

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



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November 2008

Prelates say both social and political steps needed to protect life

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholics are required to oppose abortion on demand and to provide help to mothers facing challenging pregnancies, the chairmen of two committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in an Oct. 21 statement.

Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, also urged Catholics to study church teaching on matters pertaining to abortion rather than rely on statements and materials from outside organizations.

The prelates' statement was released in response to two arguments that have surfaced in the abortion debate during the run-up to the Nov. 4 election.

The first maintains that the Catholic Church should accept the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on abortion as a "permanent fixture of constitutional law" and the only way to reduce abortions is through broader government support for pregnant women. The second holds that the church should focus solely on restoring recognition for unborn children's human rights and that proposals to provide life-affirming support for pregnant women distract from that effort.

"We want to be clear that neither argument is consistent with Catholic teaching," the prelates wrote. "Our faith requires us to oppose abortion on demand and to provide help to mothers facing challenging pregnancies."

Editor's Note: The full text of the joint statement can be viewed on page 2 and online at www.usccb.org/prolife/Rigali-Murphy-Joint-Statement.pdf.

GUEST COMMENTARY

By George Wesolek, director of public policy and social concerns for the Archdiocese of San Francisco

The study of "Faithful Citizenship," the U.S. bishops' statement on the formation of conscience in the political process, is helping many American Catholics to understand the role that their faith plays in this election cycle. The arguments have been furious between Catholics who believe that they cannot, in conscience, vote for Democratic Sen. Barack Obama because of his abysmal pro-abortion record and those who feel that, in conscience, they cannot vote for Republican Sen. John McCain because of his record on the war, taxes and health care.

The division in the American Catholic

Pope sends congratulatory message to Obama

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI sent a personal message to President-elect Barack Obama Nov. 5, congratulating him and offering his prayers for Obama and for all the people of the United States.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said that because the message was addressed personally to Obama the Vatican did not plan to publish it.

However, he said, the papal message opened by referring to the "historic occasion" of the election, marking the first time a black man has been elected president of the United States.

The pope congratulated Obama, his wife and family, Father Lombardi said.

"He assured him of his prayers that God would help him with his high responsibilities for his country and for the international community," Father Lombardi said.

The pope also prayed that "the blessing of God would sustain him and the American people so that with all people of good will they could build a world of peace, solidarity and justice," the spokesman said.

Asked if the pope mentioned any specific issues he was concerned about, Father Lombardi responded, "peace, solidarity and justice."

The message to Obama was sent through the office of Mary Ann Glendon, the U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, he said. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, also sent a message.

Father Lombardi said it is likely a formal message also will be sent on the occasion of Obama's Jan. 20 inauguration; in past years, the Vatican custom has been

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After November 4 ...

community is stark and deep. But Catholics will vote, hopefully in record numbers, and they will again be the deciding factor in this election.

It is time for us to look ahead to after the election. Casting our vote on Nov. 4 should not be the end of our involvement in the political process. Both political parties are in need of serious Catholic intervention. Neither party adequately reflects Catholic social teaching.

If McCain wins, Catholics who voted for him have a responsibility to influence the actions of his administration to reflect policies of economic justice. With the notion of a "free market economy" in shambles with government ownership of banks, insurance companies and the like,

Historic Election Year



U.S. PRESIDENT-ELECT ARRIVES IN CHICAGO WITH FAMILY AFTER WINNING 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION—U.S. President-elect Barack Obama arrives in Chicago to speak to supporters with his wife, Michelle, and their children, Sasha, 7, and Malia, 10, after being declared the winner of the 2008 U.S. presidential election Nov. 4. (CNS photo/Gary Hershorn, Reuters)

Church view on same-sex marriage prevails; other ballot issues fail

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In voting on 2008 ballot questions across the country, the Catholic Church view against same-sex marriage appeared headed for victory, but Catholic efforts to influence voting related to abortion, assisted suicide, embryonic stem-cell research and gambling failed.

Although the vote count on California's Proposition 8 had not been finalized by the morning of Nov. 5, the proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman appeared headed to victory by a 52 percent to 48 percent margin. Similar proposals were approved in Arizona (57 percent to 43 percent) and Florida (62 percent to 38 percent).

California is one of three states where same-sex marriage is currently allowed, and the California bishops had said the amendment would affirm "the historic,

logical and reasonable definition of marriage" without removing any benefits from other contractual arrangements such as civil unions or domestic partnerships.

But California voters rejected by a 47 percent to 53 percent margin a church-supported proposal to require parental notification, or a judicial bypass, 48 hours before a minor's abortion, and a South Dakota measure that would have banned abortions in the state, except for victims of rape and incest, also failed, 55 percent to 45 percent.

Washington became the second state in the nation to allow physician-assisted suicide with a 59 percent to 41 percent vote in favor of Initiative 1000. The state's Catholic bishops had said the proposal did not have adequate safeguards and its approval would threaten "the dignity of all human life regardless of frailty or social definitions of usefulness."

In Michigan, voters agreed by a 53 percent to 47 percent margin to expand embryonic stem-cell research and "prohibit

See Church view, p. 17

President of U.S. bishops congratulates Obama on 'historic election'

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Catholic bishops, congratulated President-elect Barack Obama on his "historic election" as the first African-American to win the White House. "The people of our country have entrusted you with a great responsibility," the cardinal said in a letter to Obama on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "As Catholic bishops we offer our prayers that God give you strength and wisdom to meet the coming challenges. The country is

See President of U.S. bishops, p. 8

See After November 4 ..., p. 16



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

Nov.	
9-13	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, general meeting, Baltimore, Maryland
14	9:00 a.m., read to Nazareth Academy students for National Young Readers' Month
16	2:00 p.m., Mass, Consecration of Associates, Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria
19	4:30 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
21	10:00 a.m., Our Lady of Victory School, Blue Ribbon celebration
23	3:00 p.m., Mass, 60th Anniversary of Ordination of Msgr. Stanley Petru, Holy Rosary Church, Hostyn. Blessing of the new Eucharistic Adoration Chapel to precede the Mass
27-28	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec.	
1	6:30 p.m., Catholic Daughters of the Americas and Knights of Columbus Council 1329, Christmas gathering, Knights of Columbus Hall, Victoria
3	6:30 p.m., The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem Christmas gathering, Victoria Country Club, Victoria
4	6:30 p.m., Knights of St. Gregory Christmas gathering, Colony Creek Country Club, Victoria
5	Noon, presentation, Serra Club, Colony Creek Country Club, Victoria
6	1:30 p.m., Sons of the Republic of Texas, Presidio La Bahia Awards, Goliad
7	6:00 p.m., Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Christmas gathering, Holy Family Church, Victoria
8	8:15 a.m., Mass, Nazareth Academy, Victoria
9	4:00 p.m., Blessing of relocated Gulf Bend Center, 6502 Nursery Drive, Victoria
12	5:30 a.m., Mañanitas and Mass, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Victoria
13	5:30 p.m., Mass and Bishop's Christmas dinner at the Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
14	9:00 a.m., Mass, Installation of Lectors, Permanent Deacon Candidates, St. Joseph Church, Moulton

Diocesan Services Appeal '08



The Harvest is waiting. The Diocesan Services Appeal needs your contribution. As the 2008 DSA winds down, we urge each of you to contribute so that this year's spiritual harvest may be complete. The need is NOW. The time is NOW. The solution is YOU. Our total pledged amount thus far is \$612,573 with \$587,187 paid-to-date.

As we approach Thanksgiving Day, let us take a moment to consider all the blessings we have received from God and how we, in turn, thank God for those blessings.

Chancery
Business Office

Stewardship Thought

"Honor the Lord with your substance and
with the first fruits of all your labors." (Prov 3:9)



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Bishops say oppose evil and do good to end abortion

Joint Statement by Cardinal Justin Rigali, Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Bishop William Murphy, Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development ~ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

October 21, 2008

In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (2007), the Catholic bishops of the United States urged Catholic voters to form their consciences in accord with the Church's moral teaching. We emphasized that: "Both opposing evil and doing good are essential obligations" (No. 24). Unfortunately, there seem to be efforts and voter education materials designed to persuade Catholics that they need only choose one approach: either opposing evil or doing good. This is not an authentically Catholic approach.

Some argue that we should not focus on policies that provide help for pregnant women, but just focus on the essential task of establishing legal protections for children in the womb. Others argue that providing life-affirming support for pregnant women should be our only focus and this should take the place of efforts to establish legal protections for unborn children. We want to be clear that neither argument is consistent with Catholic teaching. Our faith requires us to oppose abortion on demand and to provide help to mothers facing challenging pregnancies.

In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision knocked down laws against abortion in all 50 states, fabricating a constitutional "right" to abortion that continues to haunt and divide our society. Within two days of that decision, the Catholic bishops rejected it as "bad morality, bad medicine and bad public policy."

We called for a comprehensive response: exploring "every legal possibility" for challenging the Court's tragic error and restoring legal safeguards for the right to life of the unborn child; helping to pass laws to "restrict the practice of abortion as much as possible" in the meantime; and educating society to the need to safeguard the child and support "more humane and morally acceptable solutions" for women facing problems during pregnancy.

Recently, some have called on the Church to abandon most of this effort. They say we should accept *Roe* as a permanent fixture of constitutional law, stop trying to restore recognition for the unborn child's human rights, and confine our public advocacy to efforts to "reduce abortions" through improved economic and social support for women and families.

The Catholic community is second to no one in providing and advocating for support for women and families facing problems during pregnancy. Catholic hospitals, charitable institutions, and thousands of pregnancy aid centers, provide life-saving care and compassionate alternatives to the violence of abortion.

We have advocated for universal health care coverage, generous family leave policies, increases in the minimum wage, humane welfare policies for women who are pregnant or caring for young children, expanded funding for WIC and other nutrition programs, and a federal children's health insurance program that includes coverage for unborn children and their mothers. Because some women still feel pressured by economic hardship and lack of support to resort to abortion, our task in this regard is far from over.

These efforts, however, are not an *adequate* or *complete* response to the injustice of *Roe v. Wade* for several important reasons. First, the Court's decision in *Roe* denied an entire class of innocent human beings the most fundamental human right, the right to life. In fact, the act of killing these fellow human beings was transformed from a crime into a "right," turning the structure of human rights on its head. *Roe v. Wade* is a clear case of an "intrinsically unjust law" we are morally obliged to oppose (see *Evangelium vitae*, nos. 71-73). Reversing it is not a mere political tactic, but a moral imperative for Catholics and others who respect human life.

Second, the many challenges to the Court's error since 1973 have borne fruit, leading to significant modifications of *Roe*. Most recently in its ruling on partial-birth abortion, the Court upheld a ban on an abortion procedure for the first time in 35 years, and acknowledged that abortion takes a human life and does serious harm to women.

Third, *Roe* itself enormously increased the annual number of abortions in our society. The law is a teacher, and *Roe* taught many women, physicians and others that abortion is an acceptable answer to a wide range of problems. By the same token, even the limited pro-life laws allowed by the Court since *Roe* have been shown to reduce abortions substantially, leading to a steady decline in the abortion rate since 1980. Bans on public funding, laws requiring informed consent for women and parental involvement for minors, and other modest and widely supported laws have saved millions of lives. Laws made possible by reversing *Roe* would save many more. On the other hand, this progress could be lost through a key pro-abortion proposal, the "Freedom of Choice Act," which supporters say would knock down hundreds of current pro-life laws and forbid any public program to "discriminate" against abortion in providing services to women.

Providing support for pregnant women so they choose to have their babies is a necessary but not sufficient response to abortion. Similarly, reversal of *Roe* is a necessary but not sufficient condition for restoring an order of justice in our society's treatment of defenseless human life. This act by itself would not automatically grant legal protection to the unborn. It would remove an enormous obstacle to such protection, so the people of the United States and their elected representatives in every state could engage in a genuine discussion of how to save unborn children and their mothers from the tragedy of abortion. Both approaches to opposing abortion are essential. By protecting the child's life to the maximum degree possible, improving life-affirming support for pregnant women, and changing the attitudes and prejudices imposed on many women to make them see abortion as an acceptable or necessary solution, we will truly help build a culture of life.

In light of a wide range of attempts to interpret Church teaching or imply that outside materials represent the teaching of the Church, we wish to affirm that *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* is the teaching that has been approved by the body of bishops of the United States. As we explained in that statement, "We encourage Catholics to seek those resources that are authorized by their own bishops, their state Catholic conferences, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops."



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 October 23, 2008

	TOTALS		
— General Seminary Burse		by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
Previously reported	\$92,664.00	Total	\$14,054.84
In memory of Charles William "C.W." Terry Jr. by Bob and Minnie Bochat	25.00	— Josephat R. Janak Seminary Burse #2	
In memory of Sir Knight Bernard M. Zabransky by K of C 4th Degree Yoakum Assembly #1128	150.00	Previously reported	\$1,083.77
In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
In memory of Weyman Adamek by Bob and Minnie Bochat	25.00	In memory of Josephat R. Janak by Rose Marie Janak	25.00
Total	\$92,884.00	In memory of Weyman Adamek by Margaret Kutac	20.00
— Rev. John C. Bily Seminary Burse		Total	\$1,148.77
Previously reported	\$7,189.00	— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdaram Seminary Burse	
In honor of Rev. John C. Bily's 50th ordination anniversary by CDA Court St. Michael #559	225.00	Previously reported	\$8,722.89
In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In memory of Vencil Janis by Peggy Hermes	20.00
In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
Total	\$7,434.00	In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
— Catholic Daughters Court of St. Ann #369 Seminary Burse		Total	\$8,762.89
Previously reported	\$6,253.99	— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Seminary Burse	
In honor of Libby Ramirez, National Regent, by Carolyn Janak	10.00	Previously reported	\$6,228.00
In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00
Total	\$6,283.99	Donation by CDA Our Lady of the Rosary	50.00
— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council #1329 Seminary Burse #3		Total	\$6,298.00
Previously reported	\$7,987.50	— St. Mary's Church – Praha Burse	
In memory of John S. Gwosdz by K of C Victoria Council #1329	100.00	Previously reported	\$6,270.00
In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph & Debra Neskora and Family	10.00
In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph & Debra Neskora and family	10.00
Total	\$8,107.50	In honor of Rev. Msgr. Edward Bartsch by Joseph & Debra Neskora and family	80.00
— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #4		Total	\$6,370.00
Previously reported	\$3,264.00	— Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse #2	
In memory of Sr. Edith Mzyk	25.00	Previously reported	\$9,795.00
In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	Donation to the burse from the Estate of Mary P. Jackson, sister of Rev. Msgrs. Julius (deceased) and Stanley Petru	75,000.00
In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	Total	\$84,795.00
In memory of Tillie Peters, Lena Stock, Mary Stock and Leona Sizemore	100.00	This completes burse #2 and fulfills burse 3 thru 7 with a remaining balance of \$590.00 for Burse #8	
In honor of Rev. John Peters' 60th birthday celebration by:		The following donations were made to each burse listed below by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family:	
Angela Hermes	25.00	• In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary	10.00
Laurence & Carol Bludau and family	25.00	• In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako	10.00
Anthony & Joan Corte and family	25.00	Each burse includes their balance after donation.	
Bea Heinzl	25.00	— Msgr. Edward F. Bily Burse #2	
Elizabeth Fuller	30.00	Total	\$120.00
In memory of Dorothy Petru by Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas, KJZT Society #2	5.00	— Rev. Msgr. Werner Bockholt Burse #2	
Total	\$3,544.00	Total	\$20.00
— Rev. Roman M. Janak & Rev. Msgr. Hubert J. Janak Seminary Burse		— Rev. Charles Kolek OSB and John and Mary Kolek Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$13,984.84	Total	\$2,450.00
In memory of Joe & Cecilia Fikac, August Fikac, Alvin Janak, Leon Klekar Sr. by the Joe and Cecilia Fikac Family	50.00	— Catholic Daughters of America Our Lady Queen of Peace Court #1374	
In honor of Rev. Celestino Say's 50th ordination anniversary by Joseph and Debra Neskora and family	10.00	Total	\$3,478.82
In memory of Rev. Francis Asare-Bediako		— Catholic Daughters of America State Court of Texas Seminary Burse #2	
		Total	\$320.00
		— Deceased Priests of Praha Burse	
		Total	\$1,215.00
		— Rev. Sean Donohue Seminary Burse #2	
		Total	\$4,074.36



SEMINARIAN PATRICK KNIPPENBERG INSTALLED AS ACOLYTE—On Sunday, October 5, 2008, Patrick Knippenberg, a seminarian for the Diocese of Victoria, presently in his second year of theology at St. Mary Seminary, was installed in the ministry of acolyte as part of his preparation for the priesthood. Bishop Oscar Cantu, auxiliary bishop of San Antonio, presided over the Mass, which was held at St. Mary Seminary in Houston. The ministry of acolyte, alongside that of instituted lector, is a ministry received by seminarians on their journey leading up to the reception of major orders, namely ordination to the diaconate and to the priesthood.

Pray For Vocations

Loving Father, you call each of us by name and ask us to follow you. Bless your Church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who will serve your people as priests, sisters, brothers and permanent deacons. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Serra International

— Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek Burse	Total	\$3,106.00	— Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Yoakum Assembly #1128 Seminary Burse #2	Total	\$920.84
— Rev. Msgr. Michael Harrold Burse	Total	\$220.00	— Rev. Msgr. Benton A. Thurmond Burse	Total	\$1,025.00
— Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS Burse	Total	\$1,670.00	— St. John the Baptist Church, St. John In Memory of Rev. Brian Crookes Burse #2	Total	\$4,431.00
— Rev. Msgr. Albert Henkes Burse	Total	\$2,720.00	— Knights of Columbus 4th Degree St. Michael's Assembly #1527 Weimar, TX Seminary Burse	Total	\$2,720.00
— Rev. Henry Herbst Seminary Burse	Total	\$220.00	— Knights of Columbus Yorktown Council #2480 Seminary Burse	Total	\$220.00
— Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko Burse	Total	\$1,840.00	— Knights of Columbus Holy Family Victoria Council #9088 Seminary Burse	Total	\$520.00
— M/M Nicholas A. Grahmann Burse	Total	\$4,669.56	— Sr. M. Barbara Konvicka Burse	Total	\$150.00
— Willamena & Herman Grahmann Sr.	Total	\$1,360.00	— Rev. Charles Kram Seminary Burse	Total	\$2,185.00
— Catholic Life Insurance #51 Rev. Msgr. Eustace Hermes & Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi Seminary Burse #2	Total	\$1,565.47	— Rev. Joe Levya Seminary Burse	Total	\$1,625.25
— Louis and Edith Hickl Seminary Burse	Total	\$5,020.00	— Rev. Msgr. Thomas McLaughlin Burse	Total	\$370.00
— Rev. William F. Halata Seminary Burse	Total	\$95.00	— Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse #8	Total	\$610.00
— Mr and Mrs John F. Hlavaty Burse	Total	\$390.00	— Sophie Schmidt Seminary Burse	Total	\$540.00
— Holy Rosary Parish – Hostyn Burse #2	Total	\$205.00	— Jim Vacek Seminary Burse #2	Total	\$20.00
— Knights of Columbus Ganado Council #3204 Rev. Joseph Hybner Burse	Total	\$1,926.00	— Rev. Marcus Valenta Seminary Burse	Total	\$3,039.55
— Joseph F. Jakubik Jr. Seminary Burse	Total	\$70.00	— Bishop David Fellhauer / Catholic Life Insurance Nada, Moulton-Flatonia, Hallettsville, El Campo and Edna-Ganado Branches Seminary Burse	Total	\$1,850.00
— Eddie & Olga Juroske and Florian & Laura Frnka Burse	Total	\$10,040.00			
— Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas – KJZT Seminary Burse #6	Total	\$886.10			
— Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree – Victoria Assembly #1126	Total	\$4,852.30			
— William L. Schmidt Seminary Burse	Total	\$6,290.00			
— St. Mary Church – High Hill Burse	Total	\$1,060.00			
— Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy Seminary Burse	Total	\$8,134.90			
— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Seminary Burse	Total	\$11,262.50			
— Mrs. Elorine Tumlinson Burse	Total	\$1,390.00			

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:

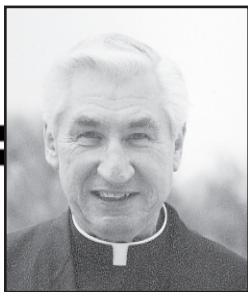
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DIOCESE OF VICTORIA
P. O. BOX 4070
VICTORIA, TX 77903



FAITH POINT

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

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



Learning Morality the Hard Way

It is a truism to say we live in an oversexed society. Moral restraints on sex are either rejected or ignored. In the interest of space and readability in discussing this topic I will give conclusions of dozens of studies cited by the Heritage Foundation without naming the studies. Readers who are interested in identifying the studies may find them at the Heritage Foundation website.

Few would deny that our teenagers are oversexed. Before age thirteen 7.1% of youth have had sexual experiences. In 9th grade 32.8% have engaged in sexual activity; 43.8% of 10th graders; 55.5% of 11th graders; and 64.6% of twelfth graders. Among all youth 47.8% have engaged in sexual activity by the end of the 12th grade.

Sex is a consequential act and teenage sex has many undesirable consequences. One in four teenage girls has at least one sexually transmitted disease (STD). Teenage girls especially are physiologically vulnerable to STD infections. One study found that those who began their sexual activity at age 13 are twice as likely to become infected as their peers who sexually abstain during their teen years.

The nation is experiencing an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases that is steadily expanding. In the 1960s, the beginning of the "sexual revolution," the dominant diseases related to sexual activity were syphilis and gonorrhea. Today, there are more than 20 widespread STDs, infecting an average of more than 15 million individuals each year. Two-thirds of all STDs occur in people who are 25 years of age or younger. Each year, 3 million teens contract an STD; overall, one-fourth of sexually active teens have been afflicted.

There is no cure for sexually transmitted viral diseases such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and herpes, which take their toll on people throughout life. Other common viral STDs are the Human Papillomavirus (HPV)—the leading

viral STD, with 5.5 million cases reported each year, and the cause of nearly all cases of cervical cancer that kill approximately 4,800 women per year—and Chlamydia trachomatis, which is associated with pelvic inflammatory disease that scars the fallopian tubes and is the fastest growing cause of infertility.

Condom use offers relatively little protection (from "zero" to "some") for herpes and scarcely any from the deadly HPV. A review of the scientific literature reveals that, on average, condoms failed to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus—which causes AIDS—between 15 percent and 31 percent of the time. It should not be

surprising that while condom use has increased over the past 25 years, the spread of STDs has likewise continued to rise.

Teenage sexual activity results in one in five girls becoming teen mothers.

Girls who begin sexual activity during their teenage years are three times as likely to become single mothers as those who remain abstinent during all their teenage years. Nearly 40% of girls who begin their sexual activity at ages 13 and 14 will give birth outside marriage as compared with 9% of those who are abstinent until age 20. Early sexual activity is linked to maternal poverty. At the time of a large national survey in 1995 nearly 30% of mothers who began sexual activity at ages 13 or 14 lived in poverty as compared to 12% of those who waited until their early twenties. Single mothers and their children contribute most members to the welfare rolls.

Often the response of adults to teen sex is to throw up their hands and resign themselves to the situation because they are convinced that teenagers are going to have sex no matter what they say or do. "Safe sex" advocates respond to the troubling statistics by demanding more comprehensive sex education and offering contraceptives to minors, most often without parental consent or knowledge. The approach is faulty and has done little to minimize teenage sexual activity. Indeed, it may actually encourage it because teens

think that sexual activity has societal approval as long as they employ contraceptives and thus act "responsibly."

It is also unwise to cut parents out of the loop. Teens reveal that parents have the greatest influence on their sexual decisions and two-thirds of all teens share their parents' values on these topics.

The studies show strong empirical evidence between parental influence and teen sexual activity. Factors that offer strong protection against early sexual activity on the part of teens include an intact family structure, parents' disapproval of adolescent sex, a sense of belonging and satisfaction with their families on the part of the teens, parent monitoring, and parent-child communication about teen sex and its consequences.

Adolescents living in intact families are more likely to delay sexual activity than those in other forms of family life. The tragedy of our time is that there are fewer and fewer intact families. In 1960 88% of children lived with two parents compared to 68% in 2007. In 1960 5% of children were born to unwed mothers as compared with 38.5% in 2006. Some stupidly allege that teenage abstinence is impossible. If teenagers in the '60s were able to hold illegitimacy to 5% why is it now possible to hold it only to 38.5%?

Religious practice has enormous potential for addressing today's social problems. Allen Bergin, professor of psychology at Brigham Young University, states that there is considerable evidence that religious involvement reduces "such problems as sexual permissiveness, teen pregnancy, suicide, drug abuse, alcoholism... [S]ocial scientists are discovering the continuing power of religion to protect the family from the forces that would tear it down."

It has long been known that intensity of religious practice is closely related to adolescent virginity and sexual restraint and control. Reviews of the literature

demonstrate that, nearly without exception, religious practice sharply reduces the incidence of premarital intercourse. The reverse is also true: The absence of religious practice accompanies sexual permissiveness and premarital sex. This is confirmed in numerous studies, including a 1991 analysis of the federal government's National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.

In an important study published in 1987, a group of professors from the Universities of Georgia, Utah, and Wyoming found that the main cause of problematic adolescent sexual behaviors and attitudes is the absence of religious behavior and affiliation. They further concluded that healthy family dynamics and practices are themselves caused, to a powerful degree, by the presence or absence of religious beliefs and practices. The same results also hold true in international comparisons.

There are things that can be done to diminish teen sexual activity. Parents should maintain intact homes, practice their religion faithfully and pass their faith to their children, monitor their teenagers, and convey to them their view of premarital sexual activity. School sex education programs should emphasize abstinence rather than the so-called comprehensive programs that include contraception and neglect parents or operate behind their backs. These have proven to be failures in stemming the incidence of teen sex.

A loving Father who is concerned about the well-being of his children has given guidance in this area by his prohibition of sexual activity outside marriage. Refusing to follow his guidance has led tens of thousands of sexually active young people to premature deaths, impaired health, infertility, and consignment to lifelong poverty. If we will not learn from his guidance then perhaps we will learn from the negative consequences of failure to follow it.

Joe Machacek's journey to the diaconate

Joe is in the class to be ordained a permanent deacon next year. He and Mary Machacek are parishioners of Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish in Shiner, Texas.

They have three daughters and three sons, all married, and are blessed with 10 grandchildren who live within a 20-mile radius of them. These are Joe's answers to an interview done with The Catholic Lighthouse in October 2008.

When did you first think about becoming a deacon for the church?

About five years ago, Father Bob Knippenberg, our pastor, asked the parishioners to submit names of men who might be applicable for the diaconate. My name was one, so Mary and I went to Moulton for an informational session with Father Gabriel Maison.

It seems as though God had to be preparing you for this calling. How do you see that he was preparing you?

My awareness of God's plan for me became clearer about 28 years ago after Mary and I made a marriage encounter weekend thanks to Pat and Henry Pesek.

Mary graduated from Incarnate Word Academy high school in Houston, and I, from St. Paul in Shiner. The Holy Spirit awakened me that weekend to understand

all the lessons the good sisters had taught me in religion classes. After that weekend, my life changed. We had four children that needed us and I understood that God and

family were my priorities in life. Mary has always been the "Guiding Light" in our marriage, and after our weekend we began to work as a team in all that we did. You name the ministry, and we gradually became part of it, both in the church and civic activities.

It is really amazing how in life, not knowing much except through witnessing of our parents and community, we come to different steps of life, and with the faith and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to cope with them and make sense of God's plan for us. We were blessed with two more children, and the oldest, Jennifer, started college. With encouragement from Jennifer, Mary started back to college and received her teaching degree, teaching now in her eleventh year at St. Ludmila's in Shiner. I could go on and on about the miraculous ways in which the Holy Spirit guides us in life.

How has Father Gabriel Maison helped you?

Father Gabriel reminds me of a drill

See Joe Machacek, p. 15



Joe and Mary Machacek

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NCEA launches “Child to Child Two” Campaign to help Gulf Coast after Hurricane Ike

WASHINGTON DC—Across the Gulf Coast region, Catholic schools and parishes are starting repairs and reopening as they recover from the effects of Hurricanes Ike and Gustav. The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) has pledged to help them with a fundraising program called “Child to Child Two: A Catholic Campaign to Aid Education.” NCEA is asking the 6.3 million students enrolled in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs to donate a dollar to help their counterparts in the gulf region.

Many churches and schools have been hard hit. In the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas, a dozen elementary schools and three high schools were still without power as of Sept. 29. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, La., several Catholic churches that had just been rebuilt from Katrina were severely damaged. In the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas, Catholic schools opened September 25 after weeks of cleaning-up and drying out classrooms and common areas.

Galveston Catholic Elementary and Middle School, serving three-year olds through eighth-graders, is closed and parents are asked to enroll their students in another Catholic school for the time being, said Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word Kevina Keating. Estimates are the school will be without power for three to four months and efforts are being made to reopen the school in a temporary location.

At St. Peter the Apostle Church in Hackberry, La., water reached more than two feet deep in the religious education building. In the church sanctuary, a deep coating of mud covered the floor, and pews

were displaced.

“Following the devastation of the 2005 hurricanes in the gulf, Catholic youth contributed more than \$1 million—often one dollar at a time—to aid schools in the affected regions,” said Dr. Karen Ristau, president of NCEA. “We are asking them once again to step forward to help fellow students whose schools and lives have been disrupted by the 2008 storms. Damage from the recent storms affected not only the Gulf Coast but many inland areas as well.”

Every student will be asked to give \$1 (or as much or little as they can), which will be used to purchase school supplies or support other educational needs in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs.

“We are counting on our young people to reach out to thousands of children whose lives have been turned upside down,” Dr. Ristau said. “We know that there are many programs underway to provide relief and rebuilding,” she added. “Our goal is to give children the chance to help other children by providing funds for resources like books, computers, paper or pencils—from one student to another.”

Dr. Ristau added that discussions with superintendents and administrators in Catholic schools and parishes underscored the great damage that has been incurred, along with the long-term interruption of classes and services. “It is really a very sad and disheartening situation,” said the NCEA president. “This campaign will provide both financial and moral support to those in need. And they already have our constant prayers.”

See NCEA launches, p. 16

DFW Catholic and RealCatholicTV.com bring Catholic news and programming to the masses

DALLAS, TX – Internet users worldwide can now access solid Catholic news and programming thanks to the partnership of DFW Catholic and RealCatholicTV.com. By subscribing to receive DFW Catholic’s daily news updates via email, users will receive one free month of Premium Access service from RealCatholicTV.com. The relationship, while still in its infancy, is certain to draw more users to both sites and inform viewers about Catholic news and promote orthodox Church teaching.

DFW Catholic, a MetroCatholic publication, is a one-of-a-kind website which provides daily Catholic news occurring around the world from the Vatican to the local parish. The site, which supplements the periodic print publications offered by the diocesan newspapers, will soon be followed by other regional sites in Texas and subsequent sites in major markets

across the U.S.

RealCatholicTV.com is an internet-based Catholic television station that offers episodes on morality, movie reviews, news and political commentary, entertainment, apologetics, and much more. The group aims to provide viewers with a means to increase their personal holiness through catechesis and evangelization about the truth of the Christian faith.

“We are both young lay organizations and feel this partnership will help us achieve our common goal of utilizing top-notch Catholic media to evangelize to as many people as possible,” said Chad Simpson, CEO of MetroCatholic, Inc. “We are excited to be working with RealCatholicTV.com and are eager to see the fruit of both ministries.”

For news and more information, visit www.DFWCatholic.org.

Twenty Something

By Christina Capecchi



A slice of pumpkin bread: How hospitality heals

I can bring any mood to my grandma’s house, and it will be lifted in a few seconds as the door swings open and her arms spread wide.

I opt for hot cider and pumpkin bread. Grandma serves me the end piece, covered in frosting.

The crackling fireplace muffles the ticking clock that usually dictates my day. I can talk and talk; she will listen and listen, leaping alongside each remark and every emotion.

I leave with a lipstick smudge on my cheek and a sureness I am loved.

Lately I have been reflecting on hospitality, a virtue that doesn’t get nearly the air time as charity or forgiveness, patience or moderation. It seems especially foreign, even antiquated, to young adults who hop from one small apartment to another, interacting at bars, entertained by Wiis.

“Do not neglect hospitality,” Hebrews 13 tells us, “for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels.”

This neglected virtue can invite holy exchanges. And we can practice it every hour of the day – no matter the size of our bank accounts or our knowledge of Martha Stewart tips.

Hospitality is not just a virtue you exercise when hosting a party in your home; it’s something you carry wherever you go, whether you serve or are being served by a worried waitress or exhausted cashier. It’s not just about refilling empty glasses; it’s about refilling confidence and restoring hope.

“Anticipate one another,” St. Paul tells us. “Exercise hospitality. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

Hospitality takes many shapes and forms. It is a bobby pin quickly retrieved from a purse, a Band-Aid, a tissue. Fresh-baked muffins in a French-fry culture.

It is attentive listening, the kind that happens when you remove the iPod earbuds and embrace the moment.

We exercise hospitality when we confess shortcomings and crack dumb jokes to put others at ease.

Hospitality allows for honesty and whispered pleas for help. It lets us be our authentic selves and emboldens others to do the same.

It cultivates talent and calls people forward. My first mentor, Terry, facilitated editorial meetings for aspiring young writers. Her bright blue eyes, rosy cheeks and generous laughter invited us to toss-out story ideas without reservation. Under her guidance, we advanced along an uncharted path, from concept to first draft to publication.

And we kept writing.

Our priest, Father Mike, embodied Marty Haugen’s hymn “All Are Welcome.” He built us a new church and revived our spirit. New committees formed. New leaders emerged. Our parish grew by nearly 50 percent.

Dorothy practiced hospitality in my college cafeteria, scanning our cards and greeting us each by name. At least for a moment, her warm smile helped us forget that we were sleepy and stressed. She pointed disoriented freshmen to the stack of trays; she kept them moving forward.

Hospitality is a mark of affirmation, a signal that someone is special, like the ribbon bow on the baby shower invitation or the gold ink used to announce the retirement party. Little touches, big impact.

This brittle season begs for hospitality. The November chill keeps us inside, numbing us to entreaties for mittens and money, tempting to stay in our sweatpants and live online. Stocks are plummeting and heating costs are surging. It is easy to think only of our own burdens and bills.

But then our hearts would never grow and we could never entertain angels.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christina@readchristina.com.

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



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Gloria Morales is November's honored PCL

The Catechetical Office of the Diocese of Victoria has chosen to honor Mrs. Gloria Morales of Immaculate Conception Parish in Goliad as the November Parish Catechetical Leader. She was interviewed by Cynthia Brewer, editor of *The Catholic Lighthouse*.

Gloria, how long have you been the Parish Catechetical Leader for Immaculate Conception Parish in Goliad?

I've been the PCL at Immaculate Conception for somewhere in the vicinity of 25-plus years.

Why did you become a PCL?

I had taught 4th grade for about three years then went on to 1st grade followed by four years of Holy Communion, and about that time the position became available, so I said, "Yes, I'll do it."

What type of catechetical programs does your parish offer its children (Generations of Faith or classes)?

We offer classes of religion instruction, focusing on the basic catechism for each grade level. Extra time is devoted to our first Communion and confirmation classes, in order to better prepare them in learning and understanding the importance of the sacrament each of our candidates is going to be receiving. Catechists as well as the students have new books and several supplementary resources, starting with the basic teachings, which are used in providing all of our students with an excellent religious education.

Are you in any other church/community ministries?

Yes, I am currently the regent for the Catholic Daughters of the Americas in Goliad, Court Our Lady of Loreto; 4-H Adult Leadership member, Goliad High School Spanish Club Advisor, Sophomore Sponsor, Spanish Teacher at GHS and a translator when needed for new Spanish speaking parishioners, and last, but not least, my family and home to take care of. I am married to Simon Morales Jr. and we have been married for 37 years. We have two adult children, Amy and Simon III, and two beautiful granddaughters, Ashtin, 15 years, and Elizabeth, nine years.

How many children/youth are in the program? When do you meet?

We have approximately 130 children (3yrs. - 5th grade) and 48 youth (6th - 10th grade) in the program. We meet every other Sunday, for about 2 hours. Class time is from 8:30 a.m. to 9:45a.m. and is then followed by attending Mass at 10:00 - 11:00a.m.

How many catechists do you have helping you? We have 18 catechists, three office helpers, two disciplinarians and one assistant.



What is most challenging about your ministry?

The most challenging aspect of the ministry is trying to work on evangelizing the parents of many of our children. This really needs to be more of a full-time job, but because of my busy schedule, I am unable to do as much as I wish I could.

What are some of your most happy moments concerning your ministry?

This is a very hard question to answer, because as long as I have been a catechist and now the PCL, the job has been very rewarding, and I find satisfaction in what I do. I take each and every moment of my ministry as a gift from God, so everything I do toward the ministry I make it an enjoyable memory in serving our Lord. It's an honor!



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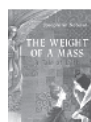
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- **Eucharist: God's Way of Embracing Us**

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Pope Benedict XVI holds the Book of the Gospels as he says Mass at the end of the Synod of Bishops on the Bible in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Oct. 26. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)

World Synod of Bishops on the Bible makes 55 proposals

**By John Thavis
Catholic News Service**

VATICAN CITY (CNS)— Devotion to the word of God must lead Catholics to prayer, concrete acts of charity, unity with other Christians and dialogue with all people of good will, said the world Synod of Bishops.

In their final message to the world's Catholics, the 253 members of the synod, *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*, said each Catholic should have a copy of the Bible, read it and pray with it regularly.

"Every home should have its own Bible and safeguard it in a visible and dignified way, to read it and to pray with it," said the synod's message, released Oct. 24.

The synod's propositions, all of which were approved overwhelmingly, were presented to the pope along with an invitation to prepare a document on the topics raised during the assembly.

Proposition 17 asked that "the ministry of lector be opened also to women, so that their role as proclaimers of the word may be recognized in the Christian community." Women already act as Scripture readers, but cannot be installed officially in such a ministry, which is reserved to males.

It was unclear what the pope would do with the proposal, which would appear to require a derogation of canon law. Some Vatican sources said that, if approved, it would have to be emphasized that the ministry of lector arises from baptism and not from any connection to priestly ordination.

An issue that was the subject of four synod propositions was the need to strengthen the theological perspective in exegesis, or scriptural interpretation. Reflecting one of the pope's expressed concerns, it said the study of Scripture cannot be reduced simply to a historical analysis of biblical texts.

On another liturgical question, the synod suggested that moments of silence be more universally adopted between the first and second readings at Mass and at the end of the homily.

It emphasized that scriptural readings never should be substituted with other

"spiritual or literary texts," which it said "can never attain the value and the richness contained in holy Scripture."

The synod propositions thanked lay-people, in particular catechists and leaders of small communities, for their help in promoting scriptural understanding, especially in places where priests are absent.

But, sounding a note of liturgical caution, the synod also recommended the formulation of "ritual directories" to help ensure that where catechists lead Sunday services such celebrations "are not confused with the eucharistic liturgy."

The synod, reflecting an ongoing theme of the assembly, said the connection between Scripture and evangelization needs to be better understood. It said the call to the Gospel must be "explicit, done not only inside our churches, but everywhere" and must be accompanied by the daily witness of the faith.

Missionary activity will often lead to persecution, the synod said. It appealed to civil authorities to respect and protect religious freedom.

On a basic point made by bishops from developing countries, Proposition 42 said many local communities lack Bibles translated into their own languages. It encouraged an effort to train translation specialists.

Proposition 53 dealt with dialogue with Muslims, but did not specifically mention scriptures. Instead, it insisted on "the importance of respect for life, the rights of men and women, and the distinction between the social-political order and the religious order in promoting justice and peace in the world." In a line added as an amendment, it said another important theme of Catholic-Muslim dialogue was "reciprocity and the freedom of conscience and of religion."

Proposition 54 treated the theme of ecology, urging greater pastoral and theological emphasis on the connection between Scripture and current efforts to safeguard the created world.

To learn more about *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church Synod*, please go to www.usccb.org/synod. Also see the pope's statements on pg. 15- *The Pope Speaks*.

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Catholic School Seminar gives direction to “LEMs”

By Cynthia Brewer

The eleventh annual Catholic School Seminar, held at Our Lady of Victory School in Victoria on Friday, Oct. 10, 2008, was directed by educators Msgr. Tom Toale and Jim Osterberger, both from the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa.

Their presentation, broken into three parts throughout the day, was titled, “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of Catholic Education” and featured the documents “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” “National Directory for Catechesis” and finished up with “St. Paul as a Catechist.”

The seminar is held annually for all the school personnel from the 13 Catholic schools/15 campuses in the Diocese of Victoria.

Msgr. Tom Toale is vicar for education and director of the Archdiocesan Center for the Archdiocese of Dubuque and also serves in parish ministry. Previously he served the archdiocese for nearly 20 years as superintendent of schools.

Jim Osterberger is director of Educational Services for the Archdiocese of Dubuque. He has been involved in Catholic education for nearly 40 years as a teacher, administrator and diocesan staff member. They both have served in leadership roles in CACE.

During the first two sections of the program, the presenters used the documents to give direction and closed with “real-life” experiences of St. Paul to give examples of the “how” to do it.

After the opening prayer service, directed by members of St. Anthony School in Columbus, Msgr. Toale said that what he just experienced with Bishop David Fellhauer leading the teachers in prayer and all the diocesan school personnel surrounding him, was an example of how the bishop is the witness and symbol of all working together.

The bishop and teachers are co-workers, he said.

“Teachers are lay ecclesial ministers (LEMs);” he said, “— lay people who serve in church ministry — who are rooted in the sacraments of initiation, not holy orders.”

“Like Jesus is the center of communion with the disciples, the bishop is the center of communion with the lay ecclesial ministers,” he continued.

Msgr. Toale and Mr. Osterberger then listed the traits described by the document that all ministers need to possess in order to minister in the Church. And every person is called to be a minister. These traits help us to help our co-workers in the vineyard:

- All ministers need to possess genuine love for the whole Catholic Church and exist in full communion of heart and mind with the pope as successor of Peter.
- Avoid elitism — use gifts and leadership roles always for the good of the Church.



Superintendent John Quarry (top r.) welcomes the Catholic school personnel of the diocese to the 11th annual school seminar Oct. 10. Msgr. Toale (l.) and Mr. Osterberger (bottom r.), both of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa, teach about church documents to assist teachers and their ministry.

- Discern the call - know what talents, virtues and limits you possess to indicate your ability to serve God’s people as a lay ecclesial minister.

- Be in full communion with the Catholic Church — a teacher in a Catholic school must be contractually in full communion with the Church. He added under this trait that if you can’t be joyful 80 percent of the time in your job, then look for another job.

- Desire — is what you are doing done out of love?

- Have a commitment to regular personal prayer, frequent participation in Mass, beyond Sunday.

- Have a zeal to live a Christian life.

- There may be some things we question, but when we’re in our role, we need to live and teach with the ecclesial magisterium.

- Be emotionally mature — be able to sustain friendships and professional relationships, manage an appropriate expression of both anger and affection.

- Have the intellectual gifts needed for the specific ministry.

- Have a commitment to good communication and conflict resolution skills.

Msgr. Toale reminded the teachers that Jesus was in “a ton of conflict, yet he handled it well.” The theme that runs through the traits is that we are called to be in communion — together. Mr. Osterberger reminded the teachers that collaboration means to co-labor.

The bishop creates structures and venues for fostering communion so that groups can communicate and collaborate with one another.

On the National Directory for Catechesis, the speakers said it is really the roadmap to dreams — to get back to the way the world was supposed to be like — even though the dream got shattered. “We can still get close,” they said.

It can be the document that says we’re the dream keepers. Think of that one kid that doesn’t have any dreams — because of the muck they’re stuck in, perhaps in his family situation, they said.



Think of the vision for Catholic Schools, here in your diocese, they continued.

Regarding “Paul as Catechist,” Msgr. Toale and Mr. Osterberger taught that Paul was forever thankful, appreciative; he always proclaimed the Word of God in some way; he went to meet others where they’re at; he saw the need for ongoing catechesis / ongoing communication; he took interest in the overall being of individuals; and he left his churches with a base — appointed elders to carry the torch when he was gone.

The teachers and personnel seemed quite pleased with this year’s seminar.

Rosanna Villafranca — 6th, 7th and 8th history and Spanish teacher at Nazareth Academy said of the seminar, “I’m always ready to learn, and I believe every time I go to a conference related to Catholicism I learn a little bit more, and I’m humbled a little bit more. It was awesome. It inspired me.”

“I think he reemphasized the main idea of bringing God out in every opportunity, every occasion in life, no matter what subject it was,” said Sister Colette Kouba of Sacred Heart in Hallettsville.

Sister Geraldine Pavlik, Holy Cross School principal in Bay City, thought the presentation was outstanding, saying “I’m delighted they ended up with St. Paul, because it’s the Year of St. Paul. They explained a little bit more for people who had not had a chance to see the book on catechesis. They explained very well the six parts that were in that book, especially the ten sections. I’m going to pull the books off the shelf and have them (available) for the teachers to use.”

Just two guys standing in the rain

Continued from p. 20

with the woman and he knew immediately — she was there for an abortion.

She went into the clinic, but came out ten minutes later. The two men rushed to her with their umbrellas. She was pregnant, she told them, and the child was not her husband’s. It was he who insisted on an abortion.

“She was a fallen away Christian who had just returned to God,” said the volunteer. “We told her that God had never left her and that He was always with her and would always be with her in all of her decisions. She felt pressure from her husband, the abortion staff and the doctor and that’s when she asked to go outside to see us.”

It turns out the woman had made an appointment with her pastor that morning but something came up and it was canceled. So she kept her appointment for the abortion. Her pastor was her last chance, she thought, and that had fallen through. Maybe God did not hear her prayer. Now, she said, it was too late.

“But just as they were turning into the abortion clinic she had seen us,” said the volunteer. “Two guys standing in the pouring rain, wet and soaked — praying. She knew we were praying. She couldn’t believe it; God had answered her prayer after all! He sent two strangers to stand out in the rain and wait for her!”

The men consoled her, told her God loved her and that she was not alone. “We held hands and the three of us prayed the Lord’s Prayer.” She went back inside,

and two minutes later, they all came out and drove away. She waved to the men as they left.

“What a powerful God we have!” said this 40 Days for Life vigil participant. “God had made his love and presence known to all of us that morning. Many lives were touched; a life may have been saved.”

Meanwhile, it kept raining. College students passed by as they ran to a nearby bus stop. “Some of the students looked at us kind of funny,” he said. “After all, we were just two guys standing in the rain.”

To read more reports, please go to www.40daysforlife.com.

“40 days for Life” in Houston is being sponsored by the Houston Coalition for Life. Conscious of the great power of prayer, the Houston Coalition for Life maintains a peaceful and prayerful presence coupled with sidewalk counseling at Planned Parenthood’s abortion facility in Houston. Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in the U.S. and the largest abortion rights advocacy group in the world. In Houston they are the largest abortion provider with an average 25 abortions daily, six days a week—one-third of Houston’s daily average of 77 abortions. By praying for and lovingly offering alternatives to women approaching Planned Parenthood, both mother and child can be spared the exploitation of abortion.

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CWV St. John's Post 1269 Auxiliary elects officers

Election of officers for St. John's Post 1269 Auxiliary, Victoria, was held on September 17, 2008. The new officers are as follows: President Lupita Martinez; First Vice-President Toney Aguilar; Second Vice-President Lupe Gallardo; Third Vice-President Cecilia Garcia; Mary Reyes, treasurer; Estella Dominguez, welfare officer; Carmen Nunez, historian; Rosalia Cisneros, ritual officer; Selina Driscoll, three-year director; Emma Reyna, two-year director; Mary Dominguez, one-year director; and Father Stan De Boe, O.S.S.T., chaplain.

The following appointments were also made: secretary - VAVS representative:

Theresa Gonzales; Americanism and Civics chairlady: Cecilia Garcia; public relations and fund-raising chairlady: Cecilia Garcia; decorating committee: Cecilia Garcia, Selina Driscoll, Noelia Pardo and Rosalia Cisneros; social committee: Rosalia Cisneros, Mary Dominguez and Josephine Gonzales; and telephone committee chairlady: Lena Quinonez. Installation of officers was held on Friday, September 26, at the CWV Post home. Cecilia Garcia, past president for the CWV Auxiliary Department of Texas, conducted the installation ceremony. A social and dinner were held for all members and their guests.



The Hallettsville Riverats won the K of C national slo-pitch softball tournament over the Labor Day weekend in Waterloo, Iowa. Members of the team are kneeling from left Ryan Hoffman, Aaron Bludau, Dillon Bludau, Kevin Darilek, Dustin Bludau, Clifford Brown, Bradley Bludau, and K of C National Board of Directors president Corey Simon. Standing from left are K of C National Board of Directors vice-president Larry Kociemba, team members Chad Johnson, Brandon Wenske, Jeremy Haas, Jason Haas, Cody Johnson and Johnny Havel. Contributed photo

2008 Knights of Columbus National slo-pitch softball champions

By Jimmy Appelt
Hallettsville Tribune-Herald
Staff Writer

The Hallettsville K of C Riverats rallied from five runs down and went on to defeat Marion, Ill., to win the Knights of Columbus slo-pitch softball national championship tournament on Sunday, Aug. 31, 2008, in Waterloo, Iowa.

The Riverats, who qualified for the tournament by winning the Texas state

championship on Memorial Day weekend, went through the double-elimination tournament undefeated to claim their first-ever national championship. Opening play on Saturday, Aug. 30, the Riverats run-ruled Quincy, Ill., by the score of 21-5. They then edged South Calhoun, Ill. 11-10 before clipping Milton, Wis., 11-7 to complete the first day of play. On Sunday, the Riverats shutout Marion, Ill., 10-0 in the semifinals before meeting the same team again in the championship game.

In the finals, the Riverats took a 12-8 come-from-behind win to claim the championship trophy.

This was the second appearance for the Riverats in the K of C national softball tournament and marked the eighth time Hallettsville K of C Council #2433 softball team has qualified for the national tournament. The Hallettsville K of C "Silver" team had six consecutive appearances from 1981-86.

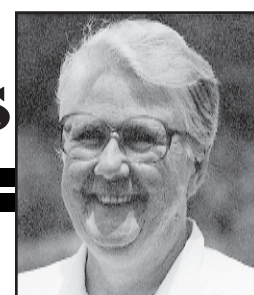
Riverats selected to the 2008 K of C National All-tournament team were Jeremy Haas, Johnny Havel, Ryan Hoffman, Clifford Brown, and Cody Johnson. The Riverats were also presented with the Fraternalism Award for the example set by the team at the tournament.

This prestigious award honors one team each year at the national tournament that displays the values of a Knights of Columbus member both on and off the field.

Members of this year's K of C National Champion team are Ryan Hoffman, Aaron Bludau, Dillon Bludau, Kevin Darilek, Dustin Bludau, Clifford Brown, Bradley Bludau, Chad Johnson, Brandon Wenske, Jeremy Haas, Jason Haas, Cody Johnson, and Johnny Havel.

SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Autumn and Anytime –Time for Letting Go – or Embracing!

I have a hard time of letting go of the plants in the flower bed at the end of their growing season. I have to look at each half-dead zinnia plant for a few days before I can pull it out and make room for the next season's plants. I have discovered that this reluctance to let go – of something I like or am used to – is not limited to plants in the flower bed. Sometimes this reluctance hinders me from learning and experiencing other things and ideas.

For example, I always buy the same style and brand of shoes – because they're fairly comfortable and reasonably priced. However, I might be depriving myself of the opportunity of discovering shoes that are even more comfortable and last longer; but I'll never know if I don't try other shoes. Or, another example is that I dislike computer program upgrades; theoretically they might have many advantages; but I prefer using what I'm used to – that is until the old program is no longer compatible with newer programs and equipment and I'm forced to change. I could continue this list of examples, but I think you understand my reluctance to leave the tried and true behind to embrace the new.

This reluctance to embrace the new can spill over into our faith life. It seemed so much simpler in the past. We didn't have to worry so much about the moral and ethical life issues; issues that face our political leaders today. Legalized abortion, same-sex "marriages," embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, current Church teaching on the death penalty, and related issues were not even on the national "radar screen" – so to speak. However, today these issues are at the forefront of our na-

tional awareness; therefore we are forced, as Catholics, to embrace the messages of our popes and bishops, which call us to promote a "Culture of Life."

Now, it doesn't make a lot of difference to society if we hold on to half-dead plants, or a certain style of shoes, or outdated computer programs, but it does make a difference whether we accept and embrace and promote moral and ethical pro-life stances. Let us then, inform ourselves on current Church teaching and follow our bishops' directives regarding the "Culture of Life." Let us check these out – with help from our bishops' letters and from our trusty "Catechism of the Catholic Church" – and let them guide us in our daily lives and in our public arenas. May the new emphasis on Pro-Life reign! And may we be instrumental in its implementation.

President of U.S. bishops congratulates Obama on 'historic election'

Continued from p. 1

confronting many uncertainties," he said. "We pray that you will use the powers of your office to meet them with a special concern to defend the most vulnerable among us and heal the divisions in our country and our world. "We stand ready to work with you in defense and support of the life and dignity of every human person," he added in the letter, released by the USCCB in Washington Nov. 5. "May God bless you and Vice President-elect (Joseph) Biden as you prepare to assume your duties in service to our country and its citizens," Cardinal George said.

THIS WEEKEND!



Our Lady
of
Lourdes

Annual Fall
Festival
Nov. 9

at the Victoria
Community Center

Featuring Our Famous Traditional
Turkey and Dressing Dinner
@ \$7 p/p

And much more!

ST. MICHAEL'S HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS



PANCAKES with Santa
arts and crafts show



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2008

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH HALL – 104 MCLEOD STREET

8:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

admission is free

BOOTHS INCLUDE ARTS AND CRAFTS, GIFTS AND GIFT IDEAS

food concessions available throughout the day

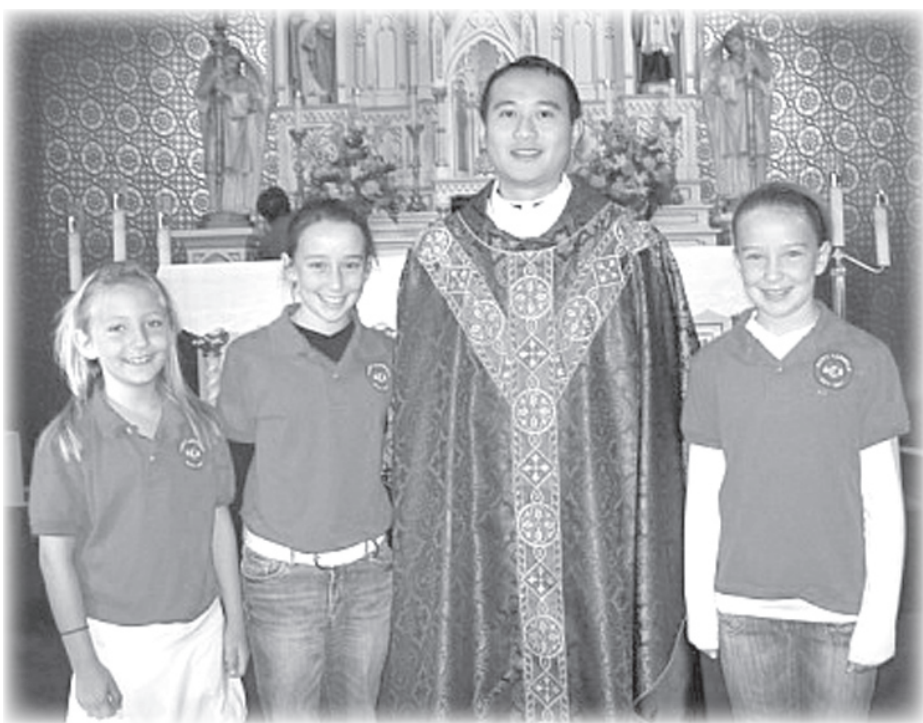
pancakes and sausage breakfast
from 8:00 until 11:00 for \$4.00 each

Soup and sandwiches lunch
from 11:00 until 2:00 For \$4.00 Each

Santa will be available for pictures WITH A PROFESSIONAL
PHOTOGRAPHER
from 9:00 A.M. until Noon

For more information contact

St. Michael's Catholic School, 208 McLeod Street,
Cuero, Texas 77954, 361/277-3854, www.stmichael-cuero.org



CONGRATULATIONS TO RELIGIOUS AWARD WINNERS—Rev. Tommy Chen of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Church, Shiner, is pictured with Junior CDA members following the presentation of Religious Award Pins at a Mass on September 21, 2008. DeLynn Pesek and Trinity Kusak earned the “Family of God” religious award while Victoria Kusak earned the “I Live My Faith” award. These young ladies worked energetically the past several months completing the required books and assignments for these religious awards.

Would you walk five miles to attend CCD?

By a Shiner catechist

Our journey of faith, at least for most of us, begins when our parents take us to their parish church to receive the sacrament of baptism. While this may be the most common way to begin a journey of faith, it is certainly not the only way. This is a story of a young man whose journey of faith began in a much different way. One can never imagine what will happen when an invitation is extended to come to learn about Jesus.

One Wednesday evening on the way to Religious Ed classes, I noticed a young teen riding his bike near the school parking lot. I mistook the young man for someone else and waved him down. Even though he wasn't who I thought he was, I struck up a conversation with him and asked him his name. He told me it was Isidor. I thought, “My, what a strong name for a young man!” I asked him where he lived and he told me around Midway, which is approximately five miles from Shiner. I asked him if he attended our Religious Ed. classes and he said he didn't but that he would like to.

I told him that I was the Religious Ed. coordinator and invited him to attend the classes. He explained that he doesn't have the transportation needed to attend the class. I then offered to pick him up for class, if he would just call me whenever he needed a ride. He promised that he would call me and then tried unsuccessfully to enter my phone number into his cell phone. I finally told him that I would contact him before the next class and check if he needed a ride.

I then recalled a lady in the parish who had just died recently from cancer who had the same last name as Isidor. She was a faith-filled lady who loved her children and grandchildren and was always concerned about them. So I asked Isidor if they were related. He replied that she was his grandmother. At that moment I couldn't help but think that that grandmother was praying and looking out for Isidor. Why else would he have crossed paths with me in what seemed like a chance meeting?

I continued my conversation with Isidor by asking if he attended Sunday Mass. He said he belonged to the Catholic Church but that he was not baptized. He then said, “I would like to be baptized.”

It was then that I extended another invitation for Isidor to begin attending Religious Ed classes. I explained to him that if he would begin attending class regularly we could then prepare him for his baptism, with his parents' permission. He then replied, “I will ask my parents tonight and let you know tomorrow.”

Later that evening, I asked two students in Isidor's class to invite him to our Religious Ed program and encourage him to come. They both promised me that they would. Knowing how shy kids can sometimes be about their religion, I began praying that they would be strong enough to follow through.

Over the next two days I must have called the phone number Isidor gave me at least twenty-five times. Each time I dialed I received an error message. My heart sank as I thought Isidor would think I let him down if he didn't receive a call from me about transportation for the next week's class.

On the next Wednesday evening before classes began, I was talking to the young people, when, much to my surprise, Isidor appeared on the scene. I was so excited that he had responded positively to my invitation to attend class; I didn't even bother asking him how he had gotten there. I was elated to find out that the two young teens I had spoken to the previous week had indeed invited Isidor to attend class with them.

I was later informed by the catechist's aide for Isidor's class that he had walked to class! Imagine that – this thirteen-year-old young teen had walked nearly five miles to attend his first Religious Ed. class!

Isidor has been attending class faithfully for the past four weeks. He no longer walks but has an aunt who brings him. And if she can't, his classmates have reached out to him and have offered to help him find a way to class.

My faith in young people has been so affirmed by Isidor's story. I shared it with a young lady recently. I asked her, “Do you believe that young people today hunger for a relationship with Jesus?” Her response was, “No way, all they want to do is have a good time.” After she heard my story of Isidor, her response was, “My

See Would you walk, p. 16

Youth Calendar of Events

November 9 — Junior High Fiesta at Holy Family in Victoria

November 15 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class – **Pastoral Care**

November 21-23 — Region 10 Catholic Youth Ministry in Amarillo, Texas

December 4-7 — National Conference for Catholic Youth Ministers in Cleveland, Ohio

December 13 — Bishop Fellhauer Benefit Dinner

January 4-9, 2009 — Head and Heart Immersion Course in Exton, Pa.

January 10-11, 2009 — Youth Leadership Retreat at the SRC, Victoria

January 17, 2009 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class – **Leadership Development - Planning and Programming**

February 1, 2009 — Youth Leadership Training, Holy Family, Victoria

February 15, 2009 — Youth Leadership Training, Chancery

February 22, 2009 — High School Spectacular

February 24-27, 2009 — Region 10 Directors Meeting in Dallas

February 28, 2009 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class – **Prayer and Worship**

March 15, 2009 — Confirmation Retreat

March 16, 2009 — Confirmation Retreat in Bay City

March 21, 2009 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class – **Justice and Service**

March 24, 2009 — Sharing Faith with Adolescents

March 29, 2009 — Confirmation Retreat, St. Michael in Cuero

April 18, 2009 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class – **Ethics and Crisis Management**

April 24, 2009 — Bishop Fellhauer Benefit Golf Tournament

April 26, 2009 — Youth Leadership Training, Chancery

May 2, 2009 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class – **Retreat Formation**

June 12-20, 2009 — Camp David

For more information on any of these events, please contact:
Debbie Vanelli or José Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry
at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at
dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org or jortega@victoriadiocese.org
Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice



Two Netters perform a skit for Our Lady of Victory Youth in Victoria. NET evangelized to nine parishes in the diocese this fall.

NET comes to diocese

The month of October brought some remarkable young adults to the Diocese of Victoria who are so on fire about their love of Jesus Christ that they have decided to spend a year of their lives spreading the good news across the United States.

These young adults with NET (National Evangelization Team) Ministries came from all over the US with a burning desire to bring people closer to the Catholic Church.

According to NET's Web site, NET Ministries began in 1981 as an outreach of the retreat program of the St. Paul (Minn.) Catholic Youth Center (CYC). The CYC was a center of spiritual renewal for thousands of young people in the 1970's and 1980's. The actual impetus for NET came from its founder and current executive director, Mark Berchem. Mark pioneered a team of 12 young adults to travel in a van around southern Minnesota, conducting high school retreats. Moving from town to town, parish to parish, this experimental team conducted 18 retreats in a three-week period during January 1980.

The response to this team was extremely positive. Additional requests for this type of ministry came from Fargo, North Dakota; and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The following January, three teams were sent to serve in Winona Minn.; Fargo N.D.; and Sioux Falls SD.

In September 1981, the first year-long team was sent out, adding Wisconsin, Louisiana, and several other Minnesota dioceses to the itinerary. In 1982, the name “NET” or National Evangelization Team, was officially adopted, inspired by the scriptures- “Come after me, I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:17); and “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4).

The mission of NET Ministries is to challenge young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church. It fulfills its mission by proclaiming the Gospel of Christ through a personal witness of faith, inviting young people to live for Christ, forming young people in Christian character through the study and practice of their faith and equipping youth workers and young adults with the ministry skills needed for evangelization.

The team facilitated nine retreats throughout the Diocese of Victoria and in the process touched the lives of over 800 young people.

To learn more, please go to www.NETUSA.org.



The Knights of Columbus Council 1329 recently held an awards banquet along with the Catholic Daughters Court St. Ann in Victoria. The knights selected, out of the family of the quarters, Margaret and Charles Kutchka (above) as Family of the Year. Out of the knights of the quarter Chris Krejci (right) was selected Knight of the Year. Making the presentations was Grand Knight Pete Moya.



National Education Contest chairperson, Geraldine Jurica (right), for Court St. Ann No. 369 of Victoria, presents Sarah Pfeffer two 1st place CDA State Contest awards for essay and photography, category three, high school. Sarah's essay "People Who Light Up My World" also won 1st place in the CDA National Contest. Sarah graduated from St. Joseph High School, Victoria, and is attending the University of Texas, San Antonio branch. Her family presently lives in England.



TRINITARIAN ORDAINED TO THE DIACONATE—The Ordination to the Diaconate of Alfonso Serna Ornelas, O.S.S.T. was celebrated September 27, 2008, at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Victoria. Deacon Alfonso began his novitiate with the Trinitarian Order in Victoria and returned for his ordination to the diaconate. Deacon Alfonso and his parents, Socorro Ornelas de Serna and Carlos Serna Padilla, are from Guadalajara, Mexico. The presider of the ordination Mass was Bishop David E. Fellhauer, while the principal concelebrants were Very Rev. Victor Scocco, O.S.S.T., minister provincial, and Rev. Stan DeBoe, O.S.S.T., pastor of OLS. The master of ceremonies was Rev. Juan Jose Molina Flores, O.S.S.T., and the vesting priest was Rev. Juan Antonio Perez-Ojeda, O.S.S.T., pastor of Santa Clara Catholic Church in Dallas. Deacon Alfonso expects to be ordained in May of 2009. (Photo by Marvin Lockhart)



Bay City's Life Teen contributed to the first ever Global Life Night, "Give It Away," Sept. 28, 2008. Meghan Orsak weighs the gift of clothing for the local St. Vincent de Paul Society. Life Teen core member Carol Newton assists her.

Bay City Life Teens "Give It Away"

BAY CITY — Life Teen parishes all around the world joined together on September 28 for the first ever Global Life Night, "Give It Away."

Parishes were challenged to collect clothing for their local St. Vincent de Paul Society or other local charity and to weigh the bags collected to see if it was possible to reach the goal of 50,000 lbs.

Over 200 parishes accepted the challenge and when all the bags were weighed, the grand total was 317,912.1 lbs., well exceeding their goal.

Bay City's Holy Cross Life Teen joined the effort and collected 1,267 lbs. Follow-

ing the recent events of Hurricane Ike, it was a great time for the teens to be able to share what they have with others.

The highlight of the night was a presentation from Cristella Rodriguez, sharing experiences of her mission trip to Nicaragua during the summer. She shared with the teens the struggles and hardships the people in Nicaragua have and how their faith in God is what gives them the strength to get through each day. The teens and adults were touched by her presentation and many are looking forward to going on a mission trip for themselves.



You are cordially invited to a Christmas Celebration

Saturday, the 13th of December

Two Thousand and Eight

6:30 p.m. Social and

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Spiritual Renewal Center
718 Gussie Schmidt Road
Victoria, Texas

Special Guest: Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

\$100 per couple
Limited Availability to 90 Guests

All proceeds of the dinner will benefit the
Spiritual Renewal Center
Sponsored by: The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
of the Diocese of Victoria
1505 E. Mesquite Lane, Victoria, Texas 77901
(361) 573-0828

For reservations contact Debbie Vanelli at ex. 32

Entree: Grilled Choice Beef Tenderloin

This event will be catered by Alimento Catering,
John Welder owner and chef.

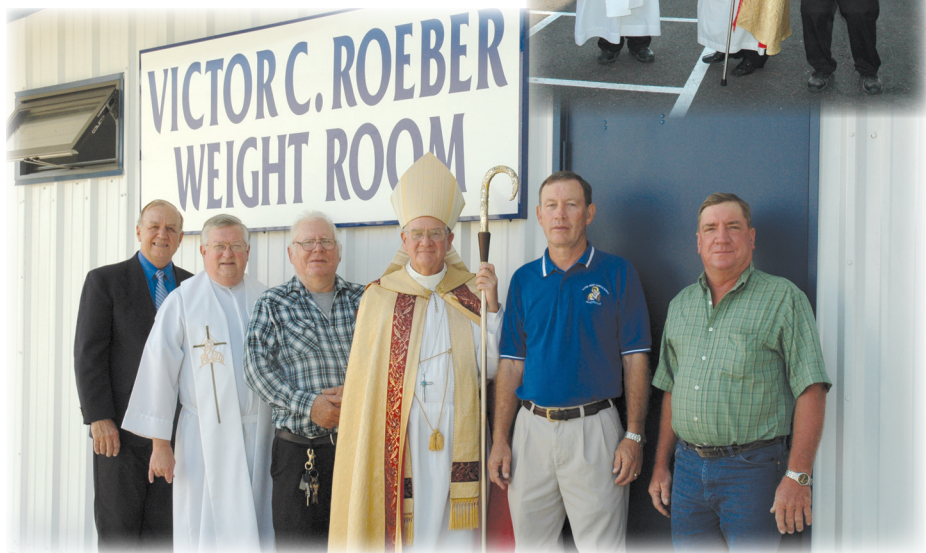
The Most Reverend David E. Fellhauer
will celebrate Mass in the newly renovated chapel
at 5:30 p.m. for all dinner guests



TEENS IN "ACTION"—On Respect Life Sunday, October 5, 2008, approximately 30 young people met at St. Philip Church to discuss pro-life issues and the terrible tragedy of abortion. The group donned their pro-life T-shirts, and then walked from the church to Evans Park in downtown El Campo to participate in the Life Chain from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. They joined another 20 plus youth and 50 plus adults holding pro-life signs and praying in silence along Highway 71. Respect Life Sunday is celebrated throughout the United States and Canada. Taking a stand against injustice is only one of the goals of the newly formed teen group, appropriately named ACTION. Membership is open to all high school-age youth from El Campo and surrounding communities. ACTION was formed by a group of young people to get together, have fun, play games, discuss issues, witness to their faith, and serve their community. For more information, call Courtney at (979) 543-0295.



A day of blessings



Bishop David Fellhauer was at Sacred Heart Church and School in Hallettsville October 3 to celebrate Mass and bless several items at the church and school. He blessed the new addition to the weight room, which includes doubling the room in size, a dressing room for the junior high and boys and girls restrooms. This project was generously donated by Victor C. Roeber and the building was named after him. Some additional equipment was donated by Terry Sablatura, P.T. and Lavaca Medical Center. Josephine DeRuiter also donated some equipment in memory of Dr. Norman DeRuiter. The bishop also blessed the new flooring in the junior high, which was provided by Allen/Dickson Foundation; the repaved parking lot provided by Victor C. Roeber; new playground equipment provided by a special grant from LCRA, the new band trailer provided by the Band Booster Club and the new addition to the bus barn provided by the Band Booster Club, the Athletic Booster Club and the ACTS Retreat members. It was installed by parishioners and parents. Pictured above from left, David Smolik, principal; Father John Peters, pastor; Victor Roeber, Bishop Fellhauer, Coach Pat Henke and Roger Janak, whose company did the work.



A MILLION YOUTH PRAY ROSARY FOR UNITY AND PEACE—A group of young people from Queen of the Holy Rosary in Hostyn and Sts. Peter & Paul in Plum gathered at the Hostyn Grotto on Saturday morning, October 18, 2008, under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Kariuki, parochial vicar. This group joined one million other children around the world praying the rosary for unity and peace under the protection of the Virgin Mary.



"WALK IN MY SHOES" RAISES MONEY FOR LOCAL SVPD SOCIETIES—Local Council of San Roberto Bellarmine Society of St. Vincent de Paul raised \$2,000 in the 1st annual national "Walk in my Shoes" Sept. 27. Over \$335,000 was raised throughout the United States on that day, with over \$2,000 raised in El Campo. The money will stay in the local communities. Pictured in front row from left: Alayna Cruz, Cynthia and Sky Garcia, Sydney Gonzales and Terri Beltran; back row: Chelsea Cruz, Carissa Diaz, Daniel Falcon, Ellie Garcia, Carmen Kocurek, Felicia Garcia and Silvia Junot.

WEIMAR KC'S DONATE LIFE-SAVING EQUIPMENT

— The Weimar Knights of Columbus recently made a donation to the athletic program at St. Michael Catholic School in Weimar and donated an automated external defibrillator to the school's

P.E. program. Pictured from left are Knights Trustee Tim Leihardt, St. Michael Principal Sister Kathleen Goike, IWBS, and Grand Knight Bill Briscoe.



Sacred Heart High School is honored by the city of Hallettsville for its TAPPS 2008 Overall 3A State Championship for the fifth year in succession. Pictured, front row: David Smolik, Sacred Heart School principal; Warren Grindland, Hallettsville city council; Pat Henke, athletic director; Ruth Barton, senior sponsor; 2nd Row: Shirley Buchanan, swim coach; Sharon Timm, junior class sponsor; Sara Grahmann (softball); Rev. John Peters, pastor; Anna Hemmi (track); Samantha Kubena (tennis); Rev. Michael Rother, parochial vicar; back row: Christina Halata, boys basketball coach; Wade Brown (football); Clay Henke (football); Erin Kriskhke (volleyball); Joe Cash, track coach; Wanda Orsak, volleyball and track coach.

Sacred Heart is TAPPS 2008 Overall 3A State Champions

HALLETTSVILLE—Congratulations are sent to Sacred Heart Catholic High School for being named the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) 2008 Overall 3A State Champion the fifth year in succession.

They received this distinct honor for advancing in the playoffs in the following athletic and music competitions: Volleyball (6 points), Football (10 points), Girls Swimming (2 points), Girls Basketball (4 points), Girls Golf (1 point), Boys Tennis (4 points), Girls Tennis (10 points), Girls

Track (8 points), Baseball (2 points), Softball (10 points), and Instrumental Music (10 points). A total of 67 points were earned for the 2007-08 school year.

Congratulations to the student participants, the teachers, the coaches, and the parents for their support of the overall extracurricular programs offered at Sacred Heart Catholic School. Sacred Heart had previously received the Overall State Championship in 1989, 1996, 1997, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007.



THANK YOU, HURRICANE IKE DONORS—Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hallettsville wants to thank everyone for their generosity towards the Hurricane Ike Evacuee Food and Supply Drive sponsored by the school just days after the hurricane struck the Houston area. It was an overwhelming success with all items transported to Victoria for the Crossroads Red Cross to distribute. A special thank you goes to Shirley Buchanan and the Lavaca County Child Services Board for donating \$268.00 worth of baby diapers. Everyone's kindness and generosity is greatly appreciated. Principal Dave Smolik drove the school bus full of emergency supplies to the Red Cross distribution site in Victoria.



A favorite book to be given as Puzzle Prize

By Cynthia Brewer

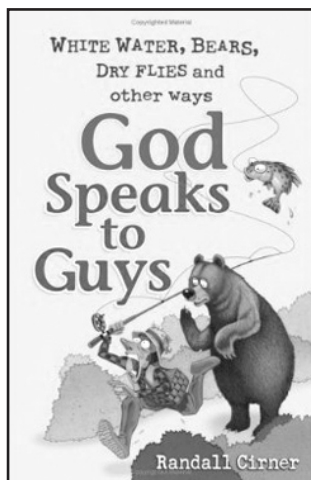
"White Water, Bears, Dry Flies and other ways God Speaks to Guys" by Randall Cirner and published by Servant Books will be the November Family Puzzle Contest Prize. This is such a delightful book that I wanted to let readers know about it in hopes that they will purchase it as a Christmas gift for all the "guys" and even "gals" in their lives.

When the book was sent to *The Catholic Lighthouse* office, I set it aside, thinking it would be a good gift to give away to any teenage boys who won the contest. When I came across it a second time, I decided to read a bit of it, and found it really spoke to my heart — and I'm a girl! However, I did grow up hunting, fishing and hiking in the mountains with my dad and brothers.

I enjoyed it so much that I ordered several copies from the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Gift Shop and began giving them as the gift for teenage boys who had won the contest. It is actually for men of all ages, but if a man won the contest, the prize would be the featured book.

So, since I've got one extra copy, I've decided to offer this as the featured book and include it as the prize for anyone over the age of 14.

"What does rafting through white water have to do with the spiritual life? Does teaching a dog to heel have an element of the sacred? Can fending off bears at a campsite or accidentally setting fire to a dandelion field yield spiritual insights?"



"In Randall Cirner's world, these ordinary — and occasionally not-so-ordinary — events are moments of encounter in which God reveals himself to those ready to find him. God hasn't distanced himself from us, Cirner notes through his own sometimes hapless, sometimes humorous experiences, God has placed us in this world and speaks to us through it. When we tune our ears to spiritual truths, we will find that daily life is a source of daily miracles."

Randall Cirner is a writer and speaker who has worked within various church renewal movements, including the Cursillo, the charismatic renewal and the covenant community movements. Randall and his wife, Therese, live in Vero Beach, FL, and have five children and one grandchild.

To order a copy of his book, which I just discovered is a clearance item with only 75 copies available, please contact Servant Books at 28 W. Liberty St., Cincinnati, OH 45202; 1-800-488-0488; or by going to the St. Anthony Press Web site at <http://catalog.americancatholic.org> and type the title under search. The order number is T16618. The price for this clearance book, which originally sold for \$12.99, is now only \$1.46. I just ordered 10 copies for my brothers and nephews!

If you don't want to purchase the book and would rather risk being the lucky one of dozens of contestants, send in the completed November Puzzle to *The Catholic Lighthouse* by November 25. See address under puzzle.

PAPAL STATEMENTS

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

A	R	D	E	H	T	A	C	X	E	I	H	I	T	F
M	J	Q	L	A	C	I	L	C	Y	C	N	E	X	E
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ANATHEMA
BRIEF
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CHAIR OF PETER

ENCYCLICAL
EX CATHEDRA
EXCOMMUNICATE
IN PETTO
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INFALLIBLE
INTERDICT
LETTER
MOTU PROPRIO
URBI ET ORBI

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Jean Marie Pritchard of Queen of Peace Parish in Sweet Home is the October Family Puzzle Contest winner and has won "Letters to My Mother — A Message of Love, a plea for Freedom" by Ingrid Betancourt.

The youth contest was won by James Wenske, 10, of St. Joseph Parish in Moulton. He will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number and parish name by November 25 for a chance to win "White Water, Bears, Dry Flies and other ways God Speaks to Guys;" (see review on this page). Send to: Family Contest, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age.

Los Angeles woman says Holy Spirit inspired 'talking Bible' storybook

By Paula Doyle

Catholic News Service

LOS ANGELES (CNS) -- Three years ago, St. Paul the Apostle parishioner Pamela Fischer woke up one morning in Los Angeles with a new vocation. The 48-year-old wife and mother of two St. Monica High School students and a college freshman art major had an idea for a book project.

"I felt an inspiration from the Holy Spirit to get together a Bible storybook for little ones," said Fischer.

Although she was a publishing neophyte, she wasn't daunted by the challenge of producing a battery-operated Bible for pre-readers and early readers. The recently released book, which was approved by the Los Angeles archdiocesan Office of Religious Education, is titled "This Bible Talks! A Child's First 'Press & Play' Bible Storybook."

"You don't question the Holy Spirit when you feel it strongly. In discernment, I felt very comfortable and at ease and at peace that this was something I should do," said Fischer, a longtime member of St. Paul's 11-year-old weekly women's faith-sharing group.

Her first step toward accomplishing her mission was to meet with officials at St. Paul the Apostle's parish school, then with second-grade chaplain, Paulist Father Brad Schoeberle, who picked 28 to 30 core Bible stories that particularly connected with young children.

Fischer pared the stories down to 20 and began writing short narratives, which her artist-daughter, Jenny, helped to il-

lustrate.

"It was a lot of days of prayer. I would write and I would pray," said Fischer.

A volunteer for ecumenical causes promoting Christian unity among Catholics, Protestants and members of Orthodox churches, Fischer wanted the Bible storybook to appeal to Christians of all denominations.

To that end, she contacted Msgr. Lloyd Torgerson, pastor of St. Monica Church in Santa Monica, who reviewed the text from a Catholic perspective. A Methodist minister Fischer knew suggested a few subtle changes, then the vetted text received a stamp of approval from her publisher's Eastern Orthodox bishop.

"It's so important to me to have the little children come to know Christ. I just really wanted to

make this Bible universal to all Christian churches. I didn't want any child left out," Fischer told *The Tidings*, newspaper of the Los Angeles Archdiocese.

A cradle Catholic whose parents shared Bible stories with her as a young child, Fischer said her early introduction to Scripture allowed her to have Christ as a central focus in her life. When she had her

own children, now ages 20, 17 and 14, she made sure she read stories to them about Jesus when they were small.

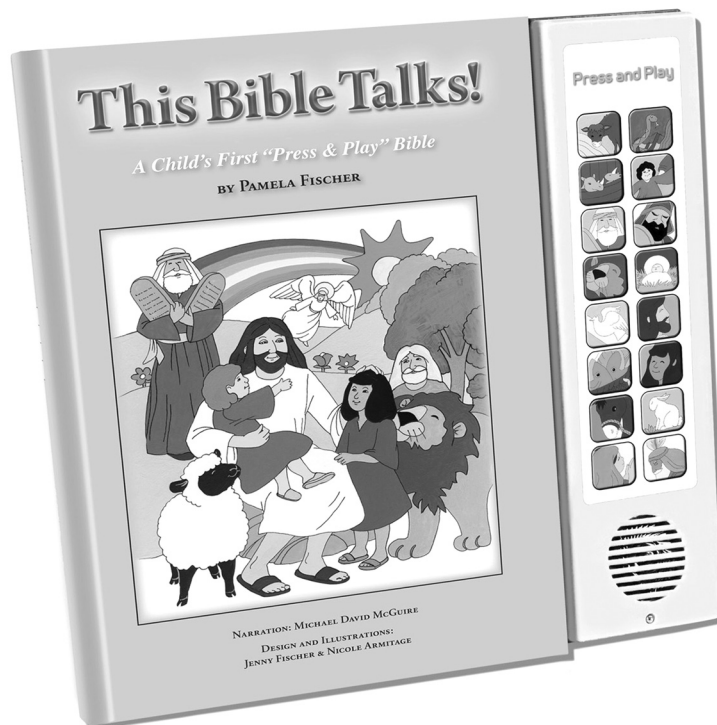
"My vision is that this Bible in different languages will reach out to children around the world, especially those living in poverty," said Fischer, who added she didn't want a child's illiteracy to keep him or her from learning about Jesus.

With the generous financial backing of her husband, Joel, a carpenter/house builder and Catholic convert, Fischer was able to self-publish the \$25.95 book, with two triple-A batteries included, through GM Books in Los Angeles. Nonreaders who peruse "This Bible Talks!" can hear a narration of the text by pressing the picture icons on the book's raised plastic panel. Early readers can follow the text as they listen to the engaging voice of the male narrator.

The talking Bible includes 16 chapters with short, paragraph-length stories from both the Old and New Testaments, starting with "God's Gift of Creation" and ending with "Jesus Sends Us the Holy Spirit."

The colorful illustrations, many showing a smiling Jesus, were a team effort by daughter Jenny, who drew the initial sketches, and Nicole Armitage, a former Disney artist. Fischer's husband, who was a college English major, helped with editing.

"This Bible Talks!" costs \$25.95, plus shipping and handling, and can be ordered online at: www.thisbibletalks.com. A portion of the net proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated by the author to various Christian charities.

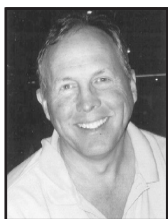


"This Bible Talks! A Child's First 'Press & Play' Bible Storybook" was written by Pamela Fischer, a parishioner at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Los Angeles. The recently released book has been approved by the Los Angeles archdiocesan Office of Religious Education. (CNS photo/Mark Heliger)



The Joyful Catholic

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



God lives in a special place

Last week my 4-year old nephew began peppering his mother with questions about God.

"Is God married?" he asked. "Is God invisible? Does God give everyone candy?"

His mother answered all his questions to the best of her ability.

The mystery behind his curiosity was solved on Sunday as she rode with him on her bicycle to church. As they passed the rectory, he pointed and declared, "That's where God lives."

After Mass, she related this funny story to our parish priest, who chuckled as she informed him that he had been promoted.

When we are children, most of us assume grown-ups are god-like because they appear powerful and super-sized to a pint-sized kid.

Priests appear especially god-like to children. In a way, this is right because priests have answered a call from God to consecrate themselves, to set themselves apart in order to "be Christ" to his people on earth.

Priests are ordained to celebrate the sacraments "in persona Christi," a Latin phrase meaning "in the person of Christ."

In other words, Christ acts

through the priest in the sacraments. This is a God-given gift originally bestowed by Jesus on his disciples.

In a similar way, all married men are called to be priests to their wives; "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

Thus when a husband loves his wife, she may say of him "God lives there."

Nuns are also called to let Christ occupy and guide their lives. In a special way, nuns are spiritual brides of Christ and mothers of God, representing him to the world and making all things new.

In reality all people are called to be priestly and Christ-like. As Saint Peter said; "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

Everyone is created to receive God's royal love and to let him dwell in us. It is our choice whether or not we accept this love.

From the moment of our conception, God provides us the spark of his divine essence and inspires us with his holy breath of life. Surely our creator smiles at us and thinks; "That's where I live."

Then Jesus invites us to receive God in an especially intimate and mysterious way; "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth... you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:15).

Thus we are living, breathing temples of the Holy Spirit and share the life of the Trinity.

We even receive Christ physically into our bodies whenever we receive the Eucharist. So when we see people returning from Communion we may say, "God lives there."

As we grow in faith, we realize that God inhabits all of us and clothes us with new life. We come to understand God indwells his entire creation, except where there is sin.

Sadly, we may kill God's life within us with selfish thoughts, words and deeds.

Happily, when we obey his will in love, Christ promises to live in each one of us; "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20).

This is a marvelous miracle to contemplate and behold: God lives in me, and I live in God.

Let us become so filled with the love of God that we may say with Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

May we strive to live in loving obedience to God so that everyone who meets us may say with delight, "That's where God lives."

Hermann is a popular Catholic writer and retreat speaker.

Sunday readings from Nov. 9 to Dec. 14

November 9 — Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome	Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12 Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17 John 2:13-22
November 16 — 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31 Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 Matthew 25:14-30
November 23 — Our Lord Jesus Christ The King	Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17 Psalm 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28 Matthew 25:31-46
November 27 — Thanksgiving Day	Sirach 50:22-24 Psalm 113:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Luke 17:11-19
November 30 — First Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7 Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Mark 13:33-37
December 7 — Second Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 2 Peter 3:8-14 Mark 1:1-8
December 8 — Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Genesis 3:9-15, 20 Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 Luke 1:26-38
December 12 — Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe	Zechariah 2:14-17 Judith 13:18bcde, 19 Luke 1:26-38 or 1:39-47
December 14 — Third Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11 Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28

Tracing the Traditions

Turning cartwheels: tracing the tradition of the Advent wreath

By Patricia Kasten

It's Advent: time for turning cartwheels.

Centuries ago, before Christianity arrived in northern Europe, farmers lived in fear of winter. In that harsh, northern climate, December days were short and cold, when nothing grew. People feared that the sun would never return from its sojourn south on the horizon.

So farmers took the wheels off their useless farm carts, decorated them with branches, ribbons and candles to symbolize the sun and the longed-for growing season and hung the wheels in their houses, hoping to bring about the return of the sun. Farmers have always had to wait patiently.

The cartwheels were a powerful symbol and, by the 16th century, the Lutherans of Germany had adapted the wheel custom into the Advent wreath — Adventskrantz in German.

The wheel image of the Advent wreath reminds us that Advent is a season of looking both forward and backward, remembering the two comings of Christ. Looking back to Christ's first coming propels us forward toward his future coming, just as a cartwheel moves back and forth across a planted field.

Clearly, the focus of Advent is on "coming." The word "advent" comes from a Latin word (advenire) meaning an arrival. In ancient Rome, an adventus was a special event, first used for various gods. At an adventus, the gods' statues were decorated and carried through the streets with great ceremony to symbolize the god's renewed coming among the people.

Today, few use cartwheels and no one would think of putting a decorated car tire in church. But the symbolism of the adventus is still apparent in Advent wreaths:

- The circle. The wheel going round and round represents eternity, with no beginning or end: Christ's eternal victory over the cycle of life and death, God's all encircling love, and the God who has no beginning or end.
- The evergreens. They stay green all year, symbolizing life even under the harsh, dark conditions of winter. The evergreen has long been a symbol of eternal life. The unchanging evergreen also symbolizes God's eternal faithfulness, shown to us through the Son's victory over death.
- Purple colors. Liturgically, the church uses color to highlight specific mysteries, such as red for the Passion. The purple of

Advent traditionally symbolizes penitence, as it does in Lent. However, while Advent is a penitential time, the season's main focus is of expectancy, like the purple of the sky before sunrise. Therefore, the purple of Advent — a blue-purple — is not the purple of Lent, which is a red-purple.

- Pink (actually rose). Pink is a rarely used liturgical color, symbolizing rejoicing. The Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin word for "rejoice." The entrance hymn of this Sunday's begins with the word "Rejoice" and the readings and psalm response continue the theme of joyful expectancy.

- Candles. There are four on an Advent wreath, representing the Sundays of Advent. They also traditionally represent the 4,000 years before Christ's coming — the time of "the people who walked in darkness (who) have seen a great light" (Is 9:1). At the time the Advent wreath custom was developing, many believed the world had been created in 4004 BC. Today, we realize that four candles, symbolizing centuries, are not literal, but remind us of the ages of waiting for the Incarnation.

So as you spin the Advent wreath to light the candles of the season, remember that your

wreath is more than candles, ribbons and pine boughs. It is a symbol of faith, reminding us of the story of salvation starting with the eternal God who so loved us that he sent his Son, the Light of the World, to redeem us

and light our path to eternal life.

This is our faith, this is our creed — all wrapped up in the wheel-shaped wreath. That's what we celebrate — with or without turning cartwheels — during Advent.

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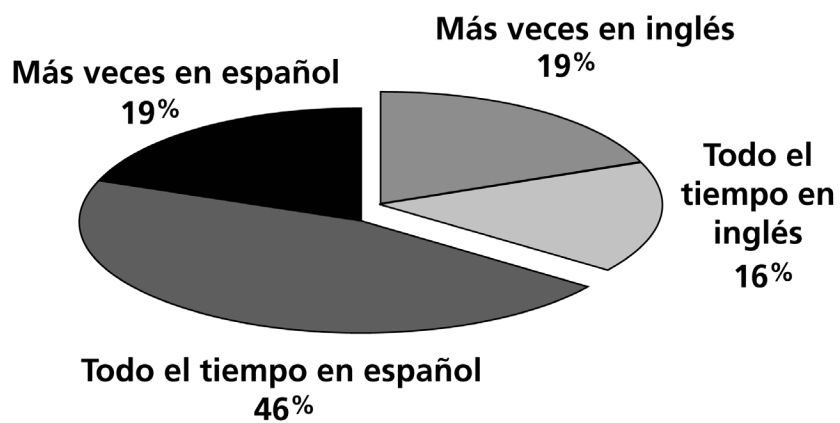
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Idioma preferido

Más hispanos católicos bilingües prefieren asistir a misa celebrada en español.



Fuente: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

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Más hispanos católicos bilingües prefieren asistir a misa celebrada en español. (Gráfico CNS/Emily Thompson)

El liderazgo de la comunidad latina, un diálogo necesario en la Iglesia

Por Mar Muñoz-Visoso

En estos tiempos revueltos de crisis financiera y mercados financieros inestables quiero hablarles de otro tipo de inversión, uno en capital espiritual y humano que debe analizarse cuidadosamente para no perder la oportunidad y obtener el máximo rendimiento.

En febrero de este año, Pew Research Center publicó sus proyecciones de población 2005-2050. No es ningún secreto el importante papel que la inmigración ha jugado en el crecimiento y la diversificación de la población en Estados Unidos en las últimas décadas. Los inmigrantes y sus hijos y nietos ya nacidos aquí son, y seguirán siendo en las próximas décadas, responsables por la mayor parte del crecimiento de la población.

La importancia del factor migratorio se ha incrementado progresivamente debido a la disminución en el número promedio de alumbramientos por parte de madres nacidas en Estados Unidos y al envejecimiento de la población nativa. Esto ha hecho que la población no inmigrante apenas pueda mantener en nivel de reemplazo generacional y que se espere un incremento dramático del ratio de dependencia (el número de niños y ancianos comparado con el número de estadounidenses en edad de trabajar) entre la población nativa.

Dado que la mayoría de los que emigran lo hacen como adultos en edad de trabajar, los emigrantes serán responsables por un 23% del crecimiento de la población adulta activa hasta el 2050. El sistema de Seguridad Social y el sistema tributario dependerán cada vez más del flujo continuo de mano de obra extranjera y de sus descendientes.

Para el 2050, los hispanos serán el 29% de la población (duplicando su porcentaje desde un 14%) y los asiáticos crecerán casi al mismo ritmo en términos porcentuales, pasando de un 5% a un 9% de la población. La población de raza negra continuará creciendo pero a un ritmo menor que los otros dos, apenas manteniendo el porcentaje de población en su nivel actual del 13%.

En una presentación reciente a la Conferencia de Obispos, el Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life les dijo a los obispos que los cambios que se reflejaban en la composición de los católicos en este país realmente podían extrapolarse al conjunto

de la población estadounidense.

Los hispanos componen ya el 35% de la población católica en EE.UU., y más del 50% entre los jóvenes menores de 25 años. El 80% de las diócesis tiene personal diocesano que coordina el ministerio hispano y un 20% de parroquias están sirviendo a la población latina. Un 25 por ciento de laicos en ministerios diocesanos son hispanos.

También encontramos algunos retos importantes. El número de vocaciones sacerdotales, un 15%, no se corresponde con el porcentaje de población. El índice de abandono escolar es del 30%. Debemos plantearnos urgentemente qué significa eso para la sociedad y para la Iglesia. Aunque un 68% de los latinos se auto identifica como católico, un número significativo está abandonando la Iglesia para ingresar a otras denominaciones o no practican ninguna religión.

Los latinos, en general, son personas muy espirituales, con una larga tradición católica. Pero un gran número nunca fueron debidamente catequizados. Esto los hace muy susceptibles al proselitismo y también significa que muchos no están preparados para un liderazgo efectivo.

Todo esto me trae al punto de mi pensamiento de hoy. Estos números, estos porcentajes y tendencias, tienen consecuencias pastorales. La Iglesia debe estudiarlas y tomar acción. Dada nuestra presencia creciente, la Iglesia espera liderazgo de nosotros y debemos ser parte de la solución, no ya sólo hacia dentro de la comunidad hispana, sino en el contexto de toda la Iglesia y de comunidades parroquiales cada vez más diversas.

La gran "misión evangelizadora continental" que nos propone el documento de Aparecida (Quinta Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Mayo 2007) tiene tanta, o más, vigencia aquí como en el resto del continente. Los latinos somos los portadores y portavoces de ese llamado aquí en "el norte" y al mismo tiempo sus destinatarios. Pueblo de Dios en marcha, ¿a qué esperamos? Formación y espíritu misionero, he aquí dos claves para el diálogo y la acción.

Mar Muñoz-Visoso es subdirectora de prensa de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos.

Ignorar las Escrituras es ignorar a Cristo

Por Mar Muñoz-Visoso

En este Año Paulino en que horamos la memoria del incansable apóstol de los gentiles, Pablo, y sobre todo en estos días en que nuestros obispos se han dedicado a reflexionar conjuntamente en el Sínodo sobre La Palabra de Dios en la vida y en la misión de la Iglesia, no puedo dejar de pensar en la famosa frase de san Jerónimo: "Ignorar las Escrituras es ignorar a Cristo".

A veces me llega como una brisa fresca que trae a la mente pasajes conocidos que iluminan realidades y preocupaciones de la vida diaria. Otras, la siento más como un reproche, si bien amable, del Espíritu que me hace avergonzarme del poco esfuerzo que pongo en conocer más y mejor a Aquel a quien digo que amo. Entonces, siento la necesidad de poner remedio a mi ignorancia, sintiendo que en ello me va la vida.

Benedicto XVI, presentando la figura de san Jerónimo en una de sus audiencias de los miércoles, decía precisamente con respecto a esta frase: "¿Qué podemos aprender de san Jerónimo? Sobre todo me parece lo siguiente: amar la Palabra de Dios en la Sagrada Escritura... Por ello es importante que todo cristiano viva en contacto y en diálogo personal con la Palabra de Dios, que se nos entrega en la Sagrada Escritura".

El Papa nos recuerda que este diálogo con la Palabra debe tener siempre dos dimensiones: por una parte, tiene que darse un diálogo realmente personal, pues Dios habla con cada uno de nosotros a través de la Sagrada Escritura y tiene un mensaje para cada uno; por otro, y para evitar caer en el individualismo, tenemos que tener presente que la Palabra de Dios se nos da precisamente para "edificar comunión".

"Por tanto —continúa el Santo padre— a pesar de que siempre es una palabra personal, es también una Palabra que edifica la comunidad, que edifica a la Iglesia. Por ello tenemos que leerla en comunión con la Iglesia viva. El lugar privilegiado de la lectura y de la escucha de la Palabra de Dios es la liturgia, en la que al celebrar la Palabra y al hacer presente en el Sacramento el Cuerpo de Cristo, actualizamos la Palabra en nuestra vida y la hacemos presente entre nosotros."

Se dice que nadie ama lo que no conoce.

Para amar la Palabra de Dios debemos conocerla mejor. Y para conocerla no hay más remedio que estudiarla, pasar tiempo con ella, saborearla en oración. Para ello es útil dejarse guiar por los que saben más y por los que han venido antes que nosotros y beber de sus conocimientos.

Nada debe impedirnos tomar una Biblia y hacer un ratito de oración. Pero tampoco debemos despreciar las herramientas que la Iglesia pone a nuestro alcance —a través de nuestras diócesis, comunidades e instituciones educativas—. Estos estudios van a ayudar que esa lectura y ese conocimiento sean verdaderamente profundos, auténticos, en contexto, descubriendo todos los sentidos de la Escritura. El estudio de las Sagradas Escrituras debería ser una necesidad vital para todo cristiano y no el privilegio o la obligación de unos pocos.

Les invito a rezar la Liturgia de las Horas, la oración de la Iglesia impregnada de pasajes y oraciones bíblicas. Les reto a sumarse a estudios bíblicos existentes y a crearlos o requerirlos donde no los haya. Especialmente a aquellos con vocación catequética y de liderazgo pastoral, la Iglesia les urge más que nunca a expandir su formación bíblica que enriquecerá su enseñanza y sobre todo iluminará su propia vida.

Les puedo decir que incluso, y sobre todo, a aquellos que hemos tenido la oportunidad de tener estudios teológicos con un componente bíblico importante, la experiencia nos ha servido para darnos cuenta de lo poco que sabemos. Y si a alguno no le abrió el apetito para desear conocer y estudiar la Palabra más y mejor, y de manera continuada, es porque sólo escuchó con la mente y no con el corazón.

No diga que nadie le había dicho. Ignorar la Escritura es ignorar a Cristo. ¿A qué espera para tratar de paliar su ignorancia? (Que, por cierto, por ser suya lo es también de la Iglesia y por tanto la empobrece). Se lo dice con mucho cariño una ignorante como usted en busca de respuestas. Ánimo, las lecturas del día le están esperando...

Mar Muñoz-Visoso es subdirectora de prensa de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos.



The "Good News" from St. Paul
Year of St. Paul ~ 2008-2009 Jubilee

Galatians 6:1-10 (NAB)

Life in the Community of Christ

1 Brothers, even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit, looking to yourself, so that you also may not be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deluding himself. **4** Each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason to boast with regard to himself alone, and not with regard to someone else; **5** for each will bear his own load.

6 One who is being instructed in the word should share all good things with his instructor. **7** Make no mistake: God is not mocked, for a person will reap only what he sows, **8** because the one who sows for his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows for the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit. **9** Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. **10** So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.

Pope Benedict XVI Intentions November 2008

General: That the testimony of love offered by the Saints, may fortify Christians in their service to God and neighbor, imitating Christ who came not to be served but to serve.

Mission: That Christian communities in Asia, contemplating the face of Christ, may find the most suitable way to announce him in full fidelity to the Gospel to the peoples of that vast continent so rich in culture and ancient forms of spirituality.



Cardinal beatifies parents of St. Therese of Lisieux in French town

By Catholic News Service

LISIEUX, France (CNS) — Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins encouraged those present at the beatification of the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux to thank God for their own parents.

"I have thought about my own father and mother, and I would like you also to think at this moment of your father and mother, so we will thank God together for having created us and made us Christians through the married love of our parents," said Cardinal Saraiva Martins, former prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes.

"Receiving life is a wonderful thing. But it is still more admirable for us that our parents should have led us to the church, which alone is capable of forming Christians. No one can become a Christian by himself," the cardinal said at the Oct. 19 beatification Mass for Louis and Marie Zelig Guerin Martin in St. Therese Basilica.

Among the approximately 15,000 people attending the Mass was a 6-year-old Italian, Pietro Schillero. When he was 13 months old, his parents prayed for the intercession of the Martins to cure his fatal lung condition; in 2003, the church recognized the cure as miraculous.

In a message read at the beatification Mass, Pope Benedict XVI said that the Martins had "proclaimed the Gospel"

through their exemplary lives, passing on their "ardent faith" to their children. The pope said he hoped their example would be "a source of joy and hope for all parents and all families."

Cardinal Saraiva Martins said St. Therese, who died of hemoptysis, or bleeding of the lungs, at age 24, had described her parents as "more worthy of heaven than earth."

The "secret of success" of the Martins' Christian life, the cardinal said, had been their readiness to "walk humbly with God

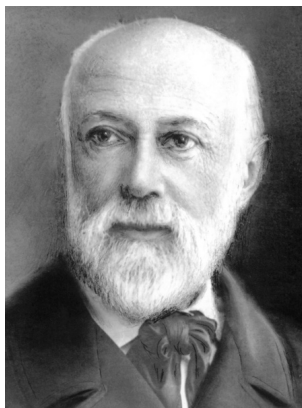
in seeking the advice of the Lord," while also "placing all aspects of their lives in harmony with church teachings."

He added that the Martins were a "gift to parents," widows and widowers, and those facing illness and death.

"Louis and Zelig are a gift for spouses of all

ages, through the esteem, respect and harmony with which they loved for 19 years," the cardinal said. "They lived the promises of marriage, the faithfulness of engagement, the indissolubility of the bond, the fruitfulness of love, in happiness and in trials, in health and in sickness."

Marie Zelig Guerin married Louis Martin, a watchmaker and jeweler, in 1858. She died of cancer in 1877, at the age of 46, after giving birth to nine children. Four of the Martins' children died in infancy. The five who survived all entered religious life.



Louis and Marie Zelig Guerin Martin, the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, are pictured in a combination photo created from images provided by the Sanctuary of Lisieux in France. Pope Benedict XVI approved the beatification of the couple on Oct. 19, World Mission Sunday, during a Mass in the Basilica of St. Therese in Lisieux, France. (CNS photo/courtesy of Sanctuary of Lisieux)

THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Pope closes synod, says Bible is put into practice through service

By John Thavis Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Benedict XVI closed the Synod of Bishops on the Bible by preaching a lesson on love of God and neighbor, saying the word of God must be put into practice through service to others.

The concluding liturgy came after the pope accepted 55 final synod propositions.

Joined by more than 250 bishops at a Mass Oct. 26 in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said the synod had highlighted a fundamental truth: that the church's missionary activity will fall flat unless it is nourished by scriptural reading and understanding.

Those who think they've understood Scripture but fail to implement its most important teachings — in particular, the double commandment to love God and neighbor — "show that they are still far from having grasped its profound meaning," he said.

There is "a singular connection that exists between listening to God and unselfish service to one's brothers and sisters," he said.

The papal liturgy closed an intense three-week period of speech-giving, small-group discussion and elaboration of final recommendations by the 253 voting members of the synod and some 50 other observers and experts.

One of the synod's strongest recommendations was to improve the scriptural aspect of homilies, and the pope seemed to offer a model at the closing Mass.

Examining St. Matthew's account of Christ's words on the "greatest commandment," the pope began by looking at the historical context of Judaic law and the originality of what Christ was proposing.

Then he drew connections with the previous readings from the Book of Exodus and a letter of St. Paul to underscore a crucial point: "To be disciples of Christ is to put into practice his teachings, which are summarized in the first and greatest commandment of divine law, the commandment of love."

The pope said the synod had helped the church focus on the importance of Scripture, and he urged participants to return home and launch a program of scriptural renewal in their dioceses and parishes.

He expressed his disappointment that bishops from mainland China were not allowed by their government to attend the synod. He paid tribute to the Chinese bishops' "communion with the universal church and their fidelity to the successor of the apostle Peter," and assured them they were in the synod's prayers.

On Oct. 25, the last working day of the synod, the pope lunched with participants, joking that he had probably violated international human rights principles by making them work late into the night and on Sundays during the assembly.

"We'll have to see what can be done to improve this for the next synod," he said.

Joe Machacek's journey to the diaconate

Continued from p. 4

sergeant. He is tough; he knows exactly what he is talking about and serious in what he is doing. He cuts no slack, but I have come to know what "tough love" is all about. I really respect this of him and he exemplifies what it takes to give of one's self and to put others first.

Please tell us about your diaconate journey?

When we took our perceiver assessment test with Deacon Gerald DuPont of St. Thomas University at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, he said that for the next five years we would need a book in our hands at all times. He wasn't kidding! The academics are challenging, yet each class builds on the prior studies and are interwoven in a way that have lured me into knowing more and more about God, Church and God's plan for me and mankind.

After the first academic year, the spouses are able to audit their classes, but Mary has studied along with me for credit. Honestly she does most of the planning and orders all the books on-line for us. It is a team effort. We juggle vacation plans, virtually no TV except an occasional EWTN program.

Our children have been most under-

standing and the last two scheduled their weddings in the summer when we have more free time from studies.

The first couple of years, we traveled to Columbus, where the professors from St. Thomas met us for instruction. Father Gabriel often sat in on the first classes to critique the teacher and lesson plan. He insists on the very best when it comes to studies. Later, long-distance learning was introduced where from Columbus we joined others from Austin, Temple and College Station via TV correspondence. Now we can all share the same great professors.

Once a month our spiritual director, Michael Fonseca, flies from Michigan to direct and guide us in our spiritual formation. Each year we make a silent retreat with our spouses, directed by Michael, where we can grow in knowing God and ourselves on our journey to serving God and his Church.

Spirituality and studies go hand in hand. Without spiritual direction, we could know all there is about Church history, philosophy and liturgy, but we would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

What is your profession/job? How has your journey/ministry affected your

work?

I have worked in maintenance with my hands and in management for 40 years; the last four at Yoakum Hospital. Working in different plant sites with different people and climaxing with the experience at the hospital, I truly believe God was grooming me for the position I now have. Our pastor, Father Bob Knippenberg, asked me to work for our parish as the business manager under the guidance of Mary Rose Barta, and I've been here since January of 2008.

Father Bob is a walking encyclopedia when it comes to questions I have in my studies. Here I am able to serve the church, minister when needed, and be close to God and his people.

What have been some of the most difficult times of your journey/schooling/etc.?

Often people ask me about my journey to ordination. I tell them, most of all, that I need their prayers. I could not have gotten this far if I didn't take this journey one step at a time.

Often I feel bombarded with studies, work and family, so I put things aside, leave it in God's hands and take one step at a time, trusting his guidance.

A priest friend of mine once told me that as he lay prostrate at his ordination, he still wasn't sure he should be ordained. This is much the same for me. Only through the direction of the Holy Spirit do I move on, one step at a time.

I believe I have started my work in a sense now with the work I am doing for the parish. Mary and I hope to teach the RCIA program after ordination and whatever my pastor and church ask of us.

Any special thoughts? Stories?

It is a tough program; we will have received more than five years of education before we're ordained. Many chose to, or are asked to leave, but they give it a try, not losing anything in the process. I respect them all, knowing that God has plans for them in different ministries. I would not discourage anyone from coming for an informational session or starting the program. Many do not see themselves in this ministry, but others see them in this light, so I encourage everyone to let the tiniest whisper in their hearts be heard, because this is usually the way God calls.

To learn more about the diaconate program, please contact Rev. Gabriel Maison at (361) 596-4674.



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Holy Day of Obligation
Immaculate Conception
December 8**

After November 4 ...

Continued from p. 1

justified and not actions of irresponsible violence.

If Obama wins, Catholics who voted for him will have a heavy responsibility. As his first act in office, he has pledged to support and sign into law the Freedom of Choice Act, or FOCA. This legislation is also supported by our own, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Would you walk five miles to attend CCD?

Continued from p. 9

faith and belief in young people have been restored. To hear that a thirteen-year-old would walk nearly five miles to attend a religion class is unbelievable!"

I know it was no mere coincidence that my path crossed with Isidor's unexpectedly on that Wednesday evening more than four weeks ago. It's amazing what our Lord can accomplish through us, if we but let him. There are young people just waiting to be invited to form a closer relationship with Jesus, if we just invite them. And that is the lesson that I pray Isidor and his classmates will learn from this year. The seed of Isidor's journey of faith has been planted by a simple invitation. Each one of us might ask ourselves, "Who have we invited to come to know Jesus, lately?"

Isidor's preparation to receive the sacrament of baptism continues. He hopes to be baptized in the Catholic Church one day soon.

The Freedom of Choice Act establishes, by federal law, that abortion is a "fundamental right" throughout the full nine months of pregnancy. If passed, it will effectively wipe out 35 years of legislation seeking to modify some of the worst aspects of abortion. It would eliminate restrictions on the infanticide of partial-birth abortions. It would wipe from the books of more than 35 states laws which provide for informed consent in abortion clinics, parental consent or even notification of parents in the case of minors. It will obliterate laws that protect doctors, nurses and health workers from having to perform abortions or other procedures that they find morally objectionable. On the world scene, the Mexico City policy will be reversed by executive order, allowing U.S. taxpayer dollars to promote and perform abortions overseas.

It will be devastating for the cause of life and major victory for the culture of death.

American Catholics who voted for Obama will have to work long and hard to stop this from happening. If they fail, this will be an immense burden on their consciences for there will be an immediate uptick in the numbers of the unborn killed through abortion.

The responsibilities of voting are heavy. Catholics voting for either Obama or McCain will have to realize that their vote has consequences that go far beyond Nov. 4. Their involvement can't end on Election Day in pursuing a culture of life and justice and peace for all.

NCEA launches "Child to Child Two" Campaign to help Gulf Coast after Hurricane Ike

Continued from p. 5

NCEA will collect money and distribute it to dioceses that incurred storm damage. All money collected will go to direct assistance. For more information about the "Child to Child Two" campaign visit www.ncea.org.

There are more than 7,300 Catholic schools nationwide serving 2.3 million students; more than 4 million students are enrolled in religious education programs.

NCEA is the largest private professional education association in the world. The Association's membership includes more than 200,000 educators serving millions of students at all levels from pre-K through graduate school. It was founded in 1904.

Mexican American Cultural Center evolves into Catholic college

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — What began in 1972 as the Mexican American Cultural Center has evolved into the Mexican American Catholic College. The board of directors held a press conference Oct. 24 to announce the unanimous decision to expand the mission of the 36-year-old institute by offering a fully bicultural, bilingual ministry formation program that can lead to a bachelor's or master's degree in Catholic pastoral ministry. "This is a day to say 'thank you' to Jesus Christ and Our Lady of Guadalupe," said Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo, chairman of the board. "We are going from an institute that offers certificates to a college awarding degrees in pastoral ministry." By the year 2020, it is expected Hispanics will represent more than 50 percent of U.S. Catholics. This shift has occurred already in Texas and many other states among Catholics under the age of 25.

Exhibit opens as debate continues over Pope Pius XII's wartime role

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican opened a major exhibit on the life and pontificate of Pope Pius XII, highlighting the late pope's actions on behalf of Jews and others who suffered during World War II. The retrospective show -- featuring photos, articles of clothing and documents -- opened Nov. 4 in an exhibition hall adjacent to St. Peter's Square. Several sections of the exhibit are dedicated to the Vatican's actions during the war. Pope Pius is described as a "defender of peace" who opened Vatican properties to refugees and created an office to help prisoners of war and their families. The pope is pictured standing amid the Roman populace after aerial bombardment of the city, visiting the Vatican bakery that furnished free bread to residents, and meeting in 1943 with Jews who escaped deportation to concentration camps. Press clippings and letters attesting to the pope's courage in defending the Jews are included, along with transcripts of the pope's radio broadcasts during the war. One of the most unusual items is a handwritten page in which the pope gave an account of witnessing the so-called "miracle of the sun," seeing the sun rotate and move in the sky. The episode occurred in the Vatican Gardens, the day before the pope proclaimed the dogma of the Assumption of Mary in 1950. The exhibit runs to Jan. 6.

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Pope Benedict says Blessed Pope John always worked for unity, peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Marking the 50th anniversary of the election of Blessed Pope John XXIII, Pope Benedict XVI said his predecessor always worked to increase agreement, hope, unity and peace. “The pope was a man of peace and a pastor of peace who knew how to open unexpected horizons for fraternity among Christians and dialogue with all in the East and the West,” Pope Benedict said after praying at the tomb of Blessed Pope John. Some 3,000 pilgrims from the Diocese of Bergamo, the home diocese of Blessed Pope John, traveled to the Vatican to mark the anniversary of his Oct. 28, 1958, election.

Pope calls for help to end violence against Indian, Iraqi Christians

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI called on government and religious leaders to help end acts of “cruel violence” and intolerance many minority Christians are facing in some parts of the world, especially in Iraq and India. The pope made his appeal Oct. 26. In India, tens of thousands of Christians have fled anti-Christian violence that erupted in Orissa state in late August. Several church leaders have denounced the local government’s inaction in stopping or prosecuting the cases of violence and destruction of church property. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that in northern Iraq more than 13,000 Christians have fled Mosul recently because of intensified violence and intimidation there. That figure represents more than half the city’s total Christian population.

Archdiocese starts campaign in Brazilian state with most murders

RECIFE, Brazil (CNS) — Reacting to statistics that show the state of Pernambuco has the highest murder rate in the country, a Brazilian archdiocese has launched a campaign with the Fifth Commandment as its theme. As part of the “Thou Shall Not Kill” campaign, the names of murder victims will be read at weekend Masses in the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife until the state’s murder rate goes down. For the campaign, archdiocesan officials are working with pebodycount.com.br, which keeps track of the murder victims in the state. In the first nine months of this year the number of homicides in the state was 3,093. Roughly 42,000 Pernambucans were murdered between 1996 and 2005, according to reports from the Unified Health System, the federal government body that regulates health care in Brazil.

Pope to visit Africa in March to help prepare for October synod

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI announced that he plans to make his first trip to Africa next March, visiting Cameroon and Angola. The pope will make the trip to help prepare for the Synod of Bishops on Africa, scheduled for October 2009, and to mark the 500th anniversary of the evangelization of Angola. He announced the trip Oct. 26 at a closing Mass for the Synod of Bishops on the Bible. Pope Benedict said his intention was to meet with representatives from African bishops’ conferences in Cameroon and hand-deliver the African synod’s “instrumentum laboris,” or working document. The Synod of Bishops will be the second for Africa and is scheduled to take place in Rome. The theme is “The Church in Africa at the Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.”

Palestinian beer on tap during village’s Oktoberfest

TAYBEH, West Bank (CNS) — Beer flowed freely and the beat of the traditional “darbuka” drum resounded through the hillside as this all-Christian Palestinian village celebrated its version of the German Oktoberfest. Later, the drumbeats were replaced by the pounding sounds of Palestinian hip-hop groups while young, fashionably dressed Palestinians danced to the hypnotic rhythms. The Taybeh Oktoberfest has been celebrated in September for the past two years out of deference to Muslims who have marked at least part of their month-long Ramadan fast in October. Surrounded by 12 Muslim villages, the 1,500 residents of Taybeh say they have a good relationship with their neighbors, but are adamant about retaining the Christian character of the village and historically do not sell land to outsiders. Taybeh is the site of the biblical refuge town of Ephraim, and Jesus is said to have passed through here on his way to Jerusalem.

Pope sends congratulatory message to Obama

Continued from p. 1

that the pope congratulates a new U.S. president only when he formally takes office.

The Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, was published Nov. 5 with an opinion piece headlined “A choice that unites.”

“In the end, change occurred. The slogan that accompanied Barack Obama’s whole electoral campaign found its expression” in the results of the Nov. 4 election, said the article by Giuseppe Fiorentino.

“As the president-elect underlined in his victory speech in Chicago, America really is the country where anything can happen,” a country “able to overcome fractures and divisions that not long ago seemed impossible to heal,” it said.

But, the article said, the vote for Obama was “very pragmatic” because he was the “more convincing” candidate for “an electorate needing new hope, especially for a quick economic recovery.”

The newspaper said Obama and his supporters know “not everything is roses and flowers,” because of the “huge political, social, economic and moral challenges” the United States is facing.

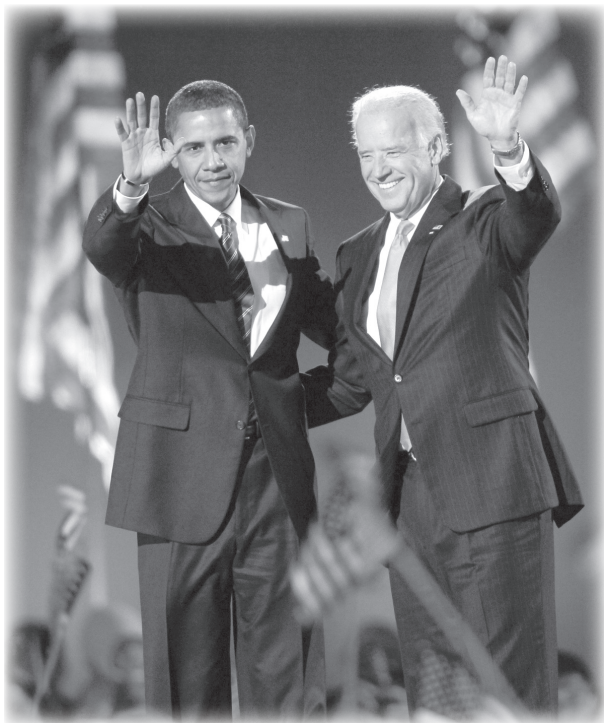
Obama must unite the nation, a process *L’Osservatore* said will be helped by the concession speech of Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who referred to Obama as “my president.”

Church view on same-sex marriage prevails; other ballot issues fail

Continued from p. 1

state and local laws that prevent, restrict or discourage stem-cell research, future therapies and cures.”

The Catholic-led campaign against the proposal had pointed to the immense potential for abuse in an unregulated environment and said it would threaten Michigan’s statutory ban on human cloning.



U.S. PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA AND VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT BIDEN WAVE DURING RALLY IN CHICAGO—U.S. President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joseph Biden wave after Obama’s speech during their election night rally in Chicago Nov. 4. Joseph Biden is a Catholic who supports legal abortion but on other issues has been an ally for the church’s public policy interests. The National Right to Life Committee gives Biden, age 65, a rating of 0 for his positions on select issues, including federal abortion funding and stem cell research. However, he’s only earned a score of 36 percent once from NARAL Pro-Choice America for his votes on their select issues. Obama has a score of 100 percent from NARAL. On issues including immigration, minimum wage, providing health care for all children and reinstating the assault weapons ban, his positions have been close to those of the church’s lobbying efforts. (CNS photo/Gary Hershorn, Reuters)

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Holy Land Olive Wood Sales

A special thanks goes to the pastors, parishioners and volunteers of the following churches who will hold an Olive Wood Gifts Sale for the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF) this fall and Advent season.



- November 9:
Sacred Heart, Hallettsville; Holy Family, Wharton; St. Agnes, Edna
- November 15/16:
St. Joseph, Inez; St. Rose, Schulenburg; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wharton; St. Joseph, Yoakum; Market Days, Victoria (Nov. 15)
- November 29/30:
Our Lady of Lourdes, Victoria; Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria; Queen of the Holy Rosary, Hostyn; Sts. Peter & Paul, Plum
- December 6/7:
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bay City; Holy Cross, East Bernard; St. Robert Bellarmine, El Campo; Assumption Church, Ganado; Sts. Peter & Paul, Meyersville; St. Anthony of Padua, Palacios; St. Mary's, Victoria; Our Lady of Victory, Victoria; Our Lady of Sorrows (OLS), Victoria; Holy Cross, Yorktown
- December 14:
Either OLS or Trinity Chapel

The KC's will sell at each of the parishes: Sacred Heart, Flatonia; Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Cistern; and St. Mary, Praha on one of the following Sundays: Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and 14.

A thank you to the parishes that have already held their sales: St. Anthony, Columbus; and St. Michael, Weimar.

HCEF, approved by the USCCB and Bishop Fellhauer, is a non-profit organization that assists the Christians of the Holy Land. Orders may also be placed at <http://gifts.hcef.org>, or to learn more about HCEF, please go to www.hcef.org.

New human body disposal process raises alarms

NEW ORLEANS (CNS) — It doesn't make for polite dinner-table conversation, but the national Catholic Cemetery Conference is raising alarms about a potential option for disposing of human bodies in which a lye solution dissolves tissues into a sterile, syrupy substance that can be safely flushed down a drain. Although no funeral home in the U.S. currently is using the process, known as alkaline hydrolysis, two research medical centers -- the University of Florida at Gainesville and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. -- make use of it to dispose of cadavers. The process, which proponents claim is safe for the environment and potentially cheaper than cremation, was developed in the U.S. in 1992 to dispose of animal carcasses. In the process, water and potassium hydroxide are mixed, heated and pressurized in a steel tank to dissolve the body tissues. Deacon Glenn Tylutki, outreach coordinator of cemetery services for the Archdiocese of Chicago, said he issued the warning about chemical digestion of human remains at the recent meeting of the Catholic Cemetery Conference in Orlando, Fla., because of concerns that it violates the Catholic Church's reverence for the sacredness of the human body.

In tough economy, agency sees 40 percent increase in calls for help

PITTSBURGH (CNS) — Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh is reporting a 40 percent increase in the number of calls from people seeking help as the country continues to struggle with the economy. Not only is the increase a significant change from this time last year, according to executive director Susan Rauscher, but "we are also seeing an increase in the complexity of the situations." Some who had been able to get from paycheck to paycheck are finding that the rising costs of gas, food and utilities "have put a significant strain on their income, which can no longer cover their expenses," she told the Pittsburgh Catholic, newspaper of the Pittsburgh Diocese. Others have lost their job or suffered



PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER OF PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA SMILES DURING NEWS CONFERENCE IN KENYA—Sarah Hussein Obama, paternal grandmother of U.S. President-elect Barack Obama, smiles during a news conference at her home in Kogelo village, 257 miles west of Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 5. (CNS photo/Thomas Mukoya, Reuters)

an illness or car-repair bill, causing "an upheaval in their ability to manage their budgets," she said. Some, she said, "seem to have been simply pounded down by the current economic situation with shut-off notices, eviction notices and medical bills all pressing for payment immediately."

Unaccompanied migrant and refugee children a U.S. and global issue

FAIRFAX, Va. (CNS) — David Siegel takes a highly personal view of his job as acting director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services. He said that means he knows the names and personal stories of all 2,300 or so children in his care under the programs for unaccompanied minor aliens and minor refugees. "If you ask me, I can tell you their names, where they came from, their ages and gender, their histories," he told an audience at the Conference on Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Oct. 22. "It's an awesome responsibility." The three-day conference at George Mason University in Virginia dealt with topics such as returning immigrants and refugees to their home countries and their families, tracing family members and meeting international criteria for determining the best interests of a child.

Full support of global AIDS package expected from new U.S. president

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An overseer of the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, expects the incoming president to fully embrace the \$48 billion package to provide treatment and prevention campaigns globally. The worldwide AIDS program that was reauthorized last summer is also expected to be fully funded in the coming years, even if a predicted economic recession is drawn out, said Mark Dybul, U.S. global AIDS coordinator and an assistant surgeon general in the Bush administration. Dybul told an audience at the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington Oct. 28 that PEPFAR is the largest global medical initiative in history, that it has been fully supported by the major-party presidential nominees, Democratic Sen. Barack Obama and Republican Sen. John McCain, and can be counted as one of President George W. Bush's greatest accomplishments. "This program has not come without its controversies, but it does have bipartisan support," said Lawrence O. Gostin, law professor at Georgetown and moderator of the Oct. 28 discussion. "Love it or hate it, (PEPFAR has) transformed the lives of countless numbers of people."

Cardinal DiNardo to lead Pilgrimage for Life

His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston will lead the Pilgrimage for Life in Huntsville, Texas, on November 24, 2008.

The pilgrimage is being hosted by the Texas Catholic Conference to promote reflection, prayer, and hope for fullness of Church teaching on the life and dignity of the human person, from conception to natural death.

"As Catholics we embrace and recognize human dignity in people at all stages of life," said Texas Catholic Conference Executive Director Andrew Rivas. "This Pilgrimage embodies the Catholic teaching that all life is sacred, and encourages us to remember and pray for a Culture of Life."

The Conference invites Catholic faithful from around the state to participate in the pilgrimage, which will begin with the celebration of Mass at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Huntsville. Pilgrims will then participate in a one-mile prayerful procession, led by the Cardinal, from an abortion referral center to the Texas death row. Pilgrims may also choose to stay at the parish for adoration and guided reflection on the Stations of the Cross and Catholic social teaching.

For more information on the Pilgrimage for Life, visit www.TXcatholic.org and click on "Pilgrimage for Life" on the Events page.

The Texas Catholic Conference is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Texas. The primary purpose of the conference is to encourage and foster cooperation and communication among the dioceses and the ministries of the Catholic Church in Texas.

Pilgrimage for Life

Led by His Eminence
Monday, November 24, 2008

Texas Catholic Conference
Serving the Church in Texas

*Promoting Reflection, Prayer, and
Hope for the Life and Dignity of
the Human Person from
Conception to Natural Death*

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
St. Thomas Church, Huntsville, Texas

The Texas Catholic Conference invites Catholic faithful to participate in a Pilgrimage for Life. During the Pilgrimage we will celebrate Holy Mass and participate in a procession with specific prayers and reflections on Catholic Social Teaching regarding the life and dignity of the human person from conception to natural death. For those unable to complete the walk, an opportunity for Adoration and reflection will be available.

For more information, visit www.TXcatholic.org and click "Pilgrimage for Life" in the Events section.





EWTN Presents “Catholic Canvas”

An Unprecedented Look Inside the Vatican Museums

IRONDALE, AL.— EWTN Global Catholic Network, with the support of the Primavera Fine Art Foundation, was given unprecedented access to the Vatican Museums to film a 10-episode original series called “Catholic Canvas.”

“We were granted four days of filming inside the Sistine Chapel – a privilege that has never been granted to any other network,” said EWTN President Michael Warsaw. “The Sistine Chapel is the backbone for the series because it conveys so beautifully in art the stories of our salvation.”

Rome producer Mary Shovlain explains the concept behind the series.

“Catholic Canvas is a journey through salvation history as seen in the art of the Vatican Museums,” she said. “We begin with the Angels – the first to be created, the first to fall – which sets the stage for a journey through the Old Testament, from the creation to the fall of man, to our need for redemption and the promise of a redeemer, Christ.”

Entire episodes are dedicated to Mary, to the Epiphany, to Christ’s earthly ministry, his Passion, death and resurrection, St. Peter, and the Saints. “Of course, our journey ends, as will all of our journeys, with a look at the Last Judgment,” Shovlain said.

Primavera chairman and co-founder Earnest Bentley is thrilled with the program that resulted with the help of his foundation’s support.

“Primavera Fine Art Foundation is committed to creating a renaissance of

fine theological art in the Church,” Bentley said. “As our Art Advisor has said, ‘Every great work of art is a window between time and eternity. When we learn to contemplate art or come in contact with it, we actually come in contact with God, a little piece of his glory.’

“For this reason, the foundation believes bringing the treasures of the Vatican Museums into the viewers’ living room is both a privilege and an opportunity to share with EWTN in this work for the Church.”

Episode 1, a visual feast called “The Angels,” will be hosted by Elisabeth Lev, Professor of Christian Art and Architecture at Duquesne University’s Italian campus. Lev’s expert commentary provides viewers with an in-depth explanation of the artistic genius behind the representation of the Cherubim and Seraphim as represented in Costanza’s Sarcophagus, Rafael’s Madonna of Foligno, and many other masterpieces.

At the conclusion of each show, viewers also have the opportunity to see Father Mark Haydu, L.C., international director of the Vatican Museums’ patrons of the Arts who gives a short presentation about one of the many gorgeous restoration projects being financed by the Patrons.

Episode 1 of “Catholic Canvas” will air 5:30 p.m. CST, Thursday, Nov. 6 and 10 p.m. CST, Tuesday, Nov. 11.

EWTN Global Catholic Network, in its 27th year, is the largest religious media network in the world.



This is a detail from Sandro Botticelli’s “The Trials of Moses,” painted on the south wall of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican. Antonio Paolucci, director of the Vatican Museums, said it is his favorite Old Testament-inspired piece in the Vatican Museums. (CNS photo/courtesy of the Vatican Museums)

Women’s retreat January 25-28

Spirit Wind Ministry will hold its 10th annual retreat for women led by Paula D’Arcy at the Spiritual Renewal Center January 25-28, 2009, titled “A Gathering of Women: What’s Enough?”

In an age when we have more, do more, expect more, and need more, the question arises: When does the wanting end? Based on a poem by Ted Loder from the book *The Haunt of Grace*, the retreat will

take a deep look at the way we live and explore the meaning of enough.

Paula D’Arcy is the author of numerous books including *Gift of the Redbird*, *Song for Sarah*, and *A New Set of Eyes*, and is widely recognized as an eloquent and powerful speaker and retreat leader.

For additional information on Paula visit www.redbirdfoundation.com. To register see information below.

Special Collections

Campaign for Human Development - Nov. 23

Tri-Conference Fund for Retired Religious - Dec. 14

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.

Extraordinary Form of the Roman Latin Rite (Traditional Latin Mass) — is celebrated every Sunday at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Shiner at 11:00 a.m. For more info. call (361) 594-3836.

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 2009 are: Feb. 6-8; March 13-15; April 24-26; June 26-28; Sept. 11-13; and Nov. 20-22. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 30. All registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee must accompany registration form.

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

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

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

Singles — Catholic Singles, 40 and over, meet every second and fourth Thursday of the month at Holy Family Education Building at 7:00 p.m. Call Georgia (361) 573-9435, or Jean at (361) 578-8760, or Sue at (361) 578-3106.

Young Adults — Between the ages of 21 and 45 meet for an evening of fellowship and good company every 1st and 3rd Thursday at Holy Family at 7:00 p.m. Call Jim Wearden at (361) 579-9737 or (361) 649-9157.

ACTS Retreats — For more information see the ACTS Web site at www.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 De Los 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.**

When & Where

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

Dec. 6

- 22nd Century Re-Enactors Frontier Rendezvous.
- Christmas in Goliad Las Posadas Procession. A traditional Mexican Cultural event recalling Mary and Joseph’s search for lodging.
- 40th Annual La Bahia Awards Presentation. A ceremony honoring authors/writers of Spanish Colonial Texas History will be held in the chapel of Our Lady of Loreto and will be sponsored by the Sons of the Republic of Texas.

Dec. - TBA

- Christmas Concert featuring Mary Ann Williams and Becky Johns. Call the Presidio for date and time.

Picnics, Activities, etc.

November

Hungerford — KJT Society 79 and KJZT Society 57 will be hosting their annual turkey and dressing dinner Nov. 9 at the community center. Serving begins at 10:30 a.m. with drive-thru or dine-in available. Pastries will be available.

Victoria — Our Lady of Lourdes Annual Fall Festival Nov. 9 at the community center, featuring their famous traditional turkey and dressing dinner. Serving from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at \$7 p/p for adults and plates-to-go (starting at 10:30 a.m. at the curb or pick-up inside); and \$3 for children (12 and under). There will be a silent auction (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) and a live auction beginning at 12:30 p.m. There will be children’s games, cakewalk, kolaches and food during the day.

Humble — Nov. 15 and 16 — Come and discover the true Thanksgiving meal: “The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass” (near Houston). Speakers: Father Mitch Pacwa; Johnnette Benkovic; Father Stan Fortuna; and Michael Cumbie. For more information please go to: www.FullnessOfTruth.org.

Victoria — Knights of Columbus Council 1329 Chicken Barbecue Fundraiser will be held Nov. 16 at the KC Hall (Airline at Ben Wilson). Prices are \$6 per chicken; beans and Spanish rice are available for \$1 per pint. Sales start at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit various council projects.

Victoria — The Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters are hosting a Discernment Weekend for single Catholic women between the ages of 18 and 50 years of age on Nov. 22-23 at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria, Texas. If you are interested, you may check them out at www.iwbsvictoria.org or call (361) 575-7111 or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com for more details.

Upcoming Events

Victoria — St. Mary’s Altar Society’s Annual Harvest Bazaar, Thursday, Dec. 4 at the activity center (Liberty Street). Doors open at 10:00 a.m. with a soup and sandwich lunch available from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Many handmade items available for the holidays as well as decorations for the home. Baked goods, canned goods and fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs. Also available, newly published cookbook entitled “St. Mary’s Altar Society’s Food for the Body; Food for the Soul.”

New Taiton — The Oblate Club of St. John’s Church will be hosting their Annual Games Party Dec. 7 at 6:00 p.m. at the Taiton Community Center. There will be games, door prizes, raffle, a mini raffle, silent and live auctions and plenty of good refreshments. Come and join the fun!!!!

Victoria — KJZT Society 101 Christmas Party Dec. 7 beginning at 2:00 p.m. with dinner at 4:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory Cafeteria. Meat will be furnished, bring covered side dish. Members and families are invited, make reservations by calling (361) 573-2669.

Victoria — The Spirit Wind Retreat on Jan. 25-28, 2009, at the Spiritual Renewal Center is limited to only 25 women. The retreat cost is \$350.00, which includes all meals and single occupancy lodging for three nights. Reservations are on a first come basis and will be reserved with a deposit of \$100.00. The balance of \$250.00 will be due by December 1st. Retreat deposits and fees are non-refundable. Make checks payable to Spirit Wind Ministry and mail to: Susan Oakley, 103 Woodmere, Victoria, TX 77904. Please include your name, address, telephone number and email address with your deposit. For additional information contact Susan Oakley at 361/576/1515 or e-mail smoak53@msn.com.



The brothers who were meant to be

By Cynthia Brewer

Editor's note: Sarah and Nicholas are fictitious names to protect the identity of the family.

It was the lowest Sarah had ever felt. "I can't remember feeling any worse than at that time," she said.

She remembers lying on her mother's couch when she made the call.

"I wanted an abortion at the time," she says. "I thought the Gabriel Project® would help me get one."

That was more than two years ago. Now she watches her older son play with his little baby brother, and it's beautiful to her.

"I can't imagine my life without him," she says of the baby boy she almost aborted.

Nicholas was born December 16, 2008, and is now almost two years old.

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"I'm not sure I want my whole name in the story," she told me. "I don't know if that is the feeling of shame," but "I want to tell my story; I want the girls who are in the situation that I was in, to know that there is help out there."

"I was probably about two months pregnant at the time I first called The Gabriel Project®," Sarah said. She found the number in the phone book near the listing for abortions.

She said she had seen the Gabriel Project® signs near churches, but didn't know exactly what they did. She hadn't put the two together at the time.

"I called, and I asked if they provide abortion services," she said. "After I talked for a while, I realized where I was calling."

"I told her (the woman on the other end of the line) why I wanted to have an abortion," Sarah said. "At that time I was pretty mean, ugly, but she listened; she really heard me out."

"I had vented with her, and it wasn't

like she snapped back and said I shouldn't do this. She was listening. It felt good to have that support."

"At the same time, I was probably still calling abortion providers in Corpus Christi and Houston," she said. Sarah said she remembered staying with a friend in Corpus and that she had the money for the abortion.

"I could have done it," she said. "It's kind of like at that time I wanted an abortion." However, in her deep depression she spent all her money.

"I can't remember feeling any worse than at that time," she said.

The hotline volunteer was Stefani Spears. "We (hotline volunteers) just try to talk gently and listen. We let them know we are there to help them with whatever we can and that we care about them," said Stefani.

Sarah and her young son had been living with a relative when she found out that she was pregnant. She felt she had to move out because she wasn't on good terms with her family. The person she had gotten pregnant by was no longer around. She and her son then moved into governmental housing. The apartment was empty but for a bed for each of them.

"Looking back," Sarah said, "I understand how a girl can fall into that deep, deep depression."

Stefani made an appointment for Sarah to talk to Ann Trost, a volunteer "Angel," with the Gabriel Project®.

After Sarah had gotten to know Ann, she said the pressure lifted off her shoulders.

"It took a while. It was a very, very

hard time for me. The main reason was because of the baby's father." After she had gotten pregnant and was no longer involved with him, she had heard he had done some very bad things and was now in trouble with the law.

"I didn't want any part of the father; therefore, I didn't want the baby," she said. "That's how I felt then, but now I look ... that sounds horrible when I say that. My little boy is in the other room sleeping. I'm always going to remember that. I used to just think I didn't want his kid, anything of him."

"Ann heard me out and said a lot of positive things," Sarah said. "I leaned on



her for that kind of support that I didn't get from anyone else."

After I met Ann, I knew I wasn't going to have an abortion, but I was still unhappy."

Sarah used to lie on the floor of her apartment and "cry her eyes out" while her son was asleep.

"One day I drove up and there was a couch outside my apartment with a note from Ann saying not to lift it," Sarah said. "One minute you feel like you have nothing, then the next, I've got a couch. It changed how I saw things. I changed little by little."

"The couch was just one of the first

things,' she said, "then she brought a table. Little things like that, from sitting on the floor eating, to sitting at a table."

It was a blessing to Sarah to have received these material things. It perked her up, made her life and home more livable.

"It wasn't the stuff; it was the fact that I had her support," Sarah said. "I felt Ann really cared what I was going through. She was there for me. Somebody cared."

"The first thing that comes to mind with that case, as well as others," said Ann, her angel, "is that it is incredibly rewarding! It was because 'Sarah' is an incredible, young woman who just needed a little bit of help to get her to where she needed to be to become independent."

Later in her pregnancy, Sarah's doctor told her that she had gestational diabetes and that if she didn't take care of her body, her little one could be in a coma.

"That's when I stepped up and knew I had to do it," Sarah said. "I grew up, I guess, and got out of the little rut I was in."

By deciding to take care of herself for the sake of her baby, she began feeling mentally and physically better.

Where do you see your life going now, I asked her.

"Well, I can't really say for sure. I just want to do the best for my kids," she said. "I don't see myself being put in that situation again. I just see myself being happy..."

Going through all I had gone through has changed my views. If someone is not going to treat me well, I'm not going to put up with it. I know I deserve more. You don't need a man to help you," she continued, "and I think that's what causes many women in that situation to have an abortion."

"Even now I have to carry those thoughts with me. Now I want to slap myself on the hand and say, 'How could I?' When someone feels like they want an abortion, they're in a crazy state of mind."

"I love The Gabriel Project®... They had helped me a lot emotionally. That was what was most important."

Now I see my older son with 'Nicholas,' and I can't imagine my life without him," Sarah said. "That love between them, that's what was supposed to happen. He's such a good brother to him."

"This is kind of crazy, but I went to Hallmark during Christmas, and I saw this Willow Tree figurine of a little toddler holding a balloon that said 'Hope.' That was before I had him ('Nicholas'), in December." She bought it with that hope for her new child. Just recently, she saw one with an older brother and little brother. "I want that one, now," she said.

Things are even better than before I was pregnant. My baby changed my life completely."

"I want the girls out there who are in the situation that I was in to know that there is help out there, emotional help, not just help with getting a couch," she said with a chuckle in her voice.

The co-founders of the Victoria Diocese Gabriel Project® said that the ministry is dependent on compassionate volunteers who are dedicated believers in a Culture of Life. "The Gabriel Project just doesn't work without our Hotline volunteers. They are our mothers' first contact for help," said Emily Yeary. The Gabriel Project® is also in Canada and for the first time, a program is being established in Nigeria (Africa). If you would like to volunteer, please call Barbara McCain, at (361) 649-1612.

Just two guys standing in the rain

This is a recent report from "40 Days for Life," which is happening in over 140 cities across the United States ... One of the 40 Days for Life prayer vigil participants in Kalamazoo, Michigan, tells an amazing story of what God can do with two guys standing in the rain.

KALAMAZOO—On a recent morning, he went to spend time in prayer in front of the abortion facility. When he got there, it was pouring.

"I decided I would stay in the car and pray and when it lightened up I would get out and stand in front of the abortion clinic and pray," he said. "After all, I could pray just as well in the car as in front of the clinic."

But then his prayer partner arrived. "I told him to get into the car — we could pray here."

"No," he said politely. He wanted to pray in front of the clinic. "I didn't need any more convincing." As they stood there praying in the rain, "we must have been an odd sight! What were we thinking? What good could be accomplished standing in the rain?"

The rain came down even harder as a young couple drove in with a baby in a car seat. One of the men made eye contact

See Just two guys, p. 7



THE REASON WE PROTEST!—Three-year-old Johnna Rangnow stood up during the October 5, 2008, Life Chain in Victoria, as proof of why we protest against abortion. She came to the event with her mother, Rika; grandmother, Bertha McDowell; 10-year-old brother, Walker; five-year-old sister, Juliet; and one-year-old brother, Everett. Her mother, Rika, explained to the older children what abortion was, while Johnna learned that she was standing up for babies. It is for little ones such as these that the pro-life movement exists, as currently one of every four American children is aborted, and one of every two African American babies is aborted.