retreat's theme is "The Broken Christ," is open to any man or woman who would like to get away for a short time to pray, reflect, and spend quiet time with God.

Sister Miriam Perez, MCSH, a member of the Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and



Sister Miriam Perez, MCSH

Mary, will be the retreat leader. She has a MA in counseling psychology and a BA in religious studies. A native of Brooklyn, NY, Sister Miriam has done missionary work in Mexico, New Jersey, and Texas.

Arrival time is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, and the retreat will conclude with a Liturgy for the first Sunday of Lent at 5:00 p.m. Saturday. The cost of the retreat is \$45, which covers three meals, overnight stay and retreat materials. For more information or to register call (361) 573-0828 or e-mail [bparkan@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:bparkan@victoriadiocese.org). Please register by Tuesday, February 4, 2008.

## Celebrate your marriage on World Marriage Day February 10

World Marriage Day, sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter will be celebrated February 10, 2008 — always the second Sunday of February.

World Marriage Day honors husband and wife as head of the family, the basic unit of society. It salutes the beauty of spouse's faithfulness, sacrifice and joy in daily, married life.

Because February 10, 2008, is the first Sunday of Lent and that tends to be a very busy day in parishes and dioceses, Marriage Encounter suggests shifting your parish WMD celebrations forward or back a week to February 3rd or 17th, this year. Each individual parish may choose the Sunday that's best for them to celebrate.

The idea of celebrating marriage began in Baton Rouge, La., in 1981, when couples encouraged the mayor, the governor and the bishop to proclaim St. Valentine's Day as "We Believe in Marriage Day." The event was so successful, the idea was presented to and adopted by Worldwide Marriage Encounter's national leadership.

By 1982, 43 state governors officially proclaimed the day, and celebrations spread to U.S. military bases in several foreign countries. In 1983, the name was changed to "World Marriage Day," designated to be celebrated each year on the

second Sunday in February. In 1993, his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, imparted his Apostolic Blessings on World Marriage Day. WMD celebrations continue to grow and spread to more countries and faith expressions every year.

The World Marriage Day logo speaks readily of the role and values we proclaim. Husband and wife are symbolically seen as two candle-like figures, reminding us that married love calls us to help enlighten the world. The couple is joined by a heart, focusing on love as the power that fosters unity within the couple and generates the capacity to be life-giving and inspire others to fruitfulness and unity.

The theme for WMD has been permanently adopted as "Love One Another." This phrase is the commandment given us by Jesus in John 14. It speaks to us in a simple but challenging way of how our Father wishes us to live. Loving one another is a daily decision - simple, but challenging.

For daily "Marriage Tips" and resources for "Living Happily Ever After," please go to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' "For Your Marriage" Web site at: [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org). For sample prayer services and liturgies for WMD, please go to: <http://wmd.wwme.org/>.



### World Marriage Day Prayer

"Father, as we prepare for WMD, we thank you for your tremendous gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. Help us to witness to its glory by a life of growing intimacy. Teach us the beauty of forgiveness so we may become more and more One in Heart, Mind and Body. Strengthen our communication and help us become living signs of your love. Make us grow more in love with the church so we may renew the Body of Christ. Make us a sign of unity in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Brother. Amen"

- Father Bill Dilgen, S.M.M.

## Diocese of Victoria



**Date:**  
**Sunday,**  
**February 24, 2008**

**Place:**  
**Holy Family**  
**Victoria**

**Registration**  
**Ends**  
**February 4, 2008**

**\$20 per team**

## Adult Catholic Knowledge Bowl

There is no limit to how many teams (four persons per team) can enter from a parish or organization.

For more information: call (361) 573-0828 or e-mail: [bparkan@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:bparkan@victoriadiocese.org)

### Adult Catholic Knowledge Bowl Team Registration

Parish or Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Team Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Team Members

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Hm/Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

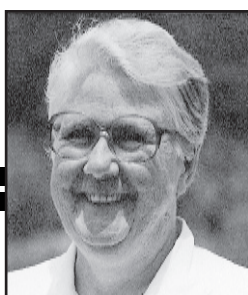
Make check payable to: Diocese of Victoria Payment enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Mail registration form and fee to: Diocese of Victoria, Adult Catholic Knowledge Bowl, 1505 E. Mesquite Lane, Victoria, TX 77901





## SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



### Peacemakers in Turbulent Times

**T**he time has come for us to respond! All during Advent we were sharing Scripture that looks forward to the realization of the dreams and hopes of us and of our spiritual ancestors — dreams and hopes of peace. The readings at our liturgies were replete with these aspirations for peace. We may recall that on the First Sunday of Advent we heard how the prophet Isaiah envisioned a day when humankind would beat its swords into plowshares and its spears into pruning hooks. Nations would not declare war on one another or train for war. What a hope! Soon afterward, in a weekday reading, we saw how the prophet continues to encourage us with the reassuring words: “There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the God of peace.” Also, in the Gospel for Christmas Eve we hear Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, addressing the infant John with these words: “You, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the messiah to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death’s shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” As a climax, on Christmas, the birth of the Prince of Peace was heralded by a heavenly chorus proclaiming “Peace on earth . . .,” a message which challenges each of us to become a person of good will so that we can hasten the day when these dreams and hopes of peace are realized.

Sadly for the newborn Prince of Peace the violence of a jealous king disrupted the tranquility of his early childhood and brutally destroyed the lives of other infant boys devastating their families. We remember how abruptly Joseph and Mary had to leave the world they knew and flee to Egypt. We can only imagine the difficulties that faced them in a foreign country with a new language, no residence, no job, and no visa.

Our times are just as violent, or perhaps even more so, as they were during

the life of Jesus. Just read or watch the news which is so full of disrespect for human life, war and bloodshed, poverty, and the plight of refugees and immigrants; or closer to home, just attend some youth athletic events and hear the epithets hurled at the referees or opposing team by disgruntled fans. Even our everyday words and thoughts reflect a violent mindset; how quickly some of us tend to criticize; and just listen to the violent words we use in everyday speech. For example, we say, “It (an idea) just struck me” when we could have used a more nonviolent term such as “It dawned on me.” Or, we may say, “I ran into so-and-so at the grocery store today” when we mean that we met or saw so-and-so.

Getting back to Jesus, in spite of the experience of flight as a result of violence in his infancy, he grew up, according to God’s plan, to become an example of peace and nonviolence through his life and ministry of compassionate healing and teaching. His famous sermon on the mount, “Blessed are the . . .” and his message “Whatsoever you do to the least . . .,” are a reflection of his own life and a blueprint for our lives. At this time, let us follow up on our Advent theme of peace and respond to Jesus’ message, “Blessed are the peacemakers, . . .”

Where can we begin? Perhaps we can start by being more conscious of our thoughts and vocabulary so that we can reframe our expressions using the lens of peace and nonviolence to filter out violent speech and actions. We can exemplify peaceful living in our families, our neighborhoods, our schools, and our work places. We can welcome and lend a helping hand to the out-siders and needy among us. We can pray and work for peace so that our soldiers can come home and be reunited with their families. We can vote wisely for candidates who respect human life and work for justice and peace. And for more ideas on enhancing our peacemaking efforts, we could visit [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org). Most of all, let us keep in mind that Jesus informs us “Blessed are the Peacemakers . . .” and let us act accordingly.

### TCC invites Catholics to mission conference

The Texas Mission Council (TMC) of the Texas Catholic Conference is inviting all Catholics who are interested in learning about or participating in the missionary work of the Catholic Church to come to the Christian Renewal Center in Dickinson, near Houston, Friday - Sunday, February 15, 16 and 17, 2008, for the Texas Mission Council annual conference.

The theme of the Texas Mission Council 2008 conference will concentrate on the Spirituality of Mission and will feature Father Joseph Donders, a former African Missionary and holder of the Missionary Chair at the Catholic University of America, as keynote speaker.

Since most US Catholics are mobile, at least moderately well educated, technically alert, and possessing resources that the greater part of the world can only dream about, US Catholics can now put

themselves and their gifts to the service of the missionary efforts of our Church, either at home or abroad.

Mission today includes short-term immersion programs as well as the traditional long-term mission activities, and the Texas Mission Council offers this conference to help people become modern missionaries, taking into account the necessities of their daily life.

The TMC has recently finished its booklet on modern, short-term mission immersion trips which are today’s answer to missionary participation by the laity. This manual on short term mission/immersion trips will be available at the conference for individuals and parishes that wish to participate in mission today.

For more information: contact Awanda Witworth at (713) 688-1060 or e-mail [mklawandaw@aol.com](mailto:mklawandaw@aol.com).



**SERRAN CLUBS HONOR THOSE IN RELIGIOUS FORMATION**—The Serra Club of Victoria and the Serra Club of Victoria Northwest (Hallettsville) held their annual Christmas party honoring the Diocese of Victoria’s men and women in religious formation Thursday evening, December 27, 2007, at Holy Family Church in Victoria. The party was a large event serving 125 dinners to members of both clubs. Those religious in formation who attended included Sister Louise Marie Jones, IWBS simple professed, seminarians Patrick Knippenberg of Shiner, Philip Brune of Frelsburg, Griffin Brown of Victoria, Transitional Deacon Tommy Chen of Point Comfort, Jacob Koether of Bay City, and Sean Breeden of Bay City, who is discerning the priesthood. Prior to the dinner, the seminarians had met at the chancery for a Mass with Bishop Fellhauer. Pictured in the chancery chapel, left to right, is Patrick Knippenberg, Father Dan Morales, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca and director of vocations, Philip Brune, Bishop Fellhauer, Griffin Brown, Deacon Tommy Chen, Sean Breeden and Jacob Koether.

## ST. MARY CHURCH

VICTORIA • 184TH ANNIVERSARY

## ANNUAL PARISH FESTIVAL

Sunday, February 10, 2008 • 10:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Victoria Community Center

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Adults — \$7 • Children (12 and under) — \$4  
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## New pastor takes over the reins at Our Lady Of Sorrows parish

By Peter Morales of Revista de Victoria

Our Lady Of Sorrows (OLS) has a new pastor. His name is Father Stanley DeBoe. *Revista* had the opportunity to speak with him recently. When asked what his mission is he responded, "I want to make a difference in people's lives. OLS is a vibrant and diverse parish and I feel blessed to be a part of it. Everyone has made me feel right at home. I truly couldn't ask for anything else."

Father Stan was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pa., 51 years ago. After graduating from high school he attended Towson University in Towson, Md. He then went on to Washington, D.C. where he did his post-graduate work. He was ordained June 4, 1983, and assigned to a parish in Washington, D.C. Within a year he had a chance meeting with Chris Smith, United States Congressman from Missouri.

They formed a fast friendship. Congressman Smith offered Father Stan a position as a Social Justice Director in his office. "I had barely been at my parish a year when this unbelievable opportunity fell into my lap. I went to the provincial who oversaw the placement of priests in the Washington area and after careful consideration he allowed me to take the position with the agreement that it would be for no longer than a year."

From that first year a working relationship developed that led to a paid position with Congressman Smith for the next six

years. Father Stan pointed out that he would find himself saying Mass in Smith's congressional office or appearing in the Congressional Chambers in his priestly collar on the occasions when he would have to appear before Congress for one reason or another.



Father Stanley DeBoe, OSST

According to Father Stan one of the toughest tasks that would fall into the lap of his office was the occasions that would arise when either a priest or a nun would be kidnapped and he would intervene in the recovery of the captured individual. Sadly, on many occasions it would be the recovery of someone who had been murdered. "Our office would make every attempt to recover the body of the slain priest or nun so they could be interred in

their homeland and in proper fashion."

After Father Stan left the congressman's office he was on special assignment from the provincial for approximately three years. "Once that task was completed I was assigned to OLS. For me it was a return to Victoria as I had come to this parish on a previous occasion for the purpose of saying Mass prior to a convention."

Father Stan's first visit to OLS was prior to the flood of '98. At that time OLS was operating at its previous church. "You can imagine my surprise when I arrived in Victoria and saw the beautiful church this parish had erected. It is a tribute to the vibrancy of the entire OLS family."

Father Stan will be installed as OLS pastor by Bishop David Fellhauer Jan. 20.



**RAPHAEL'S REFUGE HOLDS FIRST SERVICE**—The first service at the Monument of the Innocents at Raphael's Refuge fittingly took place at noon Friday, December 28, the feast day of the Holy Innocents. "The chapel and prayer garden are not yet finished and there are no sidewalks" said Administrator Midge Elam, "but on this feast day of the Holy Innocents, we want to gather for praise and thanksgiving for all God has provided here." The service held was a Mass celebrated by Father Dean Wilhelm, Vice Rector at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston and board member of Rapahel's Refuge, and concelebrated by Father Edward Bartsch, pastor at St. Mary Parish in Praha, and Father Joe Hybner, pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Flatonia. "We had hoped to have an Open House and Memorial Service as well," said Midge, "but that will have to wait until construction is further along." The feast of the Holy Innocents commemorates the infants under two years of age whom King Herod killed out of jealousy hoping to kill the infant Messiah, Jesus.

## Young man drives 3,000 miles to save the life of stranger he met on Internet

*Continued from p. 5*

paid for patient memberships is applied to running the site.

"We believe that if more people were better educated on the ability to be a live organ donor, and we add in the personal communication between potential organ donors and patients needing an organ, the number of donors will increase and so will the probability of a patient receiving their much needed organ."

MatchingDonors.com has had incredible success since its inception — most patient members that have been on the site for at least 30 days have been offered an organ by a potential donor.

We already have over 4,425 potential donors on our site waiting to find patients needing organs," said Dr. Jeremiah Lowney, MatchingDonors.com Medical Director. "MatchingDonors.com is the most comprehensive searching system available. Other organizations concentrate mainly on the passive anonymous portion

of finding organ donors - leaving little or no communication between patients and potential donors."

MatchingDonors.com is not an organ donor waiting list, and is not associated with any organ donor organization. It is a nonprofit venue where patients and potential donors can communicate and hopefully expedite a live donor agreeing to give a much-needed organ. MatchingDonors.com gives patients and potential donors the important communication tools to correspond with each other, but once the contact between the parties has been made, the road to transplant surgery is their own.

Anyone interested in donating money to support MatchingDonors.com services can do so by calling Matchingdonors.com at (781) 821-2204. More information about the company is available at its corporate Web site, [www.MatchingDonors.com](http://www.MatchingDonors.com).

## Over \$34,000 raised for Holy Land Christians by diocesan organizations

By Cynthia Brewer

The Diocese of Victoria church organizations outdo themselves again this year contributing over \$34,000 to the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF) through Olive Wood sales.

Non-profit Catholic organizations from the Catholic Daughters to the Knights of Columbus, youth groups to altar societies to Guadalupañas contributed their time, organization and hard work to holding Olive Wood sales throughout the 2007 Advent season.

Thirty-two parishes in 28 cities held Olive Wood sales following Masses for one or two weekends at their churches from the months of October through December raising over \$32,000 for Christian woodcrafters from the Bethlehem area. By many of the organizations donating back their 10 percent fund-raising allotment, another \$2,400 was raised for HCEF's Jesus Loves the Children Christmas Program, providing Christmas gifts for over 240 Christian children in the Holy Land.

Nearly \$200,000 is raised annually by HCEF through Olive Wood sales from

throughout the United States and other countries. The majority of the funds raised by HCEF is through donations, with over \$1.4 million contributed in 2006. These donations go toward Child Sponsorships (Christian schooling), the Living Stones Housing Project, and building and work projects. To learn more about HCEF, please go to [www.hcef.org](http://www.hcef.org).

Thanks to all of the organizations that helped organize these sales.

**St. Mary Adoration Chapel in Victoria has hours that need to be filled by adorers. Hours with no permanent adorer are Tuesday 1 – 2 p.m., Wednesday 9 – 10 a.m., and Friday 12 – 1 p.m. Please call Cleo Boldt at 573-6161 or the rectory at 573-4328 to commit to an hour of adoration.**

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

## STJ Family Festival Celebrating Our Community

Sunday, January 27, 2008

Victoria Community Center

Lunch at 11 a.m. • Auction at 12:30 p.m.



\$7 per plate • Dine-In or Carry-Out  
Beef brisket and sausage dinner  
with German potatoes, beans and slaw



**Don't miss the Flyer Zone**

There will be fun and exciting games for kids of all ages.

All proceeds benefit extra-curricular activities at St. Joseph High School.

**Bring your family and friends,  
and help the STJ Family celebrate our community.**





## Sts. Cyril and Methodius Youth Mission Trip to Mexico

*Continued from p. 20*

but I felt a sincere comfort knowing that all the people there felt a strong love and desire to help one another. My trip to Mexico has not only fulfilled my desire to help others and to see new places, but has also broadened my mind and allowed me to appreciate the simple things life has to offer."

**Julie Petru**, "Attending the Mexico trip has taught me to not take my family, friends, possessions and lifestyle for granted. I was amazed to see what joy and happiness overcame the Mexican children when we gave them the smallest amounts of food, candy and toys. It was refreshing to see that it did not matter what or how much you gave them, they were always satisfied. Even the smallest gesture, such as a hug or smile, made them feel loved. Witnessing all of the hardships and difficult lifestyles of the families in Mexico has helped me to realize how lucky I am to have what I do."

**Courtney Novosad**, "I was really excited about going on the Mexico trip to help the poor. It was great to see the orphans' faces and how they reacted with joy to our gifts. Seeing the families living along the railroad tracks in the paper houses was a real heartbreaker. It makes us think that what we have we should cherish and share with others."

**Allie Hoerig**, "Embarking on the missionary trip to Mexico was a wonderful experience for me. It gave me a brighter perspective of my life and allows me to appreciate all that I have. I also hope that I will get more opportunities to engage in opportunities like this one."

**Carissa Sciba**, "It was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Even though I could not speak their language very well, I was able to communicate and bond with the people I met, especially the

children. Love needs no words when you can share smiles and hugs."

**Blue Hybner**, "The neighborhood that we visited was even worse than the last ones we visited on my first trip. These people were living on an abandoned railroad track in houses made out of mostly cardboard and also anything else that they could find. But what struck me most as it did the first time that I went was not how these people lived but how thankful they were for what they had. This made me think of what I had and how thankful I should be for what I have. Another thing that struck me and made me grateful for things were the orphanages. Some of these kids live in orphanages in a country that gives them limited support and are primarily run and supported by donations. Yet these kids are always smiling and saying thank you as if they are the richest kids in the world."

The other young people who went on the trip were: Ben and Charlie VanSickle and Nicole Schwab.

It is hard to imagine that the lives and living conditions of many who live so near to us are so totally different than what we are accustomed to. The poverty that is in our neighboring country is unbelievable. As one young lady said during our trip, "The pictures don't do justice to how bad it is," yet there is hope, for our loving God will touch the hearts of many to help care for the poor. He has touched the hearts of the students who went on this trip, for they want to know when the next mission trip is scheduled. The planning has begun.

If you would like to donate to the orphanages, please contact: Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church; Mexico Mission Trip; 306 S. Ave. F; Shiner, TX 77984.



HOUSTON—San Jacinto Girl Scouts truly have a place to call their own with the grand opening of the Program Place and Goodykoontz Museum of Girl Scout History. The \$5.6 million building acquisition and renovation was part of Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council's (GSSJC) successful Capital Campaign. The opening of this one-of-a-kind building was celebrated by alumnae, donors, city leaders and friends at a series of recent events.

The Program Place is 14,000 square feet of space, just for Girl Scouts, including a theatre, expanded Girl Scout shop, stage, café and older girl lounge as well as park space and a fire pit for s'more roasts. The Goodykoontz Museum of Girl Scout History features timeline panels and interactive displays from the start of the

Council in the 1920s until today. Current headquarters at 3110 Southwest Freeway will remain the Council's administrative and training center.

"The Program Place is a dream come true for our Council," says Mary Vitek, GSSJC CEO. "It will allow us to grow our membership and continue to offer high quality programming to the Council's Girl Scouts."

GSSJC is the largest council in terms of girl members in the country, and the Program Place will help 6,500 additional girls per year take part in Girl Scouting. It is completely "girl-centric" as girl members had input on the design of the building as well as the building components. "I love everything about the building - especially the café and museum," says Girl Scout

tion, the student must demonstrate good character and respect for the rules of the academy by receiving satisfactory ratings in conduct and application, and be considered by the academy administration to be a responsible member of the community both in and out of the classroom. Subiaco Academy is a college preparatory boarding and day high school in northwest Arkansas dedicated to Catholic Benedictine traditions of service to God, respect for self and others, mutual support, and the value of work.



Hunter  
Brendel

SUBIACO, ARKANSAS—Subiaco Academy proudly announces that Hunter Brendel, son of Dr. William and Kathy Brendel of Corpus Christi and the late Leigh Brendel of Victoria, made the 2nd Quarter Honor Roll of the 2007-2008 academic year, his senior year. Hunter and his family are former members of Holy Family Church in Victoria. To be on the honor roll, a student must achieve a grade point average of 93 percent or better with a minimum grade of 85 percent in each course. In addition,

## Youth Calendar of Events

**January 12, 2008** – Basic Youth Ministry Certificate Course – Class No. 4 - **Prayer and Worship** – at the Chancery from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required

**January 17, 2008** – **Theology of the Body for Teens Training** – Information Session at the Chancery – 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**January 18, 2008** – **Theology of the Body for Teens Training** for youth ministers, priests, DRE's, and high school teachers at the Chancery - 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**January 19, 2008** – **Theology of the Body for Teens Training** for youth ministers, priests, DRE's, and high school teachers at St. Andrew in Hillje - 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**January 30 - February 2, 2008** – Annual Membership Meeting – Little Rock, Arkansas

**February 16, 2008** – 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, 2008** – Confirmation Retreat

**February 25-29, 2008** – Diocesan Directors Meeting – Brownsville

**March 9, 2008** – High School Spectacular – at Holy Family in Victoria

**March 30, 2008** – Youth Leadership Training – 8:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**April 5, 2008** – 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 19, 2008** – 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, 2008** – **Sharing Faith with Young Adolescents** – a workshop for all adults who work with junior high age young people

**April 27, 2008** – Youth Leadership Training - Camp David planning - 8:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**June 1, 2008** – Rocky Mountain High staff development and parent/participant meeting at the Chancery

**June 6-8, 2008** – Camp David staff development at the Spiritual Renewal Center

**June 8-13, 2008** – Camp David, Spiritual Renewal Center

**June 16-19, 2008** – Vocation Camp at Stoney Creek Camp in Columbus

**June 20-22, 2008** – D-week Staff Development, Spiritual Renewal Center

**June 23-26, 2008** – D-week, Spiritual Renewal Center

**July 5 - 13, 2008** – Rocky Mountain High in Pagosa Springs, Colorado

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

Debbie Vanelli at the Office of Youth Ministry

at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 or e-mail at [dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org)

or JoAnn Martinez at ext. 50 or e-mail at [jmartinez@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:jmartinez@victoriadiocese.org)

Web site: [www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice)



## Girl Scouts open Program Place for girls

Kelli Lozada. "It's awesome to see that this is all for us!"

"It is our hope that generations of girls will enter these doors to gain the leadership skills they need to be the responsible citizens and leaders of tomorrow," says GSSJC president Dr. Mary B. McIntire. "Every donor gift was critical in making

this building a reality."

Chartered by GSUSA to provide Girl Scouting locally, Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council is a United Way affiliated agency serving more than 64,000 girl members and 18,000 adults in 25 southeast Texas counties. For more information, please visit [www.gssjc.org](http://www.gssjc.org).

## Souper Bowl of Caring - February 3, 2008

Thousands of youth from across the country will join in the fight against hunger and poverty on Super Bowl Sunday through the Souper Bowl of Caring. While participating in this movement of grace, youth learn about the magnitude of domestic and international hunger, as well as recognize that God can use them to make a positive difference in the lives of others. No matter the size of your school or congregation, you can help provide shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to the needy.

For participating churches, it's as simple as holding soup pots at church doors following worship on February 3, 2008, and asking worshippers to drop in a dollar to help people who are hungry. Schools will also join this effort and collect canned goods the week preceding the big game, January 28-February 1. Each participating

group donates 100 percent of their collection to the charity of their choice. All a group needs to do is:

REGISTER at [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org)

COLLECT donations on or near Super Bowl Sunday

REPORT your collection at [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org)

DONATE 100% of your collection to the charity of your choice.

Everyone who is registered will receive a free resource kit that includes the materials you need to plan and promote your event, including an owner's manual with step-by-step instructions and ideas and publicity posters.

In addition, if you would like to add a hands-on component to this event, your group can participate in the Service Blitz by getting out and serving at a local charity on the Saturday before the big game.







## NAZARETH ACADEMY RECEIVES LARGE DONATION FROM KNIGHTS

—Knights of Columbus Council 9088 has donated \$40,000 to Nazareth Academy in Victoria. The funds are proceeds from the K of C's 5th annual Fish For Education, Readin'-Ritin'-Reelin' fishing tournament. Nazareth Academy has been adopted as KC 9088's yearly recipient of funds raised by their fishing tournament. From left, Knights of Columbus representatives Grand Knight Bob Bryarly; Dennis Lockstedt, fishing tournament co-chair; and Bryan Ellis, fishing tournament co-chair, present the check to Scott Kloesel, Nazareth Academy principal. Good going, Knights of Columbus; congratulations, Nazareth Academy!

## HOLY FAMILY COUPLE RECEIVE PRO-LIFE AWARD

Bob Leach, Knights of Columbus District Deputy, presents the ACE award to Paul and Marjorie Tasin. The ACE award stands for Pro-Life without Apology, without Compromise, and without Exception. The ACE pin is a set of wings with two baby's feet set in the middle and is given once a year, to only one member of a K of C council and his wife for Pro-Life work accomplished. The award was presented to the Tasins before the Holy Family Council 9088 business meeting recently.



## 9th Annual Bishop Fellhauer Christmas Dinner raises funds and friendships

By Debbie Vanelli, director Youth & Young Adult Ministry

The tables were set, the room was beautifully decorated and the air smelled of mouth-watering beef tenderloin as the group of eighty-six jovial and hungry attendees arrived for the ninth annual Bishop Fellhauer Christmas Dinner.

The dinner was an opportunity to renew old friendships, make new friends and raise money for the much anticipated, and soon to arrive, multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center.

The evening began very appropriately with Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Fellhauer, and then it was on to the dining area where a feast for the eyes and palate awaited the revelers. The delicious food for this event was catered by John Welder, owner of Alimento Catering. Soon the crowd erupted into Christmas carols, led by Jerry Uptmor. Wait-staff, also known as youth directors

The undertaking of putting on such a beautiful event could not have been possible without a considerable amount of support. Special thanks go to Ron Friedel, director of the Spiritual Renewal Center, Gayla Whitaker, Yolanda Suniga, Will Wearden, and Mike and Lydia Craig; youth directors of the Diocese of Victoria (wait staff) included JoAnn Martinez, Joe and Julia Ortega, Jose and Kim Ortega, Michael



Debbie enjoys playing "Santa" delivering the first doorprize to Aaron Wieland.

of the diocese, scurried around to attend to everyone's needs during the meal. After everyone sat blissfully satisfied, following the multi-course indulgence, Bishop Fellhauer reported on the progress of the construction of the buildings at the center and of the generosity of the people of the diocese who helped make this dream a reality.

and Linda Beard, Wendy Egert, and Debbie and Michael Vanelli.

Mark your calendars for next year's dinner, as the date is already set for December 13, 2008, with opening Liturgy slated to be held in the newly renovated Chapel!



Mike Beard, Julia and Kim Ortega and Mike Vanelli sing "Silent Night" along with their guests.



**EL CAMPO CDA AND KC MEMBERS ARRESTED FOR MDA**—Members from St. Robert Bellarmine Knights of Columbus and Catholic Daughters joined together December 14 for Jerry Lewis' Kids. Warrants were issued for their arrest; they were picked up in a limousine and driven to Pincher's Express on the freeway handcuffed and had their mug shots taken, all for a good cause to raise money to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Pictured are (right) Hector Gutierrez, KC member of Bishop Alfredo Galindo Knights of Columbus No. 9393, and (left) Terri Beltran, Regent for Catholic Daughters Court No. 2275. Terri also serves as State District Deputy No. 14 and State Youth/JCDA Chairman. Together they raised over \$2,000.



Groundbreaking has begun for the new multipurpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center. It will be located between the Nazareth building and the chapel.



Construction workers remove logs from the Spiritual Renewal Center chapel bell tower.

## Renovations to Spiritual Renewal Center continue

As of December 29, 2007, the renovation of the chapel at the Spiritual Renewal Center has progressed to the point where all of the old walls have been removed. The addition to the north side of the chapel has been dried in and the rear addition is almost complete. The workers are now removing the logs from the bell tower. After these logs are removed and the new slab is poured for the south side addition, the south side and then the front of the chapel will be dried in. By the end of January, weather permitting, the chapel should be fully framed and protected from the elements.

Over the Christmas and New Year holidays, groundbreaking of the long-awaited multi-purpose building began. The building should be completed in about 14 months. The multi-purpose building will house the meeting rooms and the kitchen for the center.





## Sacred Heart's many blessings

Bishop Fellhauer, escorted by two Knights of St. Gregory, came to Sacred Heart Church and School in Hallettsville on December 14 to bless improvements made to the facilities as part of the church's 125th anniversary celebration.

Following the celebration of the 8:05 a.m. school Mass, the bishop blessed the new restroom addition to the church; the Dickson-Allen Activity Center (a gym for Sacred Heart elementary students), accomplished mainly through the Dickson-Allen Foundation; the basketball goals in the activity center donated by Mr. Vic Roeber; the Sisters' Convent, a new residence that houses two sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament at the present time; and new playground property for Sacred Heart pre-k, which was donated in memory of Hilbert and Agnes Bludau by Lois Nelson and Imelda Orsak.



New Restroom Addition—Bishop Fellhauer blesses new addition to church.



Basketball Goals—David Smolik, Victor Roeber and Father John Peters



Activity Center—Jessie Allen, Dickson-Allen Foundation Trustee; Deacon Sonny Rogers, Knight Jack Klesel, Bishop Fellhauer, Knight George Bujnoch and Father John Peters



New Sisters' Convent—Pictured from left is Sister Evelyn Korenek, IWBS general superior; Sister Collette Kouba, Sister Emiliana Grafe, Sister Lois Marie Etzler (all IWBS Sisters); Bishop David Fellhauer, Father John Peters, pastor of Sacred Heart; Deacon Sonny Rogers, Knights of St. Gregory George Bujnoch and Jack Klesel.



New pre-k property—Pickle Cash, David Smolik, Sacred Heart Catholic School principal; Bishop David Fellhauer, Erin Warzecha, Debi Bludau, Father John Peters and the Sacred Heart Catholic School pre-kindergarten class.



**ST. MARY PARISH IN NADA HOLDS CHRISTMAS PLAY**—St. Mary's Youth presented their Christmas Play, "Mary's First Christmas" on Sunday evening, December 16, in the parish hall. Rev. Anthony Boateng-Mensah, one of the diocese's most recent missionary priests from Ghana, tells Santa Claus what he wants for Christmas. The Nada Knights of Columbus provided goodie bags for all the children who participated in the Christmas Play.



Acolytes and their spouses are pictured with Bishop Fellhauer at St. Joseph Parish in Moulton. From left to right: Milburn Kram and wife, Marian; Patrick Kubala and wife, Becky; Bishop David; Joseph Machacek and wife, Mary; and Joseph Ramos and wife, Letisia.

Bishop Fellhauer and candidates pose at St. Joseph Parish. From left to right: Kenneth Fishbeck, William Briscoe, Bishop David; Larry Koether and Jerry Timm.



## Catholic Schools Week 2008 January 27 - February 2



The 2008 theme is:  
*Catholic Schools Light the Way*

*National Appreciation Day For Catholic Schools is  
Wednesday, January 30*

## Men preparing to be ordained as permanent deacons in the diocese

MOULTON—On Sunday, Dec. 9, 2007, Bishop David E. Fellhauer admitted four aspirants to candidacy. Four others who had already been installed as lectors became acolytes at the same ceremony at St. Joseph's Church in Moulton. The new acolytes are: Milburn Kram of St. Joseph in Moulton, Patrick Kubala of St. John in New Taiton, Joseph Machacek of Sts. Cyril & Methodius in Shiner and Joseph Ramos of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Bay City.

Their next step on the journey will be ordination to the diaconate.

The four candidates are: Kenneth Fishbeck of St. Joseph in Moulton, William Briscoe of St. Michael in Weimar,

Larry Koether of Holy Cross in Bay City and Jerry Timm of Sacred Heart Church in Hallettsville.

These men, after having been through a period of discernment as aspirants will now formally begin their preparation for the diaconate. In the next four years they will undergo academic, spiritual and pastoral formation as part of their preparation.

For information about the Permanent Diaconate Program of the Diocese of Victoria contact: The Permanent Diaconate Office, c/o St. Joseph's Church, P. O. Box 399, Moulton, TX 77975; or call: (361) 596-4674.





A visit from the Christ Child

Help put Christ back in Christmas – a revised version of the Clement Moore poem, “A Visit from St. Nick.”

By F. R. Duplantier – National Director, Membership & Technology Services  
National Council of the United States Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc.

Twass the morning of Christmas, when all through the house  
All the family was frantic, including my spouse;  
For each one of them had one thing only in mind,  
To examine the presents St. Nick left behind.

The boxes and wrapping and ribbons and toys  
Were strewn on the floor, and the volume of noise  
Increased as our children began a big fight  
Over who got the video games, who got the bike.

I looked at my watch and I said, slightly nervous,  
“Let’s get ready for church, so we won’t miss the service.”  
The children protested, “We don’t want to pray:  
We’ve just got our presents, and we want to play!”

It dawned on me then that we had gone astray,  
In confusing the purpose of this special day;  
Our presents were many and very high-priced  
But something was missing — that something was Christ!  
I said, “Put the gifts down and let’s gather together,  
And I’ll tell you a tale of the greatest gift ever.

“A savior was promised when Adam first sinned,  
And the hopes of the world upon Jesus were pinned.  
Abraham begat Isaac, who begat Jacob,  
And through David the line went to Joseph, whereat  
This carpenter married a maiden with child,  
Who yet was a virgin, in no way defiled.

“Saying ‘Hail, full of Grace,’ an archangel appeared  
To Mary the Blessed, among women revered:  
The Lord willed she would bear — through the Spirit — a son.  
Said Mary to Gabriel, ‘God’s will be done.’

“Now Caesar commanded a tax would be paid,  
And all would go home while the census was made;  
Thus Joseph and Mary did leave Galilee  
For the city of David to pay this new fee.

“Mary’s time had arrived, but the inn had no room,  
So she laid in a manger the fruit of her womb;  
And both Joseph and Mary admired as He napped  
The Light of the World in his swaddling clothes wrapped.

“Three wise men from the East had come looking for news  
Of the birth of the Savior, the King of the Jews;  
They carried great gifts as they followed a star –  
Gold, frankincense, myrrh, which they’d brought from afar.

“As the shepherds watched over their flocks on that night,  
The glory of God shone upon them quite bright,  
And an angel explained the intent of the birth,  
Saying, ‘Glory to God and His peace to the earth.’

“For this was the Messiah whom prophets foretold,  
A good shepherd to bring his sheep back to the fold;  
He was God become man, He would die on the cross,  
He would rise from the dead to restore Adam’s loss.

“Santa Claus, Christmas presents, a brightly lit pine,  
Candy canes and spiked eggnog are all very fine;  
Let’s have fun celebrating, but leave not a doubt  
That Christ is what Christmas is really about!”

The children right then put an end to the noise,  
They dressed quickly for church, put away all their toys;  
For they knew Jesus loved them and said they were glad  
That He’d died for their sins, and to save their dear Dad.

FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

CHRISTMAS

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

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

ANGELS	HEROD	PRESENTATION
ANNUNCIATION	HOLY SPIRIT	SHEPHERD
BETHLEHEM	HOMAGE	STAR
CENSUS	INCARNATION	VISITORS
EMMANUEL	MAGI	WISE MEN

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Alene Hubenak of Holy Family Parish in Wharton is the December Family Puzzle Contest winner and will receive Richard Barry’s *The Shepherds’ Prayer – A Christmas Novel*. This is a wonderful book, and I recommend everyone who played the contest to purchase it by going to [www.christmasbook.com](http://www.christmasbook.com).

Cody Ognoskie (14 years), of Holy Cross Parish in East Bernard is the winner of the youth Puzzle Contest. He will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

Thank you to everyone, especially the youth, who entered the contest this month. We had a lot of contestants!

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number (just in case we’ve got a question about the entry) and parish name by Jan. 31, 2008, to: Family Contest, The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age.

“Joshua’s Family” book to be  
Puzzle Contest Prize

“Joshua’s Family” by Joseph Girzone is the long-awaited prequel to Joseph Girzone’s bestselling series, which has sold more than five million books in the United States.

Millions of readers around the world have followed the story of the gentle woodcarver and carpenter who was first introduced in 1983 in Joseph Girzone’s beloved parable, *Joshua*. In *Joshua’s Family* (Doubleday; \$19.95), Girzone travels back to a year in young Joshua’s childhood, beginning with the poor family’s move to a small town named Shadybrook. Although this book is a good introduction to the series, fans will be especially moved by the intimate portraits of the mother and father who nurtured Joshua and of the friends and neighbors who viewed the unusually precocious child with an uneasy balance of wonder and skepticism.

Joshua’s extraordinary nature and mysterious gifts come to light even as he participates in the ordinary routines

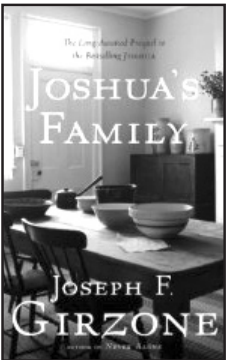
of small-town life: his gentleness and loving spirit imbue his interactions with contemporaries and adults alike. As he grows from child to adolescent, Joshua gradually awakens to the knowledge that he has been placed on earth for a special reason. But even this idyllic small

town cannot keep some of the troubles of the world at bay, and Joshua must decide whether or how he should use the gifts given to him.

As Joshua grows in his relationship to his “Father in heaven,” he will begin to teach others how the powers of love, tolerance, and understanding can heal the divisions in the human family and bring everlasting peace to the world.

This book’s powerful message is a much-needed antidote to the difficulties in today’s world.

Joshua’s Family will be the January Family Puzzle Contest prize. Please fill out contest and send in to *The Catholic Lighthouse* by January 31.



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God of love, in our darkness your presence comes to kindle  
an inner flame. On the day of the Epiphany, we are able  
to realize that it is not ourselves who create that source  
of light, but your Holy Spirit, who dwells deep within us.

Praying in Silence of Heart  
Brother Roger of Taizé





## Parish Diary

By Father Peter J. Daly  
Catholic News Service



### Breakfast with Santa

Breakfast with Santa. What is it with having breakfast with Santa?

This year our parish will sponsor three or four breakfasts with that merry giver of gifts and promoter of sales, Santa Claus.

We used to have Communion breakfasts -- breakfast with Jesus. Now we have breakfast with Santa.

Don't get me wrong. I am 100 percent in favor of helping needy children, especially at Christmas. I want their celebration of Christmas to be joyful. Our parish always participates in the community "giving tree." We buy gifts for more than 200 needy children in our community, more than any other church in our county.

But, like many parishes, we have had an increasing emphasis on "breakfast with Santa" around Christmas.

We sponsor one for the children born through the local crisis-pregnancy center. We have another one for Girl Scouts. This year we even hosted a breakfast with Santa for the local motorcycle clubs. There were 150 motorcycles in the parking lot. Santa arrived on a red motorcycle. Cool.

Even the Knights of Columbus sponsor a breakfast with Santa. They give gifts to children of Knights.

So what is my problem with all of this breakfasting with Santa? Three things bother me.

First, we are promoting Santa and forgetting Jesus in all of this. Our children come away thinking that Christmas is about Santa Claus and getting stuff.

We cannot lament the fact that Christ is not in Christmas if the churches don't even keep him there.

Above all, it seems to me the Knights of Columbus should be sensitive to this. After all, they are the ones who have the "Keep Christ in Christmas" campaign. How can we expect Wal-Mart to keep Christ in Christmas if we don't?

Second, we are promoting materialism as the spirit of Christmas.

Young people are taught that Christmas is about getting stuff. The high point of these breakfasts is a merry romp through piles of gifts. While most of them who come to these events are needy, some are just middle class children who already receive too much stuff for Christmas.

Third, all this breakfasting with Santa stretches out the Christmas season. Our celebrations begin earlier every year. The bikers' breakfast with Santa was on Nov. 17 this year. Since when does the Christmas season begin before Thanksgiving?

I've wondered what to do about this phenomenon of breakfast with Santa. I raised it with our pastoral council. Some people thought I was the "Grinch" who stole Christmas. Others agreed with me.

In reflecting, I've come up with three guidelines for children's Christmas gift-giving celebrations in our parish:

First, Christmas celebrations must be in the Christmas season. By that I mean between the feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6) and Epiphany (Jan. 6). One month is plenty. I want no dragging Christmas into November just because the stores already have their decorations up.

Second, gift-giving events must be focused on the needy, not the greedy. We should be inviting children who otherwise would not be receiving gifts. We have to be delicate in how we do this. I prefer anonymous giving.

Third, every Christmas event for children must have some reference to the birth of Jesus. A manger scene should be set up. There must be a religious Christmas carol sung (not Jingle Bells). There must be a prayer said by everyone there.

Maybe we should even require that St. Nick come dressed as a bishop!

### Tracing the traditions

### From magic to star-gazing – tracing the message of the Magi.

By Patricia Kasten with [www.tri-c-a-publications.com](http://www.tri-c-a-publications.com)

"Dear Wisemen, Why did you give frankincense, gold and myrrh to such a small baby? Jesus' family needed food, clothing and shelter. Why didn't you take the family home and give them those things?"

Morgan, a fifth grader at a Catholic school in northern Wisconsin, sent this question to me as part of a Christmas essay contest. It's a practical question about the Nativity and the Gospel readings of the season.

Who were the wise men and why did they bring those gifts?

With the popularity of Harry Potter, many children (and adults) have been introduced to a world of magic. As Christians, we don't believe in flying broomsticks and spells, but we do believe in a little bit of magic -- at least in the parent word for magic, the Greek magus, that gave us the word "Magi". The Greeks got the word from ancient Persia -- the home area of the three Wise Men in Matthew's Gospel. Magus not only gave us the word "magic" and "Magi," but also "machine."

In Persia, magi were a class of astrologer-priests whose work

was to study the stars and interpreted any signs they saw in the heavens. Just such a sign led the Magi to Bethlehem because "we have seen his star in the east" (Mt 2:2).

The wise men followed a star, but bring gold, frankincense and myrrh?

Each of these gifts was expensive and much prized in Jesus' time. Gold we can understand. But we may not know that frankincense and myrrh were also worth their weight in gold back then. However, while these expensive items could have provided wealth for the Holy Family, it is more likely that the Magi's gifts have a symbolic meaning in the Gospel. As such, they teach us more about Jesus himself than the Magi.

#### Gold

Gold has been associated with kings since ancient times. It was the most precious metal known to the ancient world and, because it does not tarnish, gold was also used in worship. In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant was made of pure gold. So the Magi's gift of gold honors the eternal and divine king, present in the human Jesus.

#### Incense

Frankincense, a rare trade spice in ancient times, comes from the resin from a group of trees, (the Boswellia) that grow in Africa, India and the Middle East. The trees resemble our North American mountain ash. To harvest frankincense, sap is



tapped and left to harden on the tree for several months before being collected.

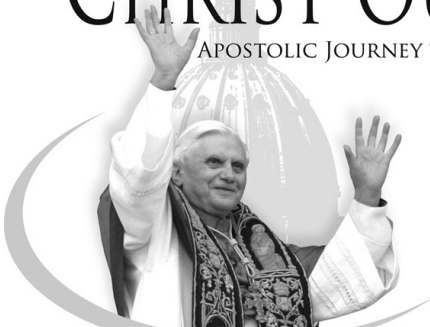
Frankincense was burned to celebrate Roman victories and for worship in Babylon, Persia and ancient Israel, which burned frankincense as a prayer offering. In Mosaic Law, frankincense was a key ingredient of the incense burned before the Holy of Holies (Ex. 30: 34-38).

Frankincense is still a common ingredient in the incense used during the Mass, and grains

### Sunday readings from Jan. 13 to Feb. 24

January 13 — The Baptism of the Lord	Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10, 11b Acts 10:34-38 Matthew 3:13-17
January 20 — Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 49:3, 5-6 Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 John 1:29-34
January 27 — Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 8:23 — 9:3 Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17 Matthew 4:12-23
February 3 — Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13 Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Matthew 5:1-12a
February 6 — Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12-18 Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14, 17 2 Corinthians 5:20 — 6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
February 10 — First Sunday of Lent	Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7 Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11
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

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



**2008 Papal Visit**  
**April 15-20**

of incense are embedded in the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil. Using incense symbolizes both our unceasing prayers and Jesus' role as our eternal High Priest.

#### Myrrh

Myrrh also comes from gum resin, this time from shrubs in Africa and Arabia. It is harvested like frankincense and was used by ancient Egyptians as a perfume and in cosmetics, as well as for burial rituals. Across the ancient world, myrrh was used medicinally, and it was offered to Jesus to deaden the pain of his crucifixion.

Myrrh was a main ingredient in the anointing oil of Israel (Ex 30: 22-33). To make this oil, 12.5 pounds of myrrh were mixed in a gallon of olive oil, along with cassia, cinnamon and other spices. This oil was used to anoint the altar in the Temple, the altar vessels and the High Priest. It was also used to anoint Israel's kings.

Myrrh is associated with love and is mentioned in both Psalm 45 (a royal marriage song) and the Song of Songs. It was also, in

John's Gospel, one of two main ingredients of the 100-pound embalming mixture brought by Nicodemus to anoint Christ's body.

Myrrh, with its links to passion, death and healing, symbolizes the role of prophet -- a role that, in ancient Israel, often brought hardship, if not death, to those who proclaimed God's Word. When linked to Jesus, myrrh reminds us that he is the Word of God.

King, priest and prophet. These are the three roles of Jesus, both during his life on earth and through all eternity. And the gifts of the Magi, recorded by Matthew, should remind us of that.

St. Irenaeus, in the second century, said the Magi's gifts revealed Jesus' true identity: "myrrh, because it was He who should die and be buried for (us); gold, because he was a King ... and frankincense, because he was God" (Against Heresies).

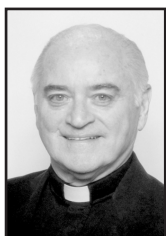
We, too, are called to imitate Jesus and be priestly, prophetic and royal people. It's a lot of work. It takes a lot of wisdom. But there's nothing magical about it. We just need to follow our Star.





## Spirituality for Today

By Father John Catoir  
Catholic News Service



### Christmas, and the divinity of Christ

Every Christmas we have the opportunity to reaffirm our faith in the Lord. The secularization of the Christmas holiday has weakened the faith of many. However, to the rescue comes Pope Benedict XVI with his new book, "Jesus of Nazareth." It is a beautifully written defense of the divinity of Jesus.

The pope makes the Incarnation the central issue in every part of the Gospel. The joy of the Christmas season is based on the belief that God came to us in the form of man: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk 19:10). "For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven. ... He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man" (The Nicene Creed).

Modern secular Scripture scholars have challenged this mystery for decades, treating the texts solely as literary works and discarding the faith perspective in their interpretations.

They distinguish between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, saying that the Scriptures have often reflected later influences coming from the faith of the Gospel writers, not from

actual firsthand witness.

Demythologizing the Scriptures is a legitimate study, but it goes off track when it contradicts the truths of revelation.

In his book, Pope Benedict demonstrates the limitations of the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture and insists that there is a need for a fuller, more integrated theological perspective in order to supplement the exegeses.

Pope Benedict XVI sees no difference between the Christ of faith and the historical person of Jesus. In unifying the two he presents a simple, integrated view of the person of Jesus, and even refers to the kingdom of God as Jesus Christ personified.

The Holy Father says, "This book is not meant to be a pronouncement of the magisterium. ... It is my personal search 'for the face of the Lord.'"

One of my favorite passages is when Pope Benedict cites the Lord's disagreements with the authorities of the time. Here Jesus uses the expression "I am," which means "Yahweh."

It was a bold assertion of his mission and his divinity, and the

Pharisees saw it as such. They considered it pure blasphemy and became infuriated. Shortly afterward they began planning Jesus' crucifixion.

Pope Benedict also shows how Jesus was called the Logos (the Word) in St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (1:1,14).

This means that God is fully manifested and glorified in the person of the historical Jesus, right from his infancy in Bethlehem.

The importance of Pope Benedict's book cannot be overestimated. It restores the simplicity of the Christmas story to its traditional place in the history of Christianity.

"Jesus of Nazareth" already has its opponents. Father Joseph S. O'Leary, an English literature teacher at Sophia University in Tokyo, said this about the book's impact: "A whole century of New Testament scholarship will now have to be radically corrected, and largely jettisoned" (National Catholic Reporter, 9/27/07).

Doctrinal teachings about the divinity of Jesus in the fourth century were all based on the faith of the primitive Christian community expressed in the New Testament. The message has always been the same and quite simple; namely, we are destined for eternal life. To get there we all need to acknowledge our dependence upon Jesus as Lord, who said, "Without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

### Document reminds Catholics of duty, right to share Gospel with others

*Continued from p. 1*

religions with the desire to lead others to faith in Christ.

When talking with members of other religious traditions, "Christians must try to discover the action of the Holy Spirit, that is, the 'seeds of truth,' as the Second Vatican Council called them," that are present in those religions, he said. At the same time, one must try "to lead them, without any superiority complex, to a full understanding of the truth in Jesus Christ."

"Even if the various non-Christian religions possess seeds of truth planted in them by the Holy Spirit and the people who follow them may be saved, that does not mean that the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ is irrelevant. It is our task to help the seeds of truth grow so that they find their fullness in Christ," Cardinal Dias said.

Nigerian Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments and also a member of the doctrinal congregation, told reporters, "The sharing of our Catholic faith with others who do not yet know Christ should be regarded as a work of love, provided that it is done with full respect for their human dignity and freedom."

"Indeed, if a Christian did not try to spread the Gospel by sharing the excellent knowledge

of Jesus Christ with others, we could suspect that Christian either of lack of total conviction of the faith or of selfishness and laziness in not wanting to share the full and abundant means of salvation with his fellow human beings," Cardinal Arinze said.

Archbishop Angelo Amato, secretary of the doctrinal congregation, said the document is a practical follow-up to the 2000 document "Dominus Iesus," on the uniqueness of Christ and universal salvation in him.

Despite the 2000 document's insistence on the importance of proclaiming salvation in Jesus Christ alone, he said, "there still exists a coolness toward missionary activity" in many parts of the church.

In addition, he said, the document is an affirmation of the right and duty of Catholics to share their faith with others who ask to know more, whether those asking belong to other religions or to other Christian communities.

He said that when non-Catholics are free to minister to their members in predominantly Catholic countries, it only makes sense that the Catholic Church would have the same right to offer pastoral care to Catholics in predominantly non-Catholic countries.

Besides China, where all religion is restricted, and some Muslim countries where Chris-

tians cannot openly practice their faith, the issue also involved some parts of the former Soviet Union, where the Russian Orthodox Church has accused the Catholic Church of proselytism, or trying to convince members of the traditionally Orthodox population to become Catholic.

The document said: "The mission of the church is universal and is not restricted to specific regions of the earth. Evangelization, however, is undertaken differently according to the different situations in which it occurs."

Asked specifically about the Russian Orthodox claims, Cardinal Levada said, "Especially in a country like Russia where there were long years of atheistic communism, one must respect the sensitivity of the Orthodox, who are concerned about rekindling Christianity in the life of their people."

While some evangelical groups have launched proselytism campaigns in Russia, he said, the Catholic Church is there to offer pastoral care to Catholics.

"We do not proselytize, but it can happen that someone has an encounter with the Catholic faith and wants to join the Catholic Church," the cardinal said. In such situations, the Catholic Church must respect the individual's conscience and help him or her to follow it.

## THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope  
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

### Pope says Christmas message of peace is sorely needed

By John Thavis Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI welcomed Christmas as a "day of great hope" and said its message of peace is sorely needed in a world beset by war, poverty and injustice.

In his Christmas day blessing delivered from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, the pope appealed for an end to "the grim sound of arms" in Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Sudan's Darfur and other "crisis situations that are frequently forgotten."

"May the child Jesus bring relief to those who are suffering and may he bestow upon political leaders the wisdom and courage to seek and find humane, just and lasting solutions," he said.

The night before, celebrating midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said Christmas should be experienced as a feast of "restored creation" in a spoiled and polluted world.

That will happen when modern men and women make time and space for God, he said.

In the message accompanying his "urbi et orbi" blessing to the city of Rome and to the world, the pope emphasized that Christ's gift of hope and salvation is offered to all peoples, especially those suffering from oppression and lack of basic rights.

"It is the most vulnerable members of society -- women, children, the elderly -- who are so often the victims of brutal armed conflicts, terrorism and violence of every kind, which inflict such terrible sufferings on entire populations," he said.

"At the same time, ethnic, religious and political tensions, instability, rivalry, disagreements, and all forms of injustice and discrimination are destroying the internal fabric of many countries and embittering international relations," he said.

He also cited the rising number of refugees and evacuees from natural disasters, often caused by "alarming environmental upheavals."

The birth of Christ brought a healing message of peace to the world, the pope said. But to receive it, faith and humility are required, he said.

"Who has time to listen to his word and to become enfolded and entranced by his love?" he asked.

In his midnight Mass homily, the pope asked a series of similar questions: "Do we have time for our neighbor who is in need of a word from us, from me, or in need of my affection? For the sufferer who is in need of help? For the fugitive or the refugee who is seeking asylum?"

"Do we have time and space for God? Can he enter into our lives? Does he find room in us, or have we occupied all the available space in our thoughts, our actions, our lives for ourselves?" he said.

Yet while the reality of a closed world can be seen daily, "God does not allow himself to be shut out," the pope said. He finds a space, "even if it means entering through the stable," he said.

The pope noted a medieval tradition of Nativity scenes depicting the stable as a crumbling palace, whose former splendor has gone to ruin. The "new palace" brought by Christ is built not on royal power but on self-giving love, he said.

The pope also outlined an environmental theme implicit in the church's celebration of Christmas.

He cited St. Anselm of Canterbury, who in the Middle Ages "in an almost prophetic way, once described a vision of what we witness today in a polluted world whose future is at risk: 'Everything was as if dead, and had lost its dignity.'"

Likewise, he said, Gregory of Nyssa, a theologian of the fourth century, saw the place of Christ's birth, a rundown stable, as the symbol of an "ill-treated world."

"What would he say if he could see the state of the world today, through the abuse of energy and its selfish and reckless exploitation?" the pope said.

Christ "came to restore beauty and dignity to creation, to the universe," he said, and in this sense "Christmas is a feast of restored creation."

"Heaven does not belong to the geography of space, but to the geography of the heart. And the heart of God, during the holy night, stooped down to the stable," he said.

"The humility of God is heaven. And if we approach this humility, then we touch heaven. Then the earth too is made new," he said.

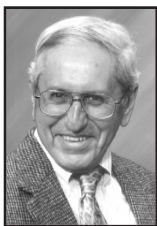
The Mass included prayers of the faithful in five languages, including a prayer for peace in Arabic.





## Buscando Vida

Por Moises Sandoval  
Servicio Noticiero Católico



### El mejor regalo que podemos darle a nuestros hijos

Apenas había terminado un taller de fin de semana en Goshen, Ind., sobre la historia y misión de los hispanos en los Estados Unidos cuando se acerco una mujer con ojos tristes de color café.

Suplicó, “Ayúdenme”.

Dijo que se había divorciado hace 10 años y tenía dos hijos y una hija.

El primero parecía haber superado una juventud muy difícil. Pero el segundo se había metido en drogas y causado tanta dificultad que se sintió obligada a correrlo de la casa. La hija había abandonado el hogar cuando cumplió 14 años.

“Siento que tengo una misión hacia mi familia”, dijo. “¿Qué es?”

Habían sido dos días duros y no hallaba las palabras para contestarle. Por fin, pensando de cómo el amor y las oraciones de la madre de San Agustín habían redimido a su hijo, le dije que su misión era continuar amando y orando por sus hijos, jamás perdiendo la esperanza de que un día volverían a la rectitud.

Lo que me más me impactó de esa mujer fue que sola se sentía. Todo el peso de crear a sus hijos estaba sobre sus hombros estrechos.

Cuando yo era niño en una remota comunidad rural en Nuevo México, crear los hijos era tarea de todos. Por supuesto, primero era el trabajo del padre y la madre, pero también de los abuelos, tíos, tías, primos, hermanos mayores y, de hecho, la responsabilidad de toda la comunidad. Todo el mundo siempre estaba enseñando, corrigiendo, y animándonos, siempre vigilando que no nos metiéramos en dificultades.

Tales lugares todavía existen. En un reciente reportaje en el New York Times, Joe Drape escribe de Smith Center, un pueblo de 1,931 habitantes en el norte de Kansas, y su extraordinario equipo de fútbol americano, ganador de 51 partidos consecutivos.

“Lo que hacemos muy bien aquí es crear jóvenes”, dijo el entrenador Roger Barta. “De hecho, lo hacemos tan bien — estoy hablando de los padres y de la comunidad — que los jóvenes salen de aquí a estudiar y ganan éxito. ... Claro, aquí nos gusta el fútbol, pero de veras creemos que se requiere todo el pueblo para crear a un hijo, y eso vale mucho más”.

Después de cada partido, los hijos se pasean por la calle principal, pero las madres y padres, tías y abuelos, están cerca vigilando alertamente, Drape reportó. En nuestra sociedad móvil y fragmentada, con la mitad de los matrimonios terminando en divorcio, pocos niños tienen esa experiencia.

Los hijos no brotan del vientre preparados para enfrentar los desafíos de la vida. Necesitan el tiempo y espacio para crecer, experimentar, desarrollar talentos y valores, descubrir límites, aprender a relacionarse con familia, familiares, vecinos y hasta con extranjeros.

De algún modo, todos nosotros — abuelos, maestros, pastores, vecinos y vendedores — tenemos que aceptar más responsabilidad.

Los vendedores, preocupados sólo sobre su ganancia, intimidan a los padres a comprar todo tipo de aparatos para sus hijos, en especial en esta temporada.

No me sentí totalmente satisfecho con mi respuesta a la mujer que suplicó, “Ayúdeme.”

Si hubiera habido más tiempo, le hubiera dicho mucho más. Pero al reflexionar, fue un buen comienzo.

Lo que nuestros jóvenes más necesitan de nosotros es nuestro amor, no el amor tolerante que accede a todo antojo sino el amor fuerte de altas expectativas y de nunca perder la fe que ellos pueden convertirse si han seguido malos caminos.

Ese amor no se mide por las cosas sino por el buen ejemplo que les damos.

### Retired Bishop Arzube, one of first Hispanic bishops, dies at 89

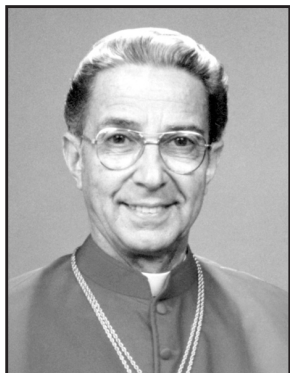
By Catholic News Service

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — A funeral Mass was held Dec. 31 for retired Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Juan A. Arzube, who died Dec. 25. He was 89.

Bishop Arzube was one of the first Hispanic bishops ordained in the United States in nearly 100 years when he was made a Los Angeles auxiliary in 1971. His involvement with various issues in the church and in the community prompted new outreach to Hispanics in the Los Angeles Archdiocese.

During his 53 years as a priest, Bishop Arzube served primarily at parishes in downtown Los Angeles and other Mexican-American communities. He was active in assorted efforts to assist immigrants, supervised the erection of a shrine at Our

Lady of Guadalupe, a mission church where he served, and supported the creation of the Episcopal Commission of the Alta Baja Bishops, for bishops from U.S. and Mexican border states.



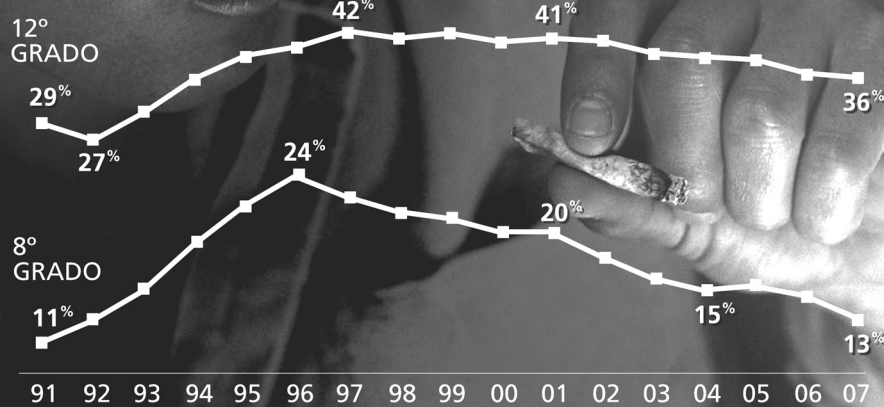
Retired Auxiliary Bishop Juan A. Arzube

Cardinal Roger M. Mahony presided at Bishop Arzube's funeral at Holy Cross Cemetery. Auxiliary Bishop Gabino Zavala gave the homily.

“Bishop Juan saw that faith and politics could not be like oil and water. They must come together,” said Bishop Zavala. “He knew that if a people's physical well-being was negatively affected by what was happening in their local neighborhoods, so was their spiritual well-being. Preaching the Gospel meant taking action and getting involved. Shepherding meant taking the lead.”

## Uso de drogas en adolescentes

Estudiantes en EE.UU. que usaron drogas ilícitas al menos una vez en los pasados 12 meses.



Fuente: Monitoring the Future study, University of Michigan

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## Sacerdotes Por Vida

Por Father Frank Pavone  
Director Nacional



### Amparo contra la ejecución

Aún los que han sido condenados a muerte pueden cambiar la historia y salvar sus vidas.

Dos prisioneros sentenciados a muerte en Kentucky han presentado un recurso que la Corte Suprema decidió analizar. En caso Baze vs. Rees, los reclusos argumentan que el método de ejecución más común, la inyección letal, viola la prohibición de los castigos crueles e inusuales que establece la octava enmienda. De hecho, por lo menos la mitad de los reclusos condenados a muerte que enfrentan ejecuciones inminentes han presentado recursos contra los químicos que se utilizan en las inyecciones letales.

El hecho que un tribunal superior haya accedido a entender en este caso ha hecho que muchos estados suspendieran las ejecuciones hasta que esto se decida durante el 2008.

No se discute la constitucionalidad de la pena de muerte, sino una cuestión específica como es el tipo de químicos que se utilizan y el método de su aplicación. En los años 80, muchos estados que aplican la pena capital cambiaron la silla eléctrica por la inyección letal, bajo el supuesto que inyectar un cóctel venenoso sería menos doloroso y más humano. Desde la reintroducción de la pena de muerte hace tres décadas, aproximadamente 900 de las 1056 ejecuciones que se realizaron hasta el 2006 fueron por inyección letal.

La inyección letal contiene tres drogas que trabajan de la siguiente manera. Primero se administra un sedante por vía intravenosa, haciendo que el recluso quede inconsciente, después se aplica un agente que paraliza los músculos respiratorios y finalmente una dosis de cloruro de potasio que causa un paro cardíaco. Sin embargo, se ha objetado este método, incluso cuando se practica adecuadamente, porque deja abierta la posibilidad que el recluso esté consciente del dolor agudo pero no pueda expresarlo a causa del efecto paralizante de la droga. Más aún, dado que en la mayoría de los estados son oficiales penitenciarios y no médicos quienes administran la dosis fatal, el riesgo de error aumenta.

Luego ¿cuál sería el nivel de riesgo de dolor innecesario que hace que esto se vuelva un “castigo cruel e inusual”? Esa es la cuestión constitucional que la Corte debe decidir.

Mientras tanto, una cuestión similar ha aparecido en años recientes con relación al dolor que se inflige en otro grupo de personas que han sido seleccionados para la muerte. En el último Congreso se presentó un proyecto de ley que permitiría la opción de darle medicamentos que reduzcan el dolor a un niño que será abortado, desmembrado 20 o más semanas después de la fertilización. Cada año se practican en los Estados Unidos solamente más de 18.000 abortos después de la 21a semana de gestación. Estos niños tampoco están en condiciones de expresar su dolor.

Un artículo publicado en 1994 en la prestigiosa revista británica de medicina, The Lancet, reveló que hay una reacción hormonal por stress en el feto. El artículo concluyó con la recomendación de utilizar analgésicos cuando se practican operaciones al feto. Los autores dijeron “esto se aplica no solamente al diagnóstico y los procedimientos terapéuticos sobre el feto, sino posiblemente también a la terminación del embarazo, especialmente por procedimientos quirúrgicos que involucren el desmembramiento.” En 1991 los asesores científicos del Consejo Médico Federal de Alemania hicieron una recomendación del mismo tenor.

¿Y qué de un recurso de amparo por las mismas razones humanitarias a favor de los niños por nacer que van a ser ejecutados?

Esta columna se puede encontrar en la página de Internet [www.priestsforlife.org/spanish/07-12-31span.htm](http://www.priestsforlife.org/spanish/07-12-31span.htm)

Si tiene algún comentario sobre esta columna escribanos a [mail@priestsforlife.org](mailto:mail@priestsforlife.org), Priests for Life, P.O. Box 141172, Staten Island, NY 10314; Tel: 888-PFL-3448, 718-980-4400; Fax: 718-980-6515; web: [www.priestsforlife.org](http://www.priestsforlife.org)

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### Enero 26-27

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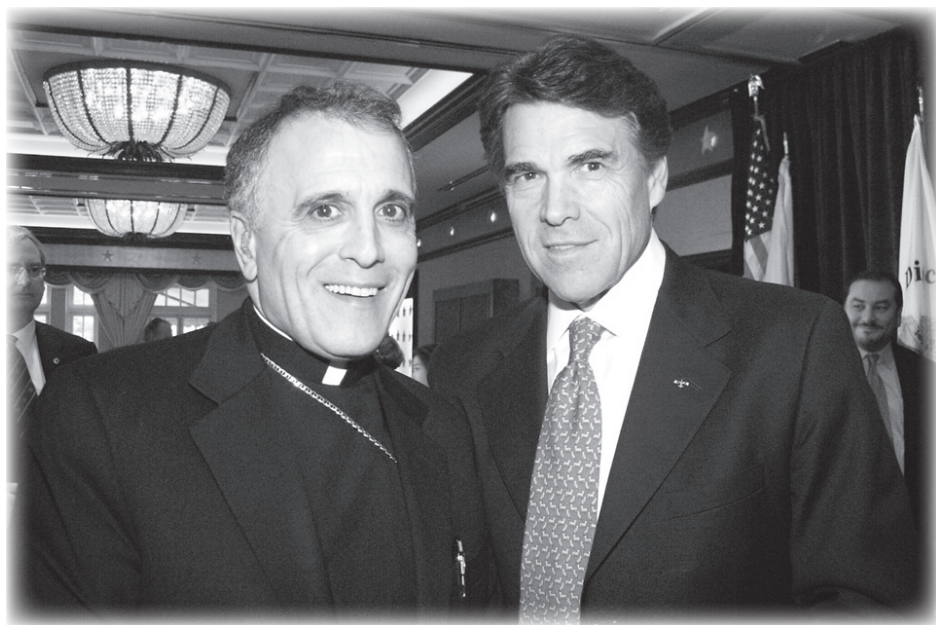


Photo by Cynthia Brewer

Newly elevated Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, archbishop of the Houston-Galveston Diocese, was honored by Governor Rick Perry of Texas, at a private luncheon at Intercontinental Stephen F. Austin Capitol Ballroom Wednesday, December 12, 2007. Cardinal DiNardo is Texas' first bishop to be elevated to the position of cardinal.

## Texas governor honors state's first cardinal

By Cynthia Brewer

AUSTIN—In keeping with the nation's tradition of "freedom of religion," Governor Rick Perry of Texas honored Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Texas' first cardinal, with a luncheon at the state's capitol December 12, 2007.

Over 300 statewide officers, legislators, friends, and family members attended the private luncheon at the Intercontinental Stephen F. Austin Capitol Ballroom in Austin.

"It's an honor to be here with people of faith, with a substantial number of different faith traditions," said Governor Rick Perry.

Governor Perry spoke of his faith in God, which was handed down to him by his parents, and then stated, "There are those who bristle at the notion of a public servant relying on a higher power, relying on their faith in the conduct of their office, so they quickly and frequently accuse us of violating their seemingly cherished separation of

church and state."

"In their zeal they have confused freedom of religion with freedom from religion," he continued.

"I would much rather follow a leader with a God-given moral code than one whose decisions are dictated by the whims of the ever-changing society that we live in," he said.

"I prefer the company of those whose moral codes compel them to put the needs of others ahead of their own, who understand that their resources are not truly their own, ... and those who are compelled to protect those who cannot protect themselves," he continued.

"As you walk through life, people of faith need dynamic leaders, men and women who can articulate the precepts of the divine, offer council in the midst of life's trials, rally the faithful to the aid of others. Today we are assembled to honor just such a man," the governor said.

Governor Perry said he's thoughtful of the motto of the first division, which was, 'The firstest with the mostest.'

"Your Eminence, when I hear that, I think of Texas," he said, causing the guests to respond with much laughter.

"We're a state that's kind of known for doing things bigger, better, faster; and we are honored today to welcome the first cardinal to ever reside in Texas.

This is living proof that the Catholic faith is alive and well in Texas. ... He is a blessing to our state and an inspiration to all of us," the governor said while introducing Cardinal Daniel DiNardo.

Upon taking the stage, Cardinal DiNardo said to much laughter, "Having walked into this room and looking at the (invitation) card, I knew something about Texas. It

says, 'Private Luncheon' and there're 400 people here."

He said that the luncheon was an honor and humbling to him.

"As I said on the day of the announcement," Cardinal DiNardo said, "I feel as though I should take the cardinalatial, red-hat biretta and cut it in half and give half of it to Archbishop Fiorenza, my predecessor, who really presided over the intense growth of the Catholic presence in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston and now enjoys retirement, sits back, and sees the kid from Pittsburgh get the red hat."

Through his elevation, Cardinal DiNardo said, "Pope Benedict XVI has recognized the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and the state of Texas as something crucial in understanding a dimension of Catholic dynamic presence in the world."

As the first cardinal in the South-Southwest, Cardinal DiNardo said he wants to work dutifully to be a good, strong voice for the Church and for the common good in Texas and in the region.

"I particularly want to be in communion with Pope Benedict, as he has become an increasingly important spokesperson in his first two years of office for peace and concord among nations," he said.

He said he hopes to continue to work with the public servants in Austin on the issues that are so important.

"I think I can state it all by saying we want to promote the human person in all aspects and that goes for everything from questions of health care, working conditions, immigration, but it also concerns the issues of pro-life in which myself and all the bishops in the state of Texas work so hard on."

He asked those present to pray for him as he takes on more responsibilities within the universal church.

"Honor is given to me, but I say, honor is given to the dynamic Catholic presence in the state of Texas. We are now some seven million; I think we have taken our place in terms of working for the common good of the great people of this state," he said in closing.

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## Death-row inmates caution troubled youths in new book

TOLEDO, Ohio (CNS) — Dennis Skillicorn can't change his past, but he believes he can change the future for young people in danger of repeating his mistakes by sharing his story and others like it. Using contributions from prisoners throughout the country, the 48-year-old inmate from Missouri's death row edited a book of essays, poems and artwork chronicling the choices that brought prisoners to where they are today. With the help of volunteers at a Catholic parish in the Toledo Diocese, "Today's Choices Affect Tomorrow's Dreams" is being distributed in juvenile detention facilities around the country to remind young people about the importance of their decisions. The book, written by death-row inmates and prisoners serving life-without-parole sentences, is distributed through Compassion, a nonprofit organization that produces a bimonthly newsletter written by and for death-row inmates in the United States. The book may be ordered for \$17.95 per copy, plus \$3 shipping and handling, by writing to: Compassion, 140 W. South Boundary St., Perrysburg, OH 43551. Order forms are available online at: [www.compassionondeathrow.org](http://www.compassionondeathrow.org).





Bishop John  
W. Yanta

Auxiliary  
Bishop Patrick  
J. Zurek



## Bishop Yanta retires; auxiliary bishop in San Antonio to succeed him

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Bishop John W. Yanta of Amarillo, Texas, and named Auxiliary Bishop Patrick J. Zurek of San Antonio to succeed him. Bishop Yanta, 76, also formerly served as an auxiliary bishop in the San Antonio Archdiocese and has been bishop of Amarillo since 1997. His retirement was accepted under the canon law requirement that bishops submit their resignations at age 75. The resignation and appointment were announced in Washington Jan. 3 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States. Bishop Yanta's legacy in Amarillo includes the creation of a new priestly society, the Missionaries of the Gospel of Life, dedicated to pro-life ministry. He also served as the first president of the Polish American Congress of Texas, was president of the Texas Catholic Conference of Priest Senates and organized the Polish American Priests Association. During the 2004 elections, he was one of a handful of bishops who said Catholic politicians who continue to support legal abortion after pastoral counseling should be denied Communion.

## Pro-life official praises retention of abortion limits in budget bill

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An official at the U.S. bishops' pro-life office praised the House of Representatives for its passage of an omnibus budget bill that retains the Mexico City policy barring the use of U.S. family planning funds to provide abortions overseas. "It is a victory to celebrate that the Mexico City policy was not weakened or otherwise gutted by Congress," said Deirdre McQuade, director of planning and information for the bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. President George W. Bush had pledged to veto any budget legislation that weakened his pro-life policies. He indicated he would sign the version passed by the House Dec. 17, as long as the Senate included an additional \$40 billion for troops in Iraq. After the Senate agreed to that addition Dec. 18, the House was expected to ratify the final bill Dec. 19. The Mexico City policy,

instituted in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan, was so named because it was announced at the U.N. International Conference on Population held that year in Mexico City. It was rescinded by President Bill Clinton in 1993 and reinstated by President George W. Bush in 2001 in one of his first acts as president.

## Pope establishes commission to study archives about Pope Pius XII

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has established a commission to study new archival material about the papacy of Pope Pius XII and to examine how his possible beatification would impact Catholic-Jewish relations, an Italian newspaper reported. The commission "must analyze every possible repercussion, including diplomatic ones, of the beatification," reported Andrea Tornielli in the Dec. 18 edition of *Il Giornale*. Tornielli, a reporter for the paper, also is the author of the 2007 book, "Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli: A Man on the Throne of Peter." Jesuit Father Peter Gumpel, the official charged with shepherding Pope Pius' sainthood cause through its Vatican process, told Catholic News Service Dec. 19 that the commission's work "has nothing to do with the merits of the cause; it is a diplomatic matter."

## Vatican says al- Qaida criticism of pope shows fear of dialogue

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican said recent criticism of Pope Benedict XVI by an al-Qaida leader reflected extremist fears of interreligious dialogue. Al-Qaida's deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, said in a videotape that the pope had offended Muslims and that Saudi Arabian King Abdullah Aziz should not have met with the pontiff in November. It was the first meeting between a pope and a reigning Saudi king. Asked about al-Zawahri's comments, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said Dec. 18 that the papal meeting with the Saudi Arabian leader and the ongoing dialogue between the Vatican and Muslim scholars "is a positive fact for the entire Muslim world." "The fact that these voices that explicitly want to dialogue and work for peace have a growing importance in Islam is evidently something that worries those who don't want dialogue," the Vatican spokesman said.

## Italian cardinal says it's logical to support moratorium on abortion

ROME (CNS) -- Cardinal Camillo Ruini, papal vicar for Rome, said the vast majority of Italians who hailed the U.N.



**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH SEEN AFTER MASSACRE IN KENYA**—An Assemblies of God church is seen Jan. 1 in Eldoret, Kenya, after 30 people were burned alive in the church the same day. An explosion of tribal violence over a disputed presidential election has claimed the lives of more than 300 people. (CNS photo/Reuters)

General Assembly's support for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty should think about extending the moratorium to abortion. "I think that after the happy result obtained regarding the death penalty, it might be logical to call attention to the theme of abortion," the cardinal said in a Dec. 31 television interview. Cardinal Ruini told the Canale 5 news program that the proposal for a moratorium on abortion, launched before Christmas by the Italian newspaper *Il Foglio*, was an opportunity to "stimulate, reawaken the consciences of all to help them recognize that a baby in its mother's womb really is a human being" and that abortion is the taking of a human life. Abortion in Italy is legal, in most cases, until the 24th week of pregnancy; the cardinal said at the very least Italian politicians should consider reducing the time abortion is legal, particularly because medical advances have made it possible for some fetuses delivered at 24 weeks to survive.

## English priest receives royal award for work in Northern Ireland

DUBLIN, Ireland (CNS) — An English Jesuit who left his order to become a diocesan priest in Northern Ireland has been honored by England's Queen Elizabeth II for his services to a community wrought by sectarian violence. Father Paul Symonds, a priest of the Belfast-based Diocese of Down and Connor, has served for four years in Ballymena, a predominantly Protestant town known for anti-Catholic sectarianism. Father Symonds is especially known for his work with Catholics and Protestants in Ballymena's Harryville section, where Catholics have been subjected to sustained campaigns of intimidation. As recently as the summer of 2005, Masses at Our Lady the Mother of Christ Church in Harryville

were canceled because of such intimidation. As a result of his ecumenical ministry in Ballymena, Father Symonds has been included in the 2008 list as an officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, a chivalric order established in 1917 by King George V to recognize exceptional achievement or service. The order has civil and military divisions and, as an officer of the civil division, Father Symonds is entitled to include the initials "OBE" after his surname.

## Christmas added as public holiday in Hindu-majority Nepal

KATMANDU, Nepal (CNS) — Christmas is among nine religious and ethnic feasts the Nepalese government has added to the country's list of public holidays after pressure from minority

ethnic and religious groups. The Hindu-majority country's Home Affairs Ministry announced Dec. 29 that Christmas and Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim feast that follows the fasting month of Ramadan, were among the new public holidays. "That is something to rejoice at," Bishop Anthony Sharma of Nepal told the Asian church news agency UCA News Dec. 31. "The government has finally recognized Christians' and the Catholic Church's contribution to the country." He added that he hopes the government will make Good Friday and Easter public holidays, too. Sunday is a working day in Nepal, while Saturday is the weekly holiday. With the additional holidays, the number of public holidays in the country is about 35, the bulk being Hindu festivals, including a nine-day break for Dashain, which commemorates a great victory of gods over demons.

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## Making A Difference

By Tony Magliano  
Catholic News Service



### A Christmas gift for the Holy Land

History — both ancient and contemporary — reveals that humanity has a powerful tendency toward war.

But in the first reading of the First Sunday of Advent, we heard Isaiah the prophet remind us that the way of God is peace: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

As we look around us today, however, it seems like God's way of peace is far off into the future. The sins of arrogance, nationalism, anger and selfishness continue to feed the insatiable appetite of the god of war.

Yet there's hope. Advent is the ideal time to remember that God — Emmanuel — is with us. And, therefore, all things are possible, even peace!

One hopeful sign was the recent Annapolis Conference in Maryland.

There Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert promised to "make every effort" to complete a total peace agreement by this time next year. And the Bush administration promised to be robustly engaged in the negotiations.

But a promise is one thing. Following through to its realization is yet another.

Father Jim Kofski, associate on Middle East issues for the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and a former longtime resident of Egypt and Palestine, explained to me that since Abbas is in a far weaker position than Olmert, it is essential that the U.S. be seen as a fair broker.

Father Kofski said that hundreds of Israeli military checkpoints in the occupied West Bank make normal Palestinian commerce impossible. Traveling from Ramallah to Bethlehem, for example, a journey that should take just half an hour, instead takes

several hours.

"Many people trying to reach a hospital have died waiting at the checkpoints," said Father Kofski.

Making matters worse is the Israeli separation barrier which extends into Palestinian territory.

Fair access to water is another major injustice. Israeli settlements built on top of water aquifers in the occupied West Bank are causing water levels to drop for many Palestinians. And yet Israel will not allow Palestinians to drill new wells.

Father Kofski said Catholics can help bring peace to the Holy Land by contacting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, asking her to act as a fair broker by urging Israel to return the occupied West Bank to Palestine and to dismantle most of its settlements there.

Not only is this just, but it is necessary for the creation of a connected Palestinian nation.

Also request that she urge Israel to make Jerusalem an international city and allow the Palestinians to make East Jerusalem their capitol. Ask her to urge Israel to provide fair compensation to every displaced Palestinian refugee.

Although the militant Palestinian group Hamas is hostile toward Israel, peace will not happen without their cooperation. Therefore, urge Rice to open channels of dialogue with Hamas.

Finally, ask her to insist that both Israel and a future Palestinian state guarantee full religious freedom for all.

It would also be helpful to ask your congressional delegation to urge the Bush administration to push forward on the above points.

With our persistent prayers and actions we can help Israelis, Palestinians and neighboring Arab nations finally live together in peace.

Now wouldn't that be a wonderful 2008 Christmas gift!

## Fighting Hunger: One Rice Bowl at a Time

Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl to Kick off Feb. 6

BALTIMORE—Millions of Catholics from more than 14,000 parishes, schools and community groups in the U.S. are ready to launch Operation Rice Bowl (ORB), Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) annual Lenten program, on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6. In advance of the Lenten season, CRS will send out millions of symbolic rice bowls that serve as the focal point for prayer, fasting, learning and giving.

Each Lent, participants in ORB put donations into individual cardboard bowls or rice bowls which are collected and donated to projects that alleviate hunger in 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and also the United States.

By making a small sacrifice and eating less than they normally would each week, people can donate the money they would have spent on food to support CRS' mission to fight global hunger. "Helping people in need through fasting and giving is a big component of ORB, but we also urge

people to help others through prayer and by learning about the factors causing hunger and poverty," says Beth Martin, director of Operation Rice Bowl for CRS. "Every year, we highlight the lives of people in five countries who have benefited from ORB, to demonstrate the impact these contributions can have."



Operation Rice Bowl also offers meatless meal recipes similar to those prepared in the featured countries, and an accompanying calendar and interactive Web site serve as a guide by providing daily activities, prayers and traditional recipes from Guatemala, Mali, India, Haiti and Cameroon.

Last year, Catholic Relief Services raised \$8 million through Operation Rice Bowl. Seventy five percent of the money is used to fund food security projects overseas in the areas of agriculture, water and sanitation, education, HIV and AIDS, microfinance, and mother and child health. The remaining 25 percent stay in U.S. dioceses to

support local projects like food pantries and hunger centers. In Cameroon, for example, ORB funds are used to support a local health care association providing support systems for people living with HIV. In addition to education and job training, the association teaches its members about nutrition and healthy eating

which are essential to maintaining the immune system as part of their antiretroviral treatment. Since its beginning in 1975, ORB has raised more than \$167 million to fund CRS' development projects. With participation in almost every diocese in the U.S., many communities and families have

## Hard Cases Make Bad Law

By David R. Carlin

When I was young (about a half-century ago), there was a social rule that every young man understood. It went like this: "If you get a girl pregnant, you have to marry her." One of the results of this rule was that relatively few unmarried girls got pregnant. Another was that those who did usually married the father before the baby was born.

But then American society decided that the rule was too strict. After all, a boy and a girl shouldn't get chained to one another for a lifetime simply because one day (or more likely one evening) they made a mistake. So we relaxed the rule; we relaxed it to the point where it hardly exists anymore. And what has been the result? Millions of babies have been born and grown up without a father — and it should be remembered that kids who grow up without fathers are, on average, at high risk for living troubled and unhappy lives.

Law professors have a maxim: "Hard cases make bad law." In other words, when you re-write a rule in order to accommodate special cases, the new rule is likely to be worse than the old rule. Better to stick with the old rule, imperfect though it be. A small number of people suffered under the old and "bad" rule; vast numbers suffer under the new and "improved" rule. Recently a number of New England colleges have had feelings of compassion for transgender students and the difficulty such students face when choosing a bathroom.

"What is a transgender person?" you ask. It's a person whose feeling of sexual or gender identity doesn't coincide with his/her anatomy. For example, you have a man's body but you feel you're a woman; or you have a woman's body but you feel you're a man; or, regardless of your anatomy, you don't feel like a man or a woman. Up until a few years ago I thought such individuals were mentally ill. But I am assured by America's most up-to-date and "progressive" people that this is not a mental illness. It is a perfectly natural feeling in a small percentage of any population. And if you persist in thinking of this as a mental abnormality, then YOU are the abnormal one. You suffer from a moral abnormality — bigotry.

I confess, dear reader, that I can't get used to this very up-to-date idea. But in a few years, progressives will be happy to note, old fogies like myself will be dead, and the brave new world of the future will have nobody in it except people who understand that anatomy has absolutely nothing to do with sexual identity. And perhaps they will eventually become even more progressive. Perhaps they will "discover" that species identity has nothing to do with anatomy. Your great-granddaughter, say, despite having the body of a human being, will be convinced that she's a bunny rabbit. And everybody, instead of groaning, "This girl is nuts," will exclaim, "How nice — and let's provide her with a bathroom appropriate for bunny rabbits."

Forgive my detour. Let me get

back to the compassionate New England colleges. They have solved the bathroom problem by doing away with men's rooms and women's rooms. Now everybody will use a gender-neutral bathroom. That is to say, men, women, and transgender people will all use the same restrooms.

What a splendid institutional improvement! They have improved the bathroom lot of a small (and mentally ill) fraction of the student population, and they have inflicted embarrassment and discomfort on everybody else. Well, not quite everybody else. The politically correct administrators who run many of our colleges will feel a glow of moral superiority every time they relieve themselves in a gender-neutral restroom.

The old French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain felt that we should be both compassionate and intelligent. One without the other would not do. He summed this up in a memorable phrase that we should all remember: "We must have tough minds and tender hearts."

America today suffers from what may eventually prove to be a lethal cocktail of compassion-plus-stupidity. We solve little problems that tug at our heartstrings by creating immense future problems. Hard cases make bad law.

David Carlin, a former Democratic majority leader of the Rhode Island Senate, is the author of the book "Can a Catholic Be a Democrat?" published by Sophia Institute Press. He can be reached at [drcarlin@hotmail.com](mailto:drcarlin@hotmail.com).



Church in Latin America  
Collection Will Be  
January 26-27 In Your Parish





## Personal stories of World War II Europe make the horrors more real

“Priestblock 25487: A Memoir of Dachau,” by Jean Bernard. Translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider. Zaccheus Press (Bethesda, Md., 2007). 196 pp. \$14.95.

### Reviewed by Rachele Linner Catholic News Service

To understand a period as complex as World War II and the Holocaust we need to read both trained historians and ordinary men and women. Historians provide a broad overview and an understanding of context but it is only individuals who can communicate the intimate details of what it is like to endure the suffering of mind, body and soul that is the reality of war. Personal narratives can elicit the empathy and identification that move the reader to compassion and insight. “Priestblock 25487,” while not among the central Holocaust narratives, is important in fleshing out our knowledge of those terrible years.

Luxembourgian Father Jean Bernard (1907-1994) was a prisoner in the Dachau concentration camp from May 1941 to August 1942. “Priestblock 25487” was originally published in a newspaper series

in 1945 and was loosely adapted into the acclaimed 2004 German film, “The Ninth Day.”

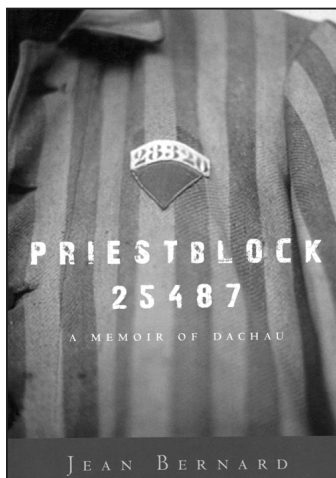
Father Bernard’s factual narrative is direct and explicit reportage and as such it gives a brutally honest recitation of what it was like to endure the clergy barracks of Dachau. It is difficult to imagine how people managed to endure these depths of misery: physical and emotional torture, starvation, disease, unceasing cold, hard physical labor and merciless guards.

Moreover, conditions could, and often did, change radically. At the whim of sadistic guards and the camp commandant, rations were cut and prisoners were assigned to more dangerous or useless work details, or forced to undergo collective punishment exercises.

Father Bernard does not offer theological reflections on his experience but in a

luminous passage he describes participating in his first Mass at Dachau. “‘Hoc est corpus meum.’ I look at the two bits of bread in my hand, and as the one for whom we are suffering all this comes into our midst, as in their hearts hundreds of priests join their offering with that of the Savior, tears roll down my cheeks. It becomes a single offering that certainly creates new ties between heaven and earth.”

It is because of his suffering that Father Bernard has the right to call on us not to forget, but to forgive. “We must forgive while remaining conscious of the full horror of what occurred, not only because nothing constructive can be built on a foundation of hatred ... but above all for the sake of him who commands and urges us to forgive, and before whom we, victims and executioners alike, are all poor debtors in need of mercy.”



### Special Collections

**Church in Latin America** — January 26-27

**Aid to Church in Europe** — Ash Wednesday, February 6

**Operation Rice Bowl** — Sundays of Lent/Easter Sunday

### 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: Feb. 1-3; April 4-6; June 27-29; Sept. 26-28; and Nov. 14-16. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 50. A date cannot be reserved for any couple unless a cashier’s check or money order is sent in the amount of \$210 for weddings being held within the Diocese of Victoria or \$265 for weddings being held outside the Diocese of Victoria. There will be a fee of \$45 for cancellation or rescheduling.

**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](mailto:register@mevictoria.org) [www.mevictoria.org](http://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](http://www.retrouvaille.org) or [www.helpourmarriage.org](http://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](http://www.beginningexperience.org); e-mail: [sanantonio@beginningexperience.org](mailto:sanantonio@beginningexperience.org); 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.actsmissions.org](http://www.actsmissions.org).

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

### Picnics, Activities, etc.

#### January

**Goliad** — Goliad State Park will present “Los Pastores — A Shepherd’s Play” at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 12. Members of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church of San Antonio will provide this historically important presentation. Come to Mission Espiritu Santo and gain a first hand perspective of what it must have been like for Native Americans getting their first look at the Spanish way of life! For more information, call Goliad State Park at (361) 645-3405. Fees are: \$3 per adult and \$2 for adult over 65. Children 12 years and under are free.

**Beasley** — Annual Chicken-Fried-Chicken Dinner Jan. 20 begins at 10:30 a.m. at St. Wenceslaus CCD building. A drive-thru for plates to go and pastry will be available. There will be a silent auction and raffle.

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

**East Bernard** — The Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Saint Bernadette 1108 will hold their annual Chicken Noodle Soup and Sandwich Supper and Raffle on Wednesday, Jan. 30, American Legion Hall, Hwy. 60. Serving begins at 5:00 p.m. till sold out. Soup is \$2 a bowl, chicken-salad sandwiches are \$2 each. Eat in or bring your own containers and enjoy at home. A large variety of pastries will be available, whole or by the slice. Raffle drawing for 76 prizes will begin at 7:00 p.m.

### Upcoming Events

**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.

**Hallettsville** — “Night in Ol’ Paris” 2008 extravaganza to benefit Sacred Heart School on Saturday, Feb. 2, at the KC Hall starting at 6:00 p.m. with a social, dinner dance; music provided by Cactus Country. Admission is \$125 per ticket (admission for two people). There will also be a silent auction. For more information and to purchase a ticket call the school at (361) 798-4251 or the rectory at (361) 798-5888.

**Victoria** — Spirit Wind Ministry’s 9th annual “Gathering of

## “Comanche Moon,” Jan. 13, 15 and 16, CBS

By John Mulderig  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — The formal establishment of the Texas Rangers in 1835 (the force had existed unofficially since 1823) marked an important milestone in the ongoing struggle between white settlers and Native American tribes in the Southwest. “Comanche Moon,” a lavish fictionalized account of the Rangers’ adventures in the years leading up to the Civil War premieres on CBS Sunday, Jan. 13, and continues Tuesday, Jan. 15, and Wednesday, Jan. 16, 8-10 p.m. CST each night.

Based on the fourth and final novel in the popular sequence by Larry McMurtry that began with “Lonesome Dove” — the first volume was made into a miniseries in 1989 — this installment follows both the professional and personal fortunes of a band of Rangers under the command of Capt. Inish Scull (Val Kilmer).

Given a number of adult thematic elements, including torture and sexual activity, this sprawling epic is only recommended for older viewers. They, however, will find “Comanche Moon” both historically balanced and dramatically engaging.

Women” retreat with Paula D’Arcy will be held at the Spiritual Renewal Center beginning Sunday evening, Feb. 10, and ending with lunch Wednesday, Feb. 13. The cost of the retreat is \$300, which in addition to Paula’s fee and travel, includes 3 nights lodging and meals. So that everyone attending has their own cabin, and to keep the retreat small and intimate, we limit the retreatant number to no more than 23. Please make your check payable to Spirit Wind Ministry and mail in c/o Susan Oakley, 103 Woodmere, Victoria, TX 77904. (There are a limited amount of small grants available.) Questions, please call: Susan Oakley (361) 576-1515; Mary Cox (361) 576-3003; Madeline Dodson (361) 573-2583; or Father Kirby Hlavaty (361) 277-9062.

**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.

**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](http://www.fullnessoftruth.org) or call 1-800-731-4500.

**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.

**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 until 5:00 p.m. with music by The Twilights. 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](http://www.olvtroop364.org).

**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** — 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) 572-9410 for more information. Anyone that 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.

**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](mailto:info@bestcatholic.com).





## Sts. Cyril and Methodius Youth Mission Trip to Mexico

SHINER—What began as two young men's desire to return to Mexico after their recent mission trip there this past summer, soon turned into a community endeavor.

Devin Pesek and Blue Hybner, freshmen students of St. Paul High School, went on a mission trip to Piedras Negras and Acuna, Mexico this past summer. Their memories of the summer trip and the poverty they witnessed enkindled in them the spirit to give to the Mexican people during this Advent season. Their enthusiasm soon spread to other students because before long there were thirteen young people signed up to go and minister to the handicapped, the orphans, and the very poor. Sister Christine Hoang, one of the three Dominican sisters in Shiner, led the initial summer trip. Sister Christine, Sister Catherine Tran, Lynette Pesek, Alisa Hybner, Sheri VanSickle and Sharon Patek accompanied the students on their recent mission on November 30 – December 2, 2007.

Devin and Blue led the students on a food drive that resulted in the collection of enough food for 150 families. Donations came from students and teachers of the parish as well as parishioners of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The students, under the guidance of Lynette Pesek and Alisa Hybner, filled boxes with five pounds of flour, two

from these families. There were expressions shared that said a thousand words. The Mexican children were overjoyed to see the students and the sweet gifts of candy that were brought for them.

During this part of the trip, all felt as true missionaries walking nearly a half-mile in mud up to the ankles. These conditions did not hinder the students because they wanted to get the food to the families. The other 100 boxes were delivered to St. Joseph Catholic Church in Acuna for later distribution to needy families.

The students also made blankets and purchased caps, gloves, and stuffed animals for orphans of a handicap clinic, Casa Bethesda Bienvenidos; and orphans of three orphanages, Casa Hogar de Nazaret Niñas, Casa Hogar de Nazaret Niños, and Casa de Hogar.

The bonding that took place between the students and the orphans was amaz-

ing. To witness the love and kindness shared by all the young people took a person back to the feeling of how it must have been in the days of the early Church when everyone shared all they had with everyone. Perhaps the most touching memories will be those of Casa Bethesda Bienvenidos, the clinic for the handicapped orphans. The ages of the orphans range from 7 to 59. Their handicaps include Down's Syndrome, autism and other psychological and physical disorders. A number of them are also confined to wheelchairs. Under the guidance of a husband and wife and a few volunteers they help care for each other. The atmosphere is one of family. The students never allowed the orphans' handicaps to stop them from sharing joy and love with them. They fed those who were unable to feed

only to find people just like us with pleasures, hopes, and dreams. These people we met left us with a wonderful experience, and a short, but significant phrase, "Que Dios te bendiga, May God bless you."

**Jessica Schwab**, "When I first became



Sister Christine Hoang, Sister Ursula, Sister Catherine Tran, Nicole Schwab, Ashley Kloesel, Jessica Schwab, Courtney Novosad, Carissa Sciba, Julie Petru, Devin Pesek, Blue Hybner, Charlie and Ben VanSickle, Allie Hoerig, Austin Whitescarver and Travis Ramos Terrell outside the Clinic for Handicapped.



Sharon Patek with child at the Casa Bethesda Bienvenidos Clinic for the Handicapped.



themselves, sang, danced and played with those who could. They also just sat and hugged those who could not participate.

The following are thoughts and feelings of some students who went

(left) Austin Whitescarver helps a young boy at the orphanage in Piedras Negras.



Courtney Novosad and Ashley Kloesel with girl at the Bethesda clinic in Piedras Negras.

pounds of rice, two pounds of pinto beans and a bottle of cooking oil.

Fifty of the boxes of food were delivered to the families who live in "paper houses" along the railroad tracks. The paper houses are constructed of wooden pallets with tin nailed to the outside to hold them together. They average approximately 12 ft. x 12 ft. or smaller and house an entire family. The students witnessed genuine appreciation

ing. To witness the love and kindness shared by all the young people took a person back to the feeling of how it must have been in the days of the early Church when everyone shared all they had with everyone.

Perhaps the most touching memories

on the trip.

**Travis Terrell Ramos**, "We left to take gifts to faceless orphans and immigrants

aware of the Mexico trip my parish was hosting my initial reaction was one of curiosity. I was interested in seeing the scenery and landscape of Mexico more than helping others. After visiting the first orphanage for the disabled I realized that the love that everyone shared for one another was stronger than the suffering they endured. Although my preliminary intentions for going to Mexico were not entirely sincere in helping others, the greatest satisfaction I received was from seeing the joy of the people and their appreciation for the little we gave them."

**Devin Pesek**, "My time spent in Mexico was the most eye-opening experience I have ever had. Seeing how we have so much and they have so little, I was just taken aback. The smallest thing that can be done for them should be done. Please pray for all of the families in these desolate conditions."

**Austin Whitescarver**, "I had already been to a border town before and I thought I would be a little more callous than the others. I was, in part right. I never wanted to cry out of pity. In fact almost the entire time we were there I was actually very happy. It helped to change your perspective about life. All of those kids, so happy with so little."

**Ashley Kloesel**, "The first place we visited was the orphanage for the disabled. It was difficult seeing the people suffer,

See Sts. Cyril and Methodius Youth, p. 9



**ST. NICK VISITS SACRED HEART CHURCH**—St. Nicholas visited Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville at all the weekend Masses December 8, 2007. The story of St. Nicholas was told, St. Nicholas, (Matthew Motal) asked questions of the children present and then distributed bags containing an orange, an apple, nuts and peppermint canes to each of the children. After Mass, everyone attending received a peppermint cane with the story of the candy cane. This was done as part of the 125th anniversary of the parish to honor the children. The chairpersons for this project were Linda Parliska, Glenda Trliceck and Tommie Claire Zimmerman.



## Presidio La Bahia Foundation grows

GOLIAD—The Presidio La Bahia Foundation continues to receive grants that will help the fort, museum and chapel to make improvements for its visitors.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded the foundation a \$5,000 grant to do an assessment of the artifacts collection at Presidio La Bahia.

This work will be done by Dr. Eileen Johnson from Texas Tech University and Mr. Jim Jobling from Texas A & M University at College Station. Mr. Jobling is the conservator who did the conservation work on all of the La Belle artifacts. Dr. Johnson is a department head at Texas Tech and oversees the artifacts collection at the university, which contains millions of artifacts. The assessment will be completed before the end of January 2008.

The other grant was a \$20,000 matching grant from the Texas Historical Commission to inventory and catalogue the collection. The other \$20,000 will come from The Presidio La Bahia Foundation. This

work will begin as soon as the assessment is completed and will take the rest of the year to complete.

The artifacts collection at Presidio La Bahia has been described as one of the most outstanding collections of cultural material in the state of Texas.

The Presidio La Bahia Foundation was established by the Presidio La Bahia advisory board in October of 2006. It was established as a money-raising foundation independent from the church, which owns the fort.

"The purpose of creating the foundation was to have an entity that could raise the money needed to accomplish those things that need to be achieved in order for our visitors to have a better experience while visiting," said Newton Warzecha.

"We have a lot going on here," he continued.

Mr. Warzecha said they have a very dedicated group of people who have worked hard to get the grants, and they will be going out for more grants this coming year.