

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 22, NO. 5

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

September 2008



Diocesan seminarians brush up on Spanish speaking skills and experience missionary work at Guatemalan orphanage. Vocation director, Father Dan Morales (c.), and six seminarians care for orphans at Las Obras Orphanage. Seminarians pictured from left are: Scott Hill (St. Roch, Mentz); Sean Breeden (Holy Cross, Bay City); Patrick Knippenberg (Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Shiner); Father Dan; Philip Brune (Sts. Peter & Paul, Frelsburg); Jacob Koether (Holy Cross, Bay City); and Adam Beard (Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca).

Seminarians experience missionary activity, enhance Spanish language skills

By Rev. Dan Morales and Cynthia Brewer

As a means for the seminarians of the Diocese of Victoria to experience the Church's missionary activity in the third world and to assist them in their Spanish language skills, Father Dan Morales, vocation director of the diocese and pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf and its missions, and Father Gary Janak, pastor of St. Philip in El Campo, brought six seminarians, along with ten other parishioners, to Antigua, Guatemala, this past summer to spend a week.

The weeklong mission, August 3-10, to Guatemala provided opportunities to assist the seminarians in both areas. Since the Diocese of Victoria has a large Spanish speaking population and because its location is so close to the Mexican border, it is helpful that the seminarians know Spanish; therefore, the group studied Spanish at La Escuela de San Jose. To experience the Church's mission work they volunteered their help at Las Obras Sociales del Hermano Pedro, an orphanage. Both the language school and orphanage are situated in the highland valley of Guatemala, located at the base of the Agua Volcano. The seminarians and priests stayed in the orphanage while the rest of the group stayed in a nearby hotel.

The orphanage's name literally translates to "the social works of Brother Peter." Brother Peter of St. Joseph Bentancur (Hermano Pedro) was canonized a saint by Pope John Paul II on July 30, 2002, giving him the distinction of being the first Guatemalan saint. He is referred to as "St. Francis of the Americas." Saint Hermano Pedro, unable to complete

his studies for the priesthood, opened a hospital for the poor, a shelter for the homeless, schools for the poor and an inn for priests.

Las Obras is an orphanage and a hospital run by the Franciscan priests, brothers and sisters who continue the charitable work of Saint Hermano Pedro. The orphanage is home to over 200 residents, from the very young to the elderly. The vast majority of the residents are handicapped and many have been abandoned at the steps of Las Obras or neighboring churches. Las Obras is the second largest provider of health care in the entire country.

The mornings were spent in the nearby language school, and in the afternoons, the seminarians performed various jobs at the orphanage, including working in the laundry room, feeding the children each afternoon, mopping floors, and transporting the residents to and from Mass and an afternoon rosary. Each day concluded with evening prayer and Mass.

However, it was not all work and no play. The days also included a lot of fun. Although the children are confined to wheelchairs, the seminarians had a spirited game of soccer with the boys who screamed with delight as wheelchairs raced to the ball aiming for an imaginary goal.

The seminarians trip was made possible by the generosity of Victoria's Holy Family Knights of Columbus 9088, whose successful annual golf tournament provided the funds.

"On our trip back home, we realized that we received far more than we gave,"

See *Seminarians experience*, p. 3

Voting by Conscience

By Father Brian Bransfield

The only difference between the voting booth and the conscience is we usually have to wait in line to get into one of them. Apart from that, the same thing is supposed to happen in each place as that small cubicle reveals me to myself.



You and I can only vote once in the election this fall. But before we do, hopefully we have repeatedly visited our own conscience. My conscience is what separates the voting machine from a slot machine, and only the human conscience can ensure that the ballot lever is not pulled on a gamble.

The U.S. bishops emphasize the role of conscience in *Forming Consciences* for



Faithful Citizenship

Insert, Pgs. 5, 6, 15, 16, 18

Faithful Citizenship, a guide for Catholics as they prepare for the 2008 elections.

What does conscience look like? It is that part of me that is bigger than me. Many issues volley for attention: immigration; affordable education; war; neighborhood violence; health care; abortion; the hungry and homeless; the environment; human embryonic stem cell research; the dignity of marriage between one man and one woman as the most commonly recognized

See *Voting by Conscience*, p. 5

Diocesan Vietnamese Community loses family, friends in Sherman bus wreck

By Cynthia Brewer

The bus wreck in Sherman, Texas, that killed 17 of 54 passengers on August 8, hit close to home as a family from Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Port Lavaca lost two members and another was seriously injured.

Our Lady of the Gulf parishioner Châm Nguyen, 90, and great-grandmother to three OLG students, and Mrs. Nguyen's daughter, Catherine Tran, 59, of Houston, died from injuries received in the accident involving the Iguala BusMex Inc. bus that was on its way to a Vietnamese religious festival, the Marian Days, in Carthage, Missouri.

Bich Ngoc Tran, also a parishioner of OLG and another daughter of Mrs. Nguyen's, is recovering at Hermann Memorial Hospital in Houston. According to her daughter, Loan Pham of Port Lavaca, she was expected to return home by the end of August.

According to Deacon Luan Van Tran of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Bay City, Vietnamese Catholic pilgrims from all around the United States as well as other countries have been gathering for the Marian Days in Carthage, Mo., for the past 31 years to worship God and honor the Blessed Mother.

The Marian Days event is held annually from the Thursday to the Sunday before the feast of the Assumption of the

Virgin Mary (Aug. 15). At the Marian Days, "we have many Masses and many different conferences for the young, the elderly, the married and single," said Deacon Tran. This year he was the master of ceremonies for all the event's Masses.

Deacon Tran has gone to the event for the past 22 years. "Every year I rent a bus to go," Deacon Tran said. "I gather 50+ people to go from Palacios, Port Lavaca and Seadrift."



Bich Ngoc Tran (l.), Catherine Tran (r.) and Châm Nguyen (c.) are pictured at a family Christmas gathering. (inset) Deacon Luan Van Tran

"There are usually about 50 - 60,000 people at each gathering," he said. "Most people stay in tents, as the hotels in the area are booked six months in advance."

See *Diocesan Vietnamese*, p. 20



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

- Sept.**
- 7** 9:00 a.m., Mass followed by the blessing of the new rectory of Holy Family Church in Victoria.
- 2:00 p.m., Reception honoring Libby Ramirez, Catholic Daughters of the Americas National Regent, Knights of Columbus Hall, Victoria
- 14** 2:00 p.m., Mass, Consecration of Associates, Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria
- 15-16** Texas Catholic Conference General Assembly, Austin
- 17** 3:00 p.m., Diocesan Finance Board meeting, Chancery Office
- 4:30 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
- 19** 8:05 a.m., School Mass and blessing of renovations, Sacred Heart Church, Hallettsville
- 6:00 p.m., Mass, Serra Club gathering for Permanent Deacons, Holy Family Church, Victoria
- 27** 10:00 a.m., Ordination to the diaconate of Brother Alfonso Ornelas, OSST, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Victoria
- 4:15 p.m., Mass, Conference for Catechesis and Ministry, Holy Family Church, Victoria
- 28** 10:00 a.m., Mass and note burning ceremony, St. Patrick Church, Bloomington
- Oct.**
- 4** 1:00 p.m., Our Lady of the Gulf benefit golf tournament, Colony Creek Country Club
- 5** 9:00 a.m., Mass, Vietnamese Dominican Sisters, Provincial House, Houston
- 7** Diocesan Clergy Fraternity Day — dinner, Knights of Columbus Hall, Shiner
- 10** 8:30 a.m., Catholic Schools Seminar, Our Lady of Victory School Cafeteria, Victoria
- 11** 10:30 a.m., Mass, Deacons' retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

RE: FLOOD '08 HITS CZECH MUSEUM in the July issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*

We have visited the museum several times as we have friends in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It is a very beautiful and interesting place. Every time we have been there, it has been a different exhibit from the Czech Republic on display. We have also purchased several beautiful pieces from their gift shop. Most items are made and imported from the Czech Republic. The museum will be restored and when it is, I would advise anyone traveling in the area, to take time and visit it. I am sure you would not be disappointed.

Sincerely,
La Rose Svab
Hallettsville

Editor's note: For updates on restoration on the National Czech & Slovak Museum, please go to: www.ncsml.org.

Interested in a Western Caribbean Polka Cruise Feb 2-7, 2009? Ask for a full colored brochure explaining the entertainment on-board and we feature the Texas Sound Check Band playing exclusively for our ABCATS booked travelers. Just send your mail address. Ask to be placed on our mailing list for the ABCATS Travel News telling about upcoming events, Alaskan Cruise, Mediterranean Cruise, South America, Panama Canal, Europe & Train Ride to Denali Park Alaska.

Come and enjoy yourself, take a break from winter weather, the cows will do fine, not much to do in the field & the garden will be fine for 5 days!

Contact:

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In Memory of ...

Sister M. Edith Mzyk, IWBS

Sister M. Edith Mzyk, 93, of Victoria, died Tuesday, Aug. 12, 2008. She was born May 17, 1915, in Cestohowa, to the late Jerome W. and Victoria (Pruski) Mzyk. She was a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament.

Sister Edith attended Holy Trinity School in Falls City and graduated from Nazareth Academy in Victoria. She entered Nazareth Convent as a postulant on Sept. 8, 1930, and became a novice on Aug. 16, 1931. She made her first profession of vows on Aug. 17, 1932, and final profession on Aug. 24, 1936.

Sister Edith received a B.A. degree with a major in English and a minor in Spanish and a M. Ed. with a major in administration and a minor in supervision from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She also held Professional Texas Teacher Certificates with specialization in high school and elementary levels, as well as principalship.

Sister Edith ministered as a teacher and/or administrator at Holy Trinity School in Duquesne, Pa., Sacred Heart School in La Grange, St. Michael School in Cuero, St. Agnes School in San Antonio, St. Michael School in Weimar, Holy Trinity School in East Bernard, Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville, St. Ludmila Academy in Shiner, St. Mary School in Nada, Mary Immaculate School in Dallas, Our Lady

of Perpetual Help School in Selma, and Our Lady of Victory School and Nazareth Academy in Victoria. She also taught in Hobson, Ammannsville and Falls City public schools. Sister Edith ministered at Incarnate Word Convent as librarian and was engaged in research and organization of records for the congregation's archives since 1991. She had resided in the congregation's infirmary since 2004.

Survivors: brother, Chester Mzyk of Falls City; sisters, Agnes Mzyk Dzuik of Falls City and Victoria "Vicki" Mzyk Traber of Victoria; and beloved nieces and nephews.

Preceded in death by: parents; brothers, Alex Mzyk, Fred Mzyk, and Jerome "J.C." Mzyk; and sisters, Otilia Mzyk Szczepanik, Rosie Mzyk Jendrusch, Anna Mzyk Kotara and Rosalie Mzyk who died in infancy.

Funeral services were held at the convent on Saturday, Aug. 16, with the Rev. John Peters presiding, assisted by the Rev. Donald Hayden. Burial followed at Catholic Cemetery No. 3.

Pallbearers were her nephews, Edward Moczygemba, Ray Traber, Ronnie Dziuk, Michael Mzyk and Valerian Moczygemba; and nieces, Elizabeth Moss, Kathy Scherer and Eileen Stevens.

Memorials: Incarnate Word Convent, Hospice of South Texas, or donor's choice.



Thank You

Your Excellency,

The 2008 National Black and Indian Mission Collection had the theme, "Working Together Leads to Success." I want to thank you for the check in the amount of \$7,002.70 that arrived as your part in helping bring this theme alive.

The collection was established by the bishops to assist their brother bishops who need financial assistance with evangelization programs. It was the reason for mandating the National Black and Indian Collection in 1884, one hundred and twenty-four years ago.

The Black and Indian Mission Office cooperates and supports diocesan evangelization by disbursing the collection returns in the form of grants to needy archdioceses and dioceses.

It is the grace of the Holy Spirit and the witness of the people by their charity and good works that we are able to accomplish so much in our Native and Black American communities.

With assurance of my prayers for you and your diocesan family, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Reverend Wayne C. Paysse
Executive Director
Black and Indian Mission Office

Blessing of Mausoleum

expansion — Sept. 21

All are invited to the blessing and dedication of the Catholic Cemeteries' new mausoleum expansion at Resurrection Cemetery at the corner of Mockingbird Lane and Laurent Street in Victoria. The blessing will take place Sunday, September 21, at 2 p.m. For details please call the Catholic Cemeteries Director Gary Rangnow at (361) 573-0828, ext. 33.

Job Posting:

Associate Youth Director position with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of Victoria is available. Complete description of position may be obtained on the youth office Web site at <http://victoriadiocese.org/youth/youth.htm> or by contacting Debbie Vanelli at dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org or (361) 573-0828, ext. 32.

Diocesan Services Appeal '08

Since our last issue of *The Lighthouse* our pledged amount has increased to \$578,509 and the total paid amount is \$547,241.36, which is 43 percent of the goal needed. Thus far 3,423 out of 23,473 registered families have responded to our Bishop's Appeal. These families are giving back to God some of the blessings that God has given them. "Thank You. Your gifts are sincerely appreciated."

Christian stewardship trains us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. Giving to God should be "from the top" — not what may be left over. As we approach the fourth quarter of 2008, let us think about what gifts God has given to us. A vibrant diocese can become even more vibrant when people respond to the call of stewardship.

Sharon Jones
DSA Coordinator

Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.

The Catholic Lighthouse
The Light of Our Inspiration

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

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Publisher
The Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

Editor
Cynthia Brewer — e-mail: cbrewer@victoriadiocese.org

Production/Advertising
Regina Matus-Janak — e-mail: janakr@victoriadiocese.org

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Seminary Burses

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

As of August 28, 2008

	TOTALS
— Rev. John C. Bily Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$ 6,969.00
In memory of Werner C. Hoelscher by	
Leona Hoelscher and	
Susan and Jim Bloodworth	100.00
In memory of L. Patrick New by	
Alton and Cindy Kutac Family	10.00
In honor of Rev. John C. Bily by	
Patricia Berger	10.00
Total	\$7,089.00

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Seminary Burse No. 3	
Previously reported	\$7,837.50
In memory of James L. Zandonatti by	
K of C Victoria Council 1329	100.00
Total	\$7,937.50

— Catholic Daughters Court of St. Ann 369 Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$6,038.99
In memory of Dorothy Mulligan by	
CDA Court St. Ann 369	100.00
In memory of Debra Hampton by	
CDA Court St. Ann 369	50.00
In memory of Mary Baass by	
CDA Court St. Ann 369	20.00
Total	\$6,208.99

— Catholic Life Insurance No. 51 Rev. Msgr. Eustace Hermes & Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi Seminary Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$1,195.47
Donation by Catholic Life Ins.	
Victoria Branch No. 51	350.00
Total	\$1,545.47

— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse No. 4	
Previously reported	\$3,244.00
In honor of Deacon Sonny Rogers' 82nd birthday by Gilbert and Mary Urbish	20.00
Total	\$3,264.00

— Josephat R. Janak Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$1,058.77
In memory of Timothy Schaefer by	
Frank Fikac Family	25.00
Total	\$1,083.77

— Rev. Sean Donohue Seminary Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$4,029.36
In memory of Tu Van Nguyen by	
Bernard and Madeline Rother	25.00
Total	\$4,054.36

Additional Burses for donations:

- Catholic Daughters of Americas Court Our Lady Queen of Peace 1374
- Rev. Jerome J. Stryk
- Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse No. 2
- Rev. Joe Levya
- Rev. Marcus Valenta
- Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
- Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
- Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas KIJT Burse No. 5
- Sophie Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Vaclav Bily
- St. Mary's Church – Praha
- St. Mary's Church – High Hill
- Holy Rosary Church – Hostyn Burse No. 2
- Rev. Charles Kram
- William L. Schmidt
- Deceased Priests of Praha
- Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS
- Jim Vacek Burse No. 2
- Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Victoria Assembly No. 1126
- Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Yoakum Assembly No. 1128 Burse No. 2
- Knights of Columbus 4th Degree St. Michael's Assembly Weimar No. 1527
- Knights of Columbus Holy Family Council No. 9088
- Knights of Columbus Council No. 3204 – Ganado Rev. Joseph Hybner

Those wishing to begin a burse or to contribute to an existing seminary burse may do so by sending their contributions with the appropriate burse designation to:

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

Pray for Vocations

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

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

Reporting Abuse

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

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

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

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



SERRA CLUB HONORS SEMINARIANS—Prior to the Diocese of Victoria's seminarians returning to college for the fall semester, the Serra Club honored the seven of them on August 11 with a Mass and dinner at Holy Family Church in Victoria. From left is Father Dan Morales, vocation director and pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Port Lavaca; Scott Hill of St. Roch in Mentz; E.J. Gutierrez, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Wharton; Patrick Knippenberg, Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Shiner; Bishop David Fellhauer, Jacob Koether, Holy Cross, Bay City; Sean Breeden, Holy Cross, Bay City; and Philip Brune, Sts. Peter & Paul, Frelsburg. Unable to attend was Adam Beard, Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca.

Deacons celebrate ordination anniversary in Ireland

July 29, 2008, was the second anniversary of ordination for the most recently ordained class of deacons. As an anniversary gift to themselves – three deacons and their wives, John and Eileen McCourt, Charlie and Lorraine Novosad and Dennis and Georgia Kutach, visited the Emerald Isle for 10 days.

By the grace of God and the guidance of the McCourts, a native of Ireland, they toured the country from July 24 to August 2.

They visited Knock where they participated in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel where the apparition of Our Lady, with St. Joseph and St. John, took place.

During their excursion, Deacon John and Eileen celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary. The group made the double-celebration days special by attending a performance by "Riverdance," preceded by an elegant dinner in Killarney.

On July 29th the three deacons celebrated their 2nd anniversary of their

ordination to the diaconate with Mass in the morning at St. Anthony's Church in Blarney.

On the last day of their tour, they cel-



Three of the diocese's most recently ordained deacons, John McCourt, Charlie Novosad and Dennis Kutach, and their wives celebrated the 2nd anniversary of their ordination in Ireland. After kissing the Blarney Stone in Killarney, the deacons showed their Irish side by dressing as Leprechauns while window-shopping.

brated Deacon Dennis' birthday, attended Mass at Deacon John's family church and ended the day with a concert by world-renowned folk singer Gerry Timlin.

Seminarians experience missionary activity, enhance Spanish language skills

Continued from p. 1

said Father Dan Morales. "The joy and spontaneity of God's little ones helped us to look past their poverty and see the face of Christ in the poorest of the poor. It was as one of the seminarians put it, '... the experience of a lifetime, packed into a week.'"

In a thank you letter to the Knights of Columbus, the six seminarians expressed their thanks for their wonderful experience.

"I leave here knowing that I have seen God in the people here and in the Eucharist," said Philip Brune of Frelsburg.

"Seeing the people here at the orphanage was such an eye opener for me," said Adam Beard of Port Lavaca. "They are the poorest of the poor here and yet so happy. It made me do a lot of thinking."

"I have had an experience of a lifetime over the past week. I have gained a new insight to my spirituality," said Patrick Knippenberg of Shiner.

This trip has not only made me a better Catholic, but a better person," said Scott

Hill of Mentz. "It has made me respect life so much more and see how lucky we are to be born without a disability."

"In our time here in Antigua, we have truly seen the face of Christ in the poor and handicapped," said Sean M. Breeden of Bay City. "In addition to this, we have also tremendously improved our Spanish skills with the one-on-one tutors at 'La Escuela de San Jose.' I will remember this trip for the rest of my life."

"Las Obras Sociales (the orphanage) is such an amazing place," said Jacob Koether of Bay City. "... These children and patients have taught me how to love even more. The Spanish school was great as well. I learned a lot and can now speak broken Spanish."

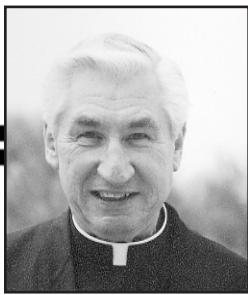
Editor's note: To learn more about Las Obras, please go to: www.obrasher-manopetro.org. Interested in a religious vocation? ... Please contact diocesan vocation director Father Dan Morales at (361) 552-6140 or olgulf@aol.com.



FAITH POINT

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

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



Greater Than You Think

Father Thomas D. Williams is the author of *Greater Than You Think*, a direct answer to Christopher Hitchens (*God Is Not Great*), Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), and a host of others. Books on atheism have become best sellers and are a new cottage industry. Father Williams, who teaches theology at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University in Rome, has written some responses to objections to religion raised by the new crop of vocal atheists.

Despite the popularity of the books, atheism per se is not on the rise. The recent study of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life shows that atheists still make up a miniscule minority of Americans. Atheism isn't growing. Atheists are just getting more belligerent.

The new atheists for the most part have ignored the old arguments against the existence of God, for example, the problem of evil and suffering of the innocent. They have come up with new objections, which are not nearly as good as the old ones that have engaged the attention of philosophers for centuries. If there is one overriding characteristic about these new objections it is that they are largely based on bad logic. The new atheists call themselves the brights and assume that religious people are mentally and educationally deficient. But we pitchfork waving, banjo dueling, teeth missing, barefoot, knuckle dragging troglodytes who never attended Harvard or Oxford know bad logic and fraudulent claims when we see them. Also it was not the dense religious people who fell for Communist ideology but the self-proclaimed secular intelligentsia. Atheists who claim to be guided only by the clear light of human reason and evidence are amazingly shoddy in their reasoning.

Father Williams points out the logical deficiency of hundreds of atheistic arguments. Here we cite only a few examples.

One bad thing done by a religious group at any time is attributed to all religions. It is like charging that all of medical practice is dedicated to killing because Dr. Kevorkian used to kill or that all Americans are terrorists because Timothy McVeigh blew up the federal building in Oklahoma, City.

The atheist authors have a maddening penchant for wanting to have things both

ways. Real reformers like Martin Luther King are not really religious according to them. But anyone who does evil is religious. Even Adolph Hitler, an atheist if there ever was one, is not to be classed with them because he conducted himself like a religious person. Hitchens gives no credit to the Church for innumerable saints, geniuses, benefactors, and advances in civilization. He faults it for failing to bring about certain advancements, or bringing them too slowly. It is like wanting to eliminate medicine because it has not yet cured diabetes, cancer, and AIDS. It is illogical to note shortcomings of a few individuals in an institution and maintain that they are characteristic of the whole. If there can be good medicine and bad medicine why cannot there be good religion and bad religion? Christianity has been and continues to be a force for good.

Hitchens has a chapter in his book titled "Religion Kills." He seems unable to distinguish between religious practice and religious abuse. He also illogically identifies the excesses of radical Islam with all religion. If religion is abused it is no more a subject of elimination than science is because the Nazis abused science in their horrendous experiments on human beings in the concentration camps.

The famous American example of religious persecution is the Salem witch trials which killed about 25 people. The Spanish Inquisition over a period of several centuries killed between 3,000 and 5,000 people. By contrast between the years 1900 and 2000 atheistic regimes killed more than 100 million people, more than all religions killed since the beginning of recorded history. Religion is much less a threat to life than atheism.

Atheists say that religious education of children is a form of child abuse. That means it should be illegal. Imposition of a homogeneous atheistic education has already been tried in Russia and the experiment did not go well. Any parent who does not impose Hitchens' worldview is guilty of child abuse.

Atheists hate Christian evangelization. Christianity was much more influential in the early years of our country and it produced the freest nation in all of history. Hitchens would like to deprive Christians of the very rights they extend to him. Outlawing speech is the mark of tyranny. It is atheism that is to be feared, not Christianity. The atheists who declare that Christianity is intolerant apparently have forgotten that the atheistic regimes, which, aided and abetted by atheists who called Communism a "noble experiment," did not usher in a worldly paradise. North Korea is a current expression of an atheist regime which tells people what to think, say, and do. Even persons who do not believe in Christianity should recognize it as a more likely source of freedom than atheism.

The chief contention of atheists is that faith is incompatible with science. But science has nothing to do with the existence of God who, by definition, transcends the world. The reasons for positing God's existence are similar to those that posit an

adequate cause for something, like power source causing the movement of a train. Atheists charge that religion misrepresents the origin of the cosmos and man. Atheists fraudulently claim that all believers are fundamentalists which is as logical as saying that all atheists are cruel because Stalin was. One scientist, Francis S. Collins, believes that the Big Bang Theory cries out for a divine explanation.

Religion is not an enemy of scientific enquiry. Atheists love to trot out the case of Galileo Galilei as proof of religious hostility to science. There is not enough space to deal with that case here but if that is the only example that atheists can cite they have little reason to complain. One case does not vitiate all the contributions of topnotch Christian scientists like Copernicus, Newton, and Pasteur. Of the top 20 scientists of history 15 were Christians.

Are atheists more ethical than religious? I know of hundreds of cases of persons who have overcome addiction,

infidelity, and dishonesty because they found religion. I do not know of a single person who has become better because he found atheism. Materialistic atheism does not appear to offer much motivation for ethical living. It does not value human dignity and so it offers no basis for treating another human differently from a slug. Right and wrong are meaningless terms in a materialistic world. Materialism denies free will and therefore personal accountability and ethics. An ethic based on evolution is necessarily a bloodthirsty dog-eat-dog affair in which survivors eliminate their enemies so as to get food and mates. Studies have demonstrated that atheists are woefully less generous than Christians in giving to worthy causes.

I recommend reading of *Greater Than You Think* for more objections and responses than can be dealt with here.

The greatest fear about Christianity is that its adherents will not live up to its teachings. The greatest fear about atheism is that its adherents will.

Showing the Appealing Side of Adoption

Moms ALIVE started out in 2002 as an adoptive mom's support group and has developed into an adoption advocacy organization reaching tens of thousands of Tennessee high school students. The word ALIVE stands for "Adoptive Life is Very Exciting." To date their speaker's bureau has addressed over 25,000 Middle Tennessee students, providing vital education on more than just the option of adoption.

Their goal is to provide students with factual information on the three options available to teens facing an unexpected pregnancy: abortion, parenting and adoption. This is accomplished by first educating students about fetal life, an eye-opening experience for most of them.

Then accurate medical information is shared regarding the truth about abortion. No graphic images are shown.

During the topic of parenting, students are informed about the documented government statistics regarding the pitfalls of children growing up in a fatherless home. The clear message is that children need both a mom and dad.

When it comes to the option of adoption, teens are often surprised to learn they

have a variety of choices. Birth mothers and fathers can choose from a confidential adoption to one that is open or any level in-between. Most face a new realization that adoption is a very loving and caring act by the birthmother that has a positive and life-affirming impact on those involved.

The group has found they are able to get into public schools when addressing the issue of adoption — doors normally closed to them when solely discussing abortion.

An added goal of Moms ALIVE is to export their thorough adoption presentation throughout the United States. They would be more than happy to assist you in reaching teens in your local community.

To reach Moms ALIVE, contact them at P. O. Box 148055, Nashville, TN 37214; (615) 264-2276; or at www.MomsALIVE.org.

Reprinted from Life Institutes, Inc.'s April Issue of "Life Issues Connector."

Editor's note: -According to Moms ALIVE Web site: Of the 765,000 teenagers who become pregnant in the United States each year less than 1 percent will choose to make an adoption plan for the child.

Diocesan Vietnamese Community loses family, friends in Sherman bus wreck

Continued from p. 20

would come to the English Mass."

Six Vietnamese Dominican Sisters and a few lay people teach the Vietnamese language and culture to the children of the communities. They also teach CCD in Palacios and Seadrift and teach in the Catholic school in Port Lavaca. Another three Vietnamese Dominican Sisters teach

at Sts. Cyril & Methodius in Shiner.

The Vietnamese community has set up an assistance fund for medical, funeral, helicopter/ambulance transport and other expenses. If you can help, please make donations payable to Missouri Victims Fund, Vietnamese Martyrs Church, 10610 Kings Point Road, Houston, TX 77075.

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Voting by Conscience

Continued from p. 1

institution in history; economic inequality; gas prices; and the beat goes on.

The common misunderstanding is that conscience amounts to “what I think” on an issue. Conscience is not just “what I think,” but it is me “thinking about what is just” and true. It is not a partial appraisal based on the words of a preacher, politician or passions. The inner moral sense is not built on a sum total of what I think, but is a manifestation linked with truth itself regardless of my preferences.

Conscience does not allow a citizen to forget he is first a person. It tells me I am a person, and, as such, I must look at a quandary according to a certain order: How does this act here and now, in and of itself, fit with being human, and not simply lower prices? Conscience insists that human dilemmas are moral concerns long before they are political points of view. Conscience tells me that to be free I must admit the truth that some acts are inescapably evil and no manner of circumstances or intentions can make them somehow good. Conscience bursts all other bubbles: It tells me the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, based not on the truth of circumstances or best intentions, but first and foremost on the truth of things in themselves.

Conscience must be formed, and, as such, it looks in three directions at once: It looks at me, looks at the moral dilemma at hand, and it sees the truth of both without favor. So often the voter makes appeal to only the first two categories, me and the dilemma. Mere opinion then substitutes for conscience. To make a decision in conscience is to consult the truth of the nature of things in themselves. Conscience begins “outside-in.” The objective reality summons accountability from me and forms the central coordinate of conscience. Conscience must begin with the true good.

This starting point ensures that freedom and truth are not enemies.

There is a faculty deep within that I do not create. It is not programmed. This region is more than super ego or social convention. It is however, formed. The moral sense of conscience must be molded, not developed simply by feelings, opinions, circumstance, intentions or movements, but by the deep moral sense in which we participate by being human and capable of reason. Conscience does not simply decide for happy or sad, but for good or evil. Conscience lines up the quandaries in size order and sees the resemblance. Marriage, racism, the environment, hunger, and abortion are not competing events. They are cousins, if not siblings. Conscience refuses to let one of these become an “issue.”

Conscience winces when it hears a candidate claim that he can fix health care, but still agree that a child in the womb can be killed. Conscience knows that if a candidate favors human embryonic stem cell research, which always includes the killing of a human person, then our neighborhoods can never be free of violence — because we just voted for violence. The moral sense knows that if you treat the environment any way you like, sooner or later you will need treatment because of the environment. Conscience realizes that if you support torture you have just paid the deposit for a war twenty years from now.

Conscience sees broadly. It breaks the bubble, brushes back the curtain, pries down the lever, and by the leverage of honest truth can not simply change, but can transform, the world.

Father Brian Bransfield is in the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Moral Questions Regarding Iraq in an Election Year

By Stephen M. Colecchi



The war in Iraq remains a major issue for voters in this election year. For U.S. Catholic bishops, however, Iraq is not primarily a partisan or political matter. For them, the war is a moral and human concern.

In late 2007, the bishops offered pre-election moral guidance on Iraq and a range of important issues facing our nation in their statement *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*.

They stated “The war in Iraq confronts us with urgent moral choices. We support a ‘responsible transition’ that ends the war in a way that recognizes the continuing threat of fanatical extremism and global terror, minimizes the loss of life, and addresses the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, the refugee crisis in the region, and the need to protect human rights, especially religious freedom. This transition should reallocate resources from war to the urgent needs of the poor.”

This statement marks the most recent of several that the bishops have issued reflecting their consideration of Iraq. In a letter and three statements issued prior to the war, the Conference of Bishops repeatedly “raised serious moral questions” regarding the possibility of war and expressed concerns for the “unpredictable and uncontrollable negative consequences of invasion and occupation.”

Pope Benedict XVI, and the bishops, have questioned whether the resort to war could meet the strict conditions in Catholic teaching on the use of military force. In particular they questioned the moral legitimacy of “preventive war” to counter gathering threats. As the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* teaches: “[E]ngaging in a preventive war without clear proof that an attack is imminent cannot fail to raise serious moral and juridical questions.” (#501)

We should continue to learn from the decisions that were made prior to the war. However, now that our forces are in Iraq, we face new moral questions and responsibilities toward the Iraqi people.

The bishops use the term “responsible transition” as a shorthand way to refer to a moral framework regarding the war. This framework is rooted in the Church’s commitment to protect the life and dignity of the human person. The word “responsible” refers to our obligations to minimize loss of life and to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. The word “transition” reminds us that our nation should withdraw its troops as soon as possible.

Achieving a responsible transition will not be easy. The surge in U.S. troop levels has reduced large-scale military conflicts and created openness for political reconciliation in Iraq. However, smaller, decentralized acts of violence remain

See Moral Questions, p. 6



Gay Marriage - Locating the Question

By H. Richard McCord



Gay marriage is a significant question that needs to be discussed and most important in the discussion is how the issue is framed.

The U.S. bishops in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* urge people to study the issues before they vote in the coming elections.

Whether homosexual persons should be allowed to marry each other is one issue. The central issue is about the nature and purposes of marriage as fundamental social structure and civil institution. It is not first a question about civil rights or discrimination or achieving the full social enfranchisement of homosexual persons nor about stabilizing a lifestyle.

The Catholic position begins not with sacramental theology, moral teachings and biblical passages. It begins with what can be observed in human nature and behavior and what we can conclude using our reason. This is the natural law position.

You don’t need religious faith to see that marriage is a unique relationship between a man and a woman. What defines this relationship is the fact that it is a partnership based on sexual complementarity. That makes possible the fulfillment of the two co-equal purposes of marriage: mutual love between the spouses and the procreation of children. No other human relationship, no matter how loving or caring or generative it might be, can make this claim or deliver on it.

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman. This is a truth discoverable by human reason. It is written in the law of nature and in the language of the human body and spirit. It is a truth enshrined from the beginning of time. Church teaching about marriage starts with this truth.

Since marriage is a fundamental social structure based on human nature, neither the church nor the state can change it at its core. Marriage, and the family it produces, is a society that precedes all other societies. It’s an institution we don’t own, but rather one that we receive. This does not mean that church and state cannot regulate marriage, for example, placing minimum age limits, but it does mean we are not free to alter its basic structure.

Marriage of a man and a woman makes a unique contribution to society. It is the

fundamental pattern for male-female relationships. It models the way women and men live interdependently and commit, for the whole of life, to seek the good of each other. The union also serves the common good of society. It brings forth the next generation and does so by providing the best conditions for raising children, namely, the stable, loving relationship of a mother and father present only in a marriage. Other relationships can and do build up the common good, but they don’t do in a complete sense what marriage does.

Should there be same-sex marriage? The Catholic Church frames this question in terms of the nature of marriage and its contribution to the common good. As a result, the Church concludes that same-sex marriage is, by definition, an impossibility, a contradiction in terms.

Some people seek to locate the issue within the framework of individual rights and justice. Catholic teaching affirms the dignity of homosexual persons and demands that they be treated with respect. This means, among other things, that the state may fashion laws to protect the rights of these individuals and to provide social benefits. Examples include access to employment, housing, health care, joint ownership of property, and the ability to make medical decisions for another.

There are social benefits and rights to be guaranteed for every individual. But the remedy for specific cases involving injustice — the lack of benefits or rights — cannot be an even greater injustice, namely, to change the definition of marriage.

Marriage is oriented to serving the common good, not to providing rights and benefits to individuals within that relationship. It is not necessary or even desirable, therefore, to tamper with a fundamental social structure in order to protect individual rights and to grant all citizens their legitimate social benefits.

The issue of same-sex marriage must be understood as a question about marriage as it has been received from the Creator and subsequently received from each generation throughout history. To perceive it as a question of justice for homosexual persons starts the conversation on the wrong path.

H. Richard McCord is executive director of the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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The American Workplace: Economic Policy, Moral Dimensions

By Thomas
Shellabarger



American families face a changing workplace in a shifting economy. No doubt this fact is the cause of anxiety as we debate whether or not the economy is in recession. It probably will be one factor in how people vote this coming November. The impact of the economy on family life is a moral issue and a legitimate concern for voters.

Take the impact of growing unemployment. The U.S. Department of Labor reported that 62,000 jobs were lost just in the month of June, bringing the number of job losses to 438,000 for the first half of 2008. The unemployment rate appeared to remain steady at 5.5 percent, but many economists

point out that is because many people have just stopped looking for work and are no longer counted in the unemployment rates. Meanwhile, Congress attempted to ease the pain by extending for additional 13 weeks unemployment insurance for workers who have exhausted the traditional 26 weeks of benefits. Unfortunately, the majority of American workers are not eligible to receive the complex Federal-State Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Whether the issue is unemployment or unpaid overtime, loss of benefits, corporate relocation, part-time work, contracting work, declining wages, international competition, limited training resources for laid-off workers or dwindling low-skill job opportunities—all these changes to local economies diminish the prospects of good jobs for U.S. workers. For too many people work puts added pressure on family life rather than strengthening it. Voters should ask candidates how their economic policies will enhance — rather than diminish — family life.

Work is the most significant way people directly interact with the economy. In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the bishops wrote “the economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation” (#52). Catholic social teaching points to the interconnection between family life and work. Work is the foundation, a necessary condition, for the formation of family life. The family shapes the social and ethical dimensions of human work. It is the starting point for establishing the conditions of the workplace.

Beginning in early 1970, family income, while still growing, started to favor

those at the very top of the wage scale. Union membership began to level off. By the turn of the 21st century, workers at the very top on the earnings scale consumed all of the economic growth and most other workers just held on or fell behind. This present disparity is the greatest wage divide since the Great Depression of the 1920s.

The Catholic Church recognizes the incredible busyness of family life and the demands of work that overwhelm families. Many pressing problems confronting family life are due to broad social forces, particularly economic strife. The decision of a man and woman to marry and raise a family is a significant one with many considerations involved. Yet today, without a job that pays a family wage, marriage and starting a family seem impossible.

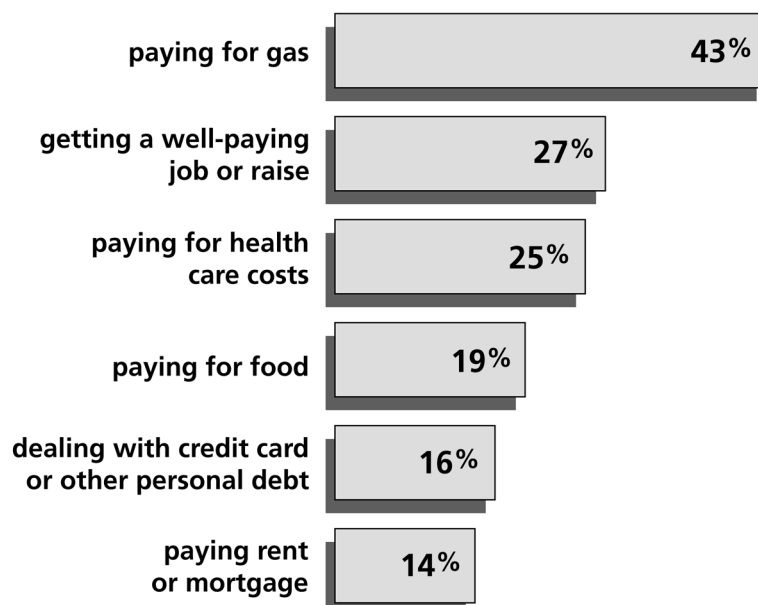
To be sure, economic policies are complex and economic issues overlap. For example, employment policy affects housing. As of July 2008, the minimum wage is \$6.55 an hour or \$13,624 a year. For a family of two, the poverty line is \$13,167. For a parent and two children, the poverty line is \$16,079. The annual income needed to afford a national fair market rent for a studio apartment (zero-bedroom) is \$19,320 according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition publication *Out of Reach*; for a one-bedroom, \$22,360; for a two-bedroom \$26,520. The study concludes: “In no community in the U.S. today can someone who gets a fulltime job at the minimum wage reasonably expect to find a modest rental unit he or she can afford. While planned increases in the minimum wage over the next two years may put affordable housing closer within reach for some households, they will not close the gap between full-time earnings at the federal minimum wage and the income needed to afford prevailing rents in most markets.”

Catholic voters need to test the policies of government and candidates’ positions with Catholic principles of Catholic teaching. The bishops urge Catholic voters to focus not on political questions such as “Are you better off than you were two or four years ago?” Rather, each of us should enter the voting booth focusing on the ethical and moral dimensions of public policies that affect the entire community.

Thomas Shellabarger is the policy advisor for Urban and Economic Issues in the Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Economic Effects

In the recent economic downturn, the percentage of U.S. adults who say they have had trouble...



Source: Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008

©2008 CNS

Moral Questions Regarding Iraq in an Election Year

Continued from p. 5

widespread. Out of a total population of about 27 million, more than two million Iraqis are internally displaced from their homes, and another two million are refugees who have fled the country. A disproportionate number of displaced families and refugees are Christians and other religious minorities.

For more than two and a half years, the bishops have called for bipartisan cooperation to break the political stalemate in Washington. They have urged leaders of both parties to find ways to promote a “responsible transition” that minimizes further loss of human life and addresses the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and the region-wide refugee crisis. An effective plan will promote political reconciliation and engage international support, including that of Syria and Iran, to stabilize Iraq.

The bishops are acutely aware of the sacrifices of military personnel. In addition to our responsibilities toward Iraqis, our country has moral obligations to provide for the human, medical, mental health, and social needs of military personnel and their families.

The bishops’ moral framework does not provide a detailed roadmap out of Iraq, but it does suggest important moral questions for Catholic voters to ponder. For example, in light of the traditional moral principle of “probability of success,” we should ask: Is it likely that a given course of action will contribute to a “responsible transition” and withdrawal as soon as possible? Will it save lives, promote reconciliation, protect religious freedom, and help stabilize Iraq?

The bishops’ moral analysis has some practical relevance. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group explicitly promoted “responsible transition.” Some members of Congress have attempted to craft bipartisan approaches.

Perhaps if enough voters ask the right moral questions, a new Iraq policy might engender broad bipartisan support. It could even help our next president unite our nation on a path to peace.

Stephen M. Colecchi is director of the Office of International Justice and Peace, for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Our Lady of the Gulf 9th Annual Golf Outing



This year’s event will be held **Saturday, October 4th** at the well-manicured Colony Creek Country Club in Victoria, Texas.

Registration begins at 11 am, with tee-off at 1 pm.

The cost for this event is **\$400.00 per 4-person team scramble format (make checks payable to Our Lady of the Gulf)**. This price includes range balls, 18 holes of golf, carts, lunch, and various awards.

There will be an awards presentation directly after golf.

To help us properly plan for this event, please contact Mike Elgin via email @ mikeelgin112@gmail.com or contact the church office @ 552-6140 before September 15th.

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Mike has had the privilege of speaking in over 95 dioceses, to groups ranging from 10 to 10,000. He has addressed youth, adult and intergenerational (family) audiences in diocesan, regional, national and international settings. Mike Patin lives in Lafayette, LA, with his wife, Marlene, and his daughter, Megan.

For more information contact your parish coordinator or Debbie Vanelli at the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry (361)573-0828, dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org.

Doors open at 11:00 a.m., Program begins at 11:30 a.m. and concludes with Liturgy.

Lunch is provided
Liturgy begins at 5:00 p.m.

Early Registration Deadline:
Thursday, November 6, 2008

\$15.00 per-person
\$12.00 per-person Group Rate (8 or more)
(\$7.00 per-adult)
(\$20.00 at the door **NO EXCEPTIONS**)

All fees must be mailed to the office **before the event.**
NO REFUNDS AFTER November 6, 2008



Youth Calendar of Events

- September 14** — Youth Leadership Training at the Chancery, Victoria
September 18 — Theology at the Well - *Marriage Made in Heaven*, presented by Rev. Bob Knippenberg at Chili's in Victoria
October 2 — Theology at the Well - *Mercy, Mercy*, presented by Rev. Michael Rother at Chili's in Victoria
October 5 — Life Chain
October 5 — Youth Leadership Training at Holy Family, Victoria
October 11 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class - **Renewing the Vision and Advocacy**
October 16 — Theology at the Well, *Tending the Garden*, presented by Rev. Stan DeBoe at Chili's in Victoria
October 16 & 17 — NET Ministries at Sacred Heart School, Hallettsville
October 18 — NET Ministries at St. Joseph in Moulton
October 19 — NET Ministries at Our Lady of Lourdes, Victoria
October 21 — Open - NET Ministries in the Diocese for Retreats
October 22 — NET Ministries at Sacred Heart Parish, Hallettsville
October 23 — Open - NET Ministries in the Diocese for Retreats

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



Camille Mica wins the national CDA education contest in the Poetry category. She was presented the award at the CDA national convention in New Mexico. From l. are Patricia Michulka, Camille's grandmother; Natalie Mica, her mother; Camille; Gerald Mica, her dad; Rev. Donald Ruppert, her pastor; and Helen Mica, her grandmother.

East Bernard girl wins 1st place in CDA Nationals

ALBUQUERQUE—Camille Mica of East Bernard won first place in the Catholic Daughters of the Americas' education contest on the national level with her poem, "The Penetrating Light."

For her accomplishment, Rev. Donald Ruppert, CDA's National Clergy Consultant and pastor of Holy Cross in East Bernard, presented Camille with a certificate and \$100 at the national convention of the

Catholic Daughters in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 16-20.

Camille's poem was a winner on the local and state level of the education contest before advancing to the national level.

Camille is a Junior Catholic Daughter and her mother and grandmothers are members of Court St. Bernadette No. 1108 Catholic Daughters of the Americas in East Bernard.

The Penetrating Light

By Camille Mica

As I gaze at the holes that scar Your hands,
 A light penetrates what no nail can.
 It pierces my heart, and I cry out in pain...
 Your love is too strong for my soul to sustain.
 I gasp as I finally come to understand...
 You chose to let the nails penetrate your hands,
 So that I could experience this breathtaking light,
 And glorify You with all of my life.

Life Teen and Edge to hold training

WOODLANDS, TEXAS—See how Life Teen and Edge can renew your entire parish! Give your teens an intimate encounter with Christ without sacrificing the catechesis. Energize your entire high school and middle school ministry with Life Teen and Edge training, which will be held October 12-15 at St. Anthony of Padua in the Woodlands, Texas.

Breakthrough Breakouts include: Communication Skills for this generation; Small Group leadership; What is Edge and how does it work?; What is Life Teen and how does it work?; Unpacking timeless traditions in timely ways; and How to engage in healthy relationships with teens.

Opportunities provided by the training include: sharing your experience with

fellow ministers called to serve this age group; receive God's grace through the Eucharist in daily Mass, powerful prayer and worship experiences, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; relax by the pool, on the golf course, in a luxurious room or with Christ in the chapel; grow in your confidence, understanding and ability to serve the young Church; listen, laugh and be renewed by the grace of God.

Gain more than the basics of effective youth and middle school ministry - increase your joy for serving teens at the Life Teen and Edge Basic Training Conference.

To learn more or to register, contact Tobi Wedig at 480-820-7001 or tobiw@lifeteen.com. Also visit Life Teen at www.lifeteen.com.

Bay City youth are nourished at Holy Cross Parish

By Terri Busha

BAY CITY—Holy Cross Catholic Church in Bay City is excited to kick-off another year of religious education in September. As we begin our sixth year of Life Teen at the parish, we look back over the

how our true value comes through Christ in the Eucharist and how much he desires our heart. The following weekend, it was the guys turn to find out how to be a true Warrior for Christ as they attended the first High School Men's Retreat. There have been many retreats and XLT's over the years, and as we look back it is evident to see how the Holy Spirit has guided our parish and worked in the hearts of the teens and adults. It has been under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that other ministries have come to life at Holy Cross.

The EDGE is a Catholic Jr. High Ministry for early adolescents in 7th and 8th grade and was implemented at Holy Cross three years ago. It is designed to meet the catechetical, educational, spiritual, emotional and

social needs of young adolescents. Edge approaches catechesis to junior high youth using the Life Teen model. These young teens are brought into a large group environment for gathering activities, teachings and prayer. In small groups, they break open the teachings and build solid, Christ-centered relationships that allow them to



Under the guidance of Matthew Schaeffer, the young men learned how to be true Warriors for Christ at the first High School Men's Retreat August 2.

years to see how the Life Teen movement has impacted the teens and the parish.

Life Teen is an international Catholic movement that serves the Church by providing resources and faith experiences that help lead teens closer to Christ.

Life Teen has brought many new opportunities for our parish to deepen our faith through attending different conferences, camps, retreats, Life Nights and XLT Adoration. We have made six trips to Alexandria, La. for the Steubenville South High School Youth Conference. The teens are always eager to make the trip where they hear dynamic speakers and experience the Holy Spirit through prayer and Eucharistic Adoration.

This year, five teens applied and were accepted to attend the Steubenville South Conference a week early for the LEAD week (leadership, evangelization, and discipleship). They spent the week with about 15 teens from other parishes and were challenged by students from the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, to take their faith to the next level and learn how to truly witness their faith in their schools, parish and community.

We have had 22 teens attend the Life Teen Notre Dame Leadership Conference over the years. The Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary walks, Bible studies and worship are experienced under the shadow of the famous Golden Dome on the campus of Notre Dame. The sessions, led by Life Teen staff and priests, inspire and challenge the teens to understand that to be a true leader, you must first become a servant.

Covecrest, a Life Teen Summer Camp in Tiger, Ga., was the destination of a group of seniors a few years ago. This group of teens spent a week in the great outdoors growing in their love for Christ and each other.

This summer the high school girls traveled to Palacios on Aug. 25 for our first High School Women's Retreat, "Unveiling the Beauty." The girls spent the weekend together learning about how they were created in the image of God,



Bay City's Holy Cross high school girls attend the Women's Retreat, "Unveiling the Beauty," directed by Father Donald Hayden, OSST, in Palacios July 25.

comfortably explore their Catholic faith and make it relevant to their everyday lives. This helps build safe relationships during some of the most formative years of a teen's life.

Many adults work with the Edge and Life Teen ministries and their faith is strengthened through various training opportunities such as Core Member University, Life Teen Convention, and Life Teen Basic and Edge training. Currently, over 1,000 parishes in 22 countries implement the Life Teen model. It has been through the support of our pastor, Father Casey, and our entire parish family that we have received the blessings of Life Teen and the Edge at Holy Cross. Many adults share their gifts of time, talent and treasure to continue to build up the Body of Christ.

Editor's note: It seems that the hard work the volunteers put into their parish youth programs has paid off, as Holy Cross Parish has two young men studying for the priesthood.

Substitute Adorers Needed

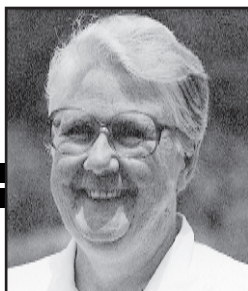
St. Mary's Adoration Chapel in Victoria is always in need of substitutes. If you are willing to be an adorer or to fill in when an adorer needs a substitute, please call Cleo Boldt at 573-6161 or St. Mary Rectory at 573-4328.

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SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



We're on the Journey Together

Have you ever had an instance in which you couldn't decide what to write about? When it was time for me to write this article, I was in such a situation; I just couldn't focus on a likely topic. Fortunately, after an email conversation with a friend in which I expressed my sense of "having missed out" since I had been absent from some community and family events due to scheduling conflicts, she suggested that I use that as a topic and even gave me some ideas. When she made that suggestion, I immediately thought of a remark that a young man had made in a recent workshop. He had related that he had recently read that we don't get to heaven by ourselves; we take others with us.

The two ideas seemed to reinforce one another. They had captured the essence of our life purpose and pilgrimage. We're all in this together. Our presence affects those about us, just as we are affected by them. The eternal destination of each of us is interwoven into that of the other members of our family, our religious community and the total Body of Christ.

Unfortunately in our culture, we have often been influenced to look at life through the lens of individualism and self satisfaction; thus, we may have failed to see the interdependence that is required in a truly Christian setting. Consequently, as a society, we often have a tendency to be so concerned about "me and my rights" that we forget about "our rights and those of others" and fail to consider our responsibility to one another. It is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve fellowship with others when one thinks only of oneself, becomes isolated, or allows oneself to be distanced from those with whom we are

called to journey.

On the other hand, it is through our loving association with one another — family, community, Church — that we are able to participate in the life and work of the Holy Spirit and achieve fellowship with all other believers. We can enjoy the support and concern of our fellow travelers; when one of us stumbles, there are others that can pick us up, dust us off, and help us get back on the trail. Together we try to follow St. Paul's repeated exhortations that we are to be the Body of Christ, that we are all to be one in Christ, and that we are to be many parts in one body of which Christ is the head.

At the same time, we all know that even with the best intentions, disagreements will disrupt the unity in a group; it happened to Saint Paul and his co-workers; it happened in the early church communities

and it happens to us. However, Paul and the early Christians were able to make accommodations for the sake of carrying out their mission. We, too, can overcome our differences and continue together on the journey of life if we keep our eye on our final destination.

Let us, then, show our appreciation and fidelity to those who journey with us — those who rejoice with us in our joys, those who cry with us in our sorrows, those who support us in our weaker moments, those who pull us forward when we falter, those who redirect us when we stray, and those who lead us through their example. Let us journey together and accompany one another toward the fulfillment of the purpose for which we were created — to be united with Christ here on earth and for all eternity.



Shiner Catholic School Grows 20% – Largest summer growth in 55 years

SHINER — St. Paul High School and St. Ludmila Elementary are beginning this new year with 51 more students than were enrolled last school year. In the 2007-2008 school year, 263 students were enrolled at Shiner Catholic School and that has grown to 314.

Not since the school grew from 381 students to 445 in the summer of 1953 has the school grown more in one summer. Those post war years saw the school double in size in just a decade until it hit its highest point of 489 students in the 1954-55 school year. With enrollment of 311, the school is now larger than at any point since 1975 when enrollment was 315 students.

Father Bob Knippenberg has made it his mission as pastor of the Catholic faithful in Shiner to preserve and strengthen the school founded 111 years ago when the Incarnate Word Sisters formed their new school in Shiner.

Credit for the growth is being given to the extraordinary face-to-face marketing efforts inaugurated by Principal Robert Whitworth. Since Rob Whitworth left his job as principal of Ganado Public High

School and came to Shiner, he has sought to turn around the enrollment slide of the past few decades. "I know we are getting better and I want to take us back to the enrollment of the good old days" he said. "The people of Shiner demand excellence in their Catholic school and I am committed to giving it."

Mr. Whitworth placed this project in the hands of Philip Pilat (Class of 1989 and current parent) who is also head of the Shiner Catholic School Alumni Association.

When asked, Mr. Pilat credited this project to the work of a large number of parents who went throughout Shiner and nearby towns to promote the excellent results at Shiner Catholic School.

Franciscan Mission with Father Van Dorn to be held in Bay City

BAY CITY — A mission will be held at Holy Cross Parish in Bay City with Franciscan Father Jim Van Dorn. Father Van Dorn, with his "Ministry of Healing and Hope," is known around the diocese as putting on wonderful missions; therefore the parish wanted to let everyone know he will be here in September.

His Franciscan Parish Mission, "Helping People Find God," will be held at Holy Cross Church from Sunday, September 14, through Wednesday, September 17, beginning each evening at 7 p.m.

The schedule of retreats include Sunday: "Letting Go of our Hurts and the Need for Reconciliation;" Monday: "Confessions;" Tuesday: "Healing;" and Wednesday: "Commissioned and Sent Forth." Father Van Dorn will also be preaching at the weekend Masses at Holy Cross Sept. 14.

To schedule a personal appointment with Father Van Dorn, please call the parish at (979) 245-6379. Holy Cross is located at 2001 Katy Street in Bay City.



Walk a Mile for the Poor

What can you do to help reduce poverty in America? Hit the Pavement for the Poor and join the Friends of the Poor® Walk.

More Americans than ever are living below the official poverty line. By taking part in the Friends of the Poor® Walk, you can help to raise national awareness of the challenges faced by the nation's poor and to raise significant funds for use in direct service to the poor.

Put on your athletic shoes and hit the pavement for the poor during the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Friends of the Poor® Walk, to be held September 27, 2008, 9:00 a.m., Friendship Park, El Campo, Texas. Participants will walk one mile to help raise significant funds for use in direct service to the nation's deserving poor. Youth organizations and churches are invited to walk. All funds raised will stay in El Campo.

We invite the whole community to come out for this spectacular event. For more information call Terri Beltran at 979-578-3647 or visit www.svdpfriendsofthepoorwalk.org.

FIRST BUS TO HOLY LAND IS FULL!

Betty Urbanovsky's November trip to the Holy Land has been filled. To accommodate all of the requests, a second group, with the same itinerary, has been scheduled for Dec. 2 – 12. The spiritual director will be Father Wayne Flagg, pastor of Sts. Peter & Paul in Frelsburg and St. Roch in Mentz. To reserve your seat, contact Betty at (979) 543-2333 or e-mail: burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net. Only 20 seats left on this newly scheduled trip.

154th Annual Picnic

St. Roch Catholic Church – Mentz, Texas

Join us for the Sacrifice of the Mass beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, October 5

BBQ BEEF, PORK & HOMEMADE SAUSAGE

Adults \$8:00 Children Under 12: \$4:00 Dine in AC comfort or under pavilion
Serving beginning at 11:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.

DRIVE-THRU LINE

BBQ & SAUSAGE SOLD
AT PIT BY THE POUND

HAMBURGERS

GET A HAMBURGER
BEGINNING AT 3:00 P.M.

AUCTION
1:00 p.m.

RAFFLE

MUSIC
Throughout The Day By:
THE CZECHAHOLICS

BINGO
12:30 – 4:30 p.m.

GROCERY WALK • COUNTRY STORE • CAKE WALK

Oct. 12

HOLY CROSS PARISH

BAZAAR

RIVERSIDE HALL, EAST BERNARD

Meal served starting at 11:00 a.m.

Bar-B-Q Beef • Chicken • Sausage

with "Homemade Dressing" & All the Trimmings

Hamburgers served starting at 3:00 p.m.

Refreshments and Country Store Items

** Camel, Pony Rides & Moonwalk** — Velcro Wall, Rock Climbing Wall
Games from Noon-5:00 p.m. • Grand Auction starting at 12:30 p.m.

Music & Entertainment starting at Noon by:

The Texas Legacy Czech Band (12:30-3:30 p.m.), Dujka Brothers (3:30-6 p.m.),
No Limit (Country/Rock (6 p.m.-?))

Mass Schedule — Holy Cross Church 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

Oct. 12

Plenty of
Czech Pastries

Everyone
Invited!!



DIOCESE OF VICTORIA PASTORAL INSTITUTE

Continuing Adult Faith Enrichment

Scripture and Church History Program via Distant Learning

Because of the high price of gasoline, our busy lives, and recent technologies, Sr. Digna Vela will begin teaching **Scripture** classes at the chancery in Victoria (in person) and at Holy Rosary Parish in Hostyn via distant learning. A **Church History** class will also be offered at the chancery and at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Wharton using the same technologies. Persons interested in taking either of these classes are invited to come and experience learning traditionally (in person) or with the technological resources of the twenty-first century (distant learning).

The Time and Works of St. Paul

Pope Benedict XVI declared 2008-2009 as the "Year of St. Paul." In this six-week continuing education course, Sr. Mildred Truchard, IWBS, will explore the time and culture of St. Paul, his themes, and his letters. *This class is not being offered via distant learning.*

Introduction to the Bible and the Pentateuch

Sr. Digna Vela, instructor
Tuesdays, 9:15 - 11:30 a.m. or 7:00 - 9:15 p.m.
Chancery, Victoria or Holy Rosary, Hostyn
Begins September 2, 2008

A History of the Catholic Church

Mr. Ron Friedel, instructor
Thursdays, 7:00 - 9:15 p.m.
Chancery, Victoria or O.L. of Mt. Carmel,
Wharton
Begins September 4, 2008

The Time and Works of St. Paul

Sr. Mildred Truchard, instructor
Mondays, 7:00 - 9:15 p.m.
Chancery, Victoria
Begins September 8, 2008

Registration fee is \$15.00 per six-week class. Book fees are extra. Call 361-573-0828 or email bparkan@victoriadiocese.org to register or register the first night of class.

"Get wisdom, get understanding!" Proverbs 4:5

Wanda Zabransky honored as September PCL

By Cynthia Brewer

The Catechetical Office of the Diocese of Victoria has chosen to honor Mrs. Wanda Zabransky of St. Joseph Parish in Yoakum as the September Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL). Mrs. Zabransky has been the St. Joseph's PCL for 10 years.

Father Al Padalecki, parochial vicar at St. Joseph from 1969 to 1972, first asked her to teach the 3rd grade CCD class over 30 years ago. She has been a dedicated teacher since.

Mrs. Zabransky is the PCL for Kindergarten through 10th grades. St. Joseph's parish has 22 catechists teaching about 180 students on Wednesdays from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. This past year 23 second grade students prepared for and received first reconciliation and first communion.

Youth receive the sacrament of confirmation in the 11th grade and meet on Sunday mornings as a separate CCD program.

Mrs. Zabransky has received certification from the diocese for completing the Pastoral Institute's short-term classes. She continues to attend conferences and inservices offered by the diocese. She also holds membership in the Organization of Catechetical Leadership.

Besides coordinating the parish's religious education program, Mrs. Zabransky also serves as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and is a member of the

Catholic Daughters of the Americas and the KJT.

She is a graduate from the University of Houston-Victoria and has a bachelor of science degree in education, with certification in elementary ed., early childhood and special education. For the past 10 years, she has been working for the Cuero ISD and is currently a special education elementary classroom teacher.



Wanda Zabransky

"The most difficulty I have is balancing my time between work, CCD, my family and other obligations," she said. The most challenging aspect of her PCL ministry "is helping students and catechists come together in an inviting and welcoming environment where they can share with each other and grow in their faith."

What brings her satisfaction and happiness is when the students become young adults and still continue to attend Mass and other church community activities.

"I enjoy being a part of the parish community," Mrs. Zabransky said, "and serving as the CCD coordinator keeps me in close contact with the parish families, parents and children." When they're all working together she finds it just wonderful and heartwarming.

Mrs. Zabransky and her husband, Henry, have two grown sons, Richard and Patrick. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, traveling, walking and bike riding.

Family Apostolate publishes new Instructional Catechism for Families

BLOOMINGDALE, OHIO — To promote a deeper understanding of the Catholic Faith among all ages, the Apostolate for Family Consecration has come out with a new unabridged edition to their Family Catechism written by Father Lawrence Lovasik, SVD. The book is based on a Q-and-A format to be used as the basic text for families, parishes and schools.

Found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism and endorsed by Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, the new edition of "The Apostolate's Family Catechism" features updated cross-references including the "US Catholic Catechism for Adults" and Pope Benedict's encyclicals, "God is Love" and "Sacrament of Charity," to guide readers through the ocean of truth of the Catholic Faith.

As with previous editions, the new edition contains 304 questions pertaining to the Creed, sacraments, prayer and the Ten Commandments. Answers include quotes from Sacred Scripture, the "Catechism of the Catholic Church," Vatican II, papal documents and other theological writings. The "By Heart Catechism and Scripture Review" provides explanations for easy memorization of the key doctrines presented.

Also featured are summary prayers, Doctrine-Moral-Worship Exercises and Thought Provokers sections complete with answers, common prayers in English and Latin, and more than 800 theological illustrations.

The late Mother Teresa commended the book's ability to "enable parents to fulfill their primary obligation in teaching their children."

To make it easier for families, parishes, schools and even adult formation groups such as RCIA to learn the Family Catechism together, commentaries for the 304 questions are given by Francis Car-

dinal Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Commentaries on audio and video as well as discussion guides can be downloaded for free off the Apostolate's website. Supplementary teaching guides and age-appropriate workbooks can also be ordered for use in elementary and high school settings.

The new edition of "The Apostolate's Family Catechism" is now available and can be ordered by calling 1-800-77-FAMILY or by visiting www.familyland.org.

Founded in 1975 by Jerry Coniker and late wife Gwen, the Apostolate for Family Consecration is a pontifically approved association striving to consecrate families to the Holy Family and in the truths of our faith in the spirit of Pope John Paul II. The Family Apostolate reaches families in Asia, Europe, Africa, and North and South America through its Consecration in Truth Catechetical Series, its Internet Media Library, its 24-hour Familyland Television Network and its programs at Catholic Familyland.

Volume
1 of 2

The
APOSTOLATE'S
FAMILY
CATECHISM™

by Rev. Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D.

Unabridged Edition
Guides you through the ocean of
Truth of the Catholic Faith through
its cross-references with Scripture,
Vatican II, the Catechism of the
Catholic Church, key books, and
Papal and other Vatican documents
for each question.



Questions
1-189

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Christmas Tour

December 3-5

2009 brochures will be ready for
mail about the middle of October.
If you would like your name added
to the mailing list, please call:

361.552.2695 or
361.920.3216

OUR LADY OF VICTORY CATHEDRAL ANNUAL Fall FESTIVAL



Sunday, October 12

at the Victoria Community Center
Doors open at 11:00 a.m.

Buffet style barbecue-beef and sausage dinner
with all the trimmings
Adults, \$7; children under 12 years, \$4.50
All plates to go \$7 with curb service available

Booths and games for the entire family
Auction begins at 12:30 p.m.
in the Community Center Annex





PARISH CELEBRATES SECRETARY'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY—Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Ganado had two events to celebrate this past August 15: its feast day, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Karen Klaus' 25th anniversary of working as the parish secretary. After the celebration of the Mass for the Assumption, the parish gave Karen a surprise party. She has worked with the following pastors at Assumption Parish: 1983-1988: Rev. John Bily (not pictured); 1988-1993: Rev. Pat Fidgeon (deceased); 1993-1998: Rev. Arnold Anders; 1998-2004: Rev. Joseph Hybner; and Rev. Michael Lyons: 2004-present. Pictured from l. to r.: Msgr. Arnold Anders, Rev. Joseph Hybner, Bishop David Fellhauer, Karen Klaus and Rev. Michael Lyons.

Life Chain – October 5

The Life Chain will be held Sunday, October 5, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Navarro Street between Loop 463 and Magruder/Sam Houston streets. Pro-life signs, "Abortion Hurts Women" and "Abortion Kills Children," may be picked up at stations at the old HEB, Chick-Fil-A and Hall Electric parking lots.



HOLY CROSS VBS CHOOSES CHRIST AND RAISES MONEY FOR ST. VINCENT DE PAUL—Holy Cross Catholic Church in Bay City held its annual Vacation Bible School July 21-25. Approximately 85 children in grades pre-kindergarten through 6th grade participated in SonWorld Adventure Park, a fun-filled program in a "theme park" setting. At SonWorld, kids learned the importance of choosing to believe in Jesus as their Savior and about putting their faith into action. Many adult and youth volunteers worked together to provide craft activities, Bible lessons, skits, food and music for the children to enjoy. The service project for the week was to raise money to help the parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society. Children and their families pitched in to raise over \$200 for this very important organization that helps those in need. At the end of the week, children enjoyed special outdoor activities and a hot dog lunch. Holy Cross looks forward to providing another action-packed, Gospel-filled program for its Vacation Bible School next summer and in the summers ahead! Above, volunteer Sally Rasmussen teaches the pre-k kindergarten class.

Holy Spirit, you have a call for everyone of us. So come, prepare our hearts to discover what it is that you expect of each of us.

Brother Roger of Taizé

Young Missionaries in Action

By Mary Rose Barta and Sharon Patek

SHINER, TEXAS—When asking teenagers what their plans for the summer are, one would expect to hear about going to the beach, swimming, movies, ball games, amusement parks, concerts or just taking it easy.

However, for one group of teenagers their summer included plans of a much different nature. In a commitment to reach out and make a difference in the lives of others, a group of young people from Saints Cyril & Methodius Catholic Church in Shiner were busy making plans for a week-long missionary trip as their summer began. Their assignment would take them to Mexico and their volunteer work would include teaching Vacation Bible School, visiting with immigrants and persons in drug rehabilitation centers, painting buildings, and gathering food items and gifts to deliver to destitute families in Mexico.

The Youth Ministry program of Saints Cyril & Methodius Catholic Church in Shiner offered the opportunity for youth to participate in a mission trip to Mexico from May 27 to June 1, 2008. A group of 24 young people eagerly began their preparations even before the summer of 2008 began.

Parish Youth Ministry coordinator, Sharon Patek, spearheaded efforts to give this group of teenagers first-hand experience in being true missionaries for a week. She coordinated her efforts through Margarita and Juan Viego, residents of Del Rio, Texas.

The young missionaries collected gifts for children, as well as monetary donations, which helped them purchase canned foods, toiletries, paint supplies and other household items. Through the generosity of parishioners and other friends in the area, they were able to collect a substantial amount of useful supplies for our neigh-

bors to the south.

With a departing prayer and blessing by Father Bob Knippenberg asking for God's blessings on their efforts, the youthful missionary group left Shiner on May 27 in two, 15-passenger vans. Their destination was Del Rio, Texas, and Acuna, Mexico.

Each morning began with prayers asking for God's blessings on the group and the people they would meet that day. Two of the mornings were spent with the orphans at the Casa Del Hogar orphanage.



(inset) Ashley Kloesel of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish in Shiner paints with Mexican girl during VBS. (above) Sts. Cyril & Methodius youth minister in Mexico on their 2008 Parish Youth Missionary Trip.

Sheri VanSickle and the young people provided the orphans with a Vacation Bible School experience, which included Scripture stories, arts, crafts and games.

One afternoon was spent with the immigrants from the Emmaus House where the energetic group of teens and their adult chaperones washed and painted the outside walls of one of the buildings. Before the group departed, the immigrants shared

their life stories and gave the youth an opportunity to ask questions. The immigrants then asked the group a question



to help the addicts overcome their addiction is prayer. The addicts stay there for three months and then are to return back to their homes. Margarita Viego, the group's guide, stated that this is the most fruitful facility because the addicts return back to the community to work, volunteer at the churches and better their lives. The addicts at the center range from age 16 to 60. The group from Shiner was the first group that went to this rehab center.

The group also visited and brought food and toiletries to the families along the railroad tracks. The young people were invited into the cardboard homes of the families. They saw first hand what these people call a house and the conditions that they are forced to live in. Even though they were saddened by the plight of these families, the young people were amazed at their gratitude when they received the gifts brought by them.

The youth in the group included Matthew Baker, Angelique Blaschke, Abby and Shelby Bohuslav, Allie Hoerig, Blue Hybner, Ashley Kloesel, Hannah Marcak, Hailey Morrow, Courtney Novosad, Ashlyn Patek, Kevin Patek, Devin Pesek, Matthew Pohl, Calli and Kyla Schacherl, Carissa Sciba, Stephanie Squyres, Ben, Charlie, and Gary Van Sickle, Paige Werner, Austin Whitescarver and Megan Zella. Adults accompanying the youth were: Sheri VanSickle, Lynette Pesek, Alisa Hybner and Sharon Patek.

Future missionary trips are already being planned. Anyone wanting to know more about supporting the missionary efforts of Saints Cyril & Methodius Youth Ministry may contact Sharon Patek at 361-594-3234 or sscmymmin@shinercatholicchurch.org.

To read quotes from the Young Shiner Missionaries, go to the diocesan Web site at: www.victoriadiocese.org/lighthouse/lighthouse.htm and click on extra, extra.



The Young Adult Group of Victoria meets to prepare the 2008 Theology at the Well series. Young adults are invited to meet at Chili's in Victoria every other Thursday evening from Sept. 4 – Nov. 6 to hear straight talk, hard facts and real answers to living the Catholic faith.

Theology at the Well begins

By Cynthia Brewer

After the successful turn out for Rev. Ty Bazar's talk "Got Hope?," featuring an in-depth look at "Spe Salvi" (On Christian Hope) on Sept. 4, the Catholic Young Adult Group of Victoria continues its Theology at the Well series Thursday, Sept. 18.

The upcoming dates, topics and teachers include:

Sept. 18: "Marriage Made in Heaven" – Looking at the sacrament of marriage through the lens of "Theology of the Body" – by Rev. Bob Knippenberg, pastor of Sts. Cyril & Methodius in Shiner

Oct. 2: "Mercy, Mercy" – St. Faustina's Divine Mercy Chaplet is a powerful new prayer. What is the background of this relatively new devotion, and how is it bringing people closer to Christ? – Rev. Michael Rother, Sacred Heart in Hallettsville

Oct. 16: "Tending the Garden" – What is our obligation as Catholics? Stewardship is often a foreign concept – what does it really mean and how does it fit into God's plan – by Rev. Stan DeBoe

Oct. 30: "Red, Blue and Who Are

You?" – Faithful Citizenship is a topic on everyone's mind. As a Catholic, what is my responsibility as the election draws near – by Rev. David Berger, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral

Nov. 6: "Be Not Afraid" – Jesus challenges us to overcome fear by trusting God. How do we learn to trust him in

spite of the troubles we experience in life? – by Ron Friedel, director of the Spiritual Renewal Center.

Sessions are from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday evenings, "at a new venue with a new menu" – Chili's – 5004 N. Navarro in Victoria.

Come and bring a friend for the great teaching and camaraderie. Door prizes will be presented.

Theology at the Well is sponsored by the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Diocese of Victoria and is open to all young and "young at heart" adults. This program is a casual forum of straight talk, hard facts and real answers to living our faith.

For more information, please call (361) 649-9157 or e-mail: the-inn@tisd.net; or Debbie at (361) 573-0828, ext. 32 or e-mail: dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org.



YOUTH GROUP COLLECTS SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR THE NEEDY—St. Robert's Youth Group in El Campo held a garage sale on Saturday, July 26, and used the proceeds to purchase school supplies to donate to Northside Elementary. The group members delivered the supplies to the school on August 6. Pictured are a few of the group members with the school's principal: (sitting) Laura Echeverria; (l-r, first row) Gabby Puentes, Jackie Leal, Gabby Martinez, Yvette Garcia and Carlos Garcia; (l-r, back row) Principal Diane Srubar, Crisanta Canales, Sara Leal, Ben Prochazka, Chelsea Cruz and Andrew Prochazka.



Father Samuel Appiasi receives the sign of peace from Bishop David Fellhauer at the Mass of Thanksgiving for his 25th anniversary to the priesthood. The Mass and a reception were held July 27 at St. Peter Parish in Blessing where Father Samuel is pastor. Since becoming a priest he has also become a U.S. citizen and has been incardinated into the Diocese of Victoria.

Father Samuel Appiasi celebrates 25th anniversary to priesthood

By Cynthia Brewer

BLESSING—Father Samuel Appiasi, pastor of St. Peter Parish in Blessing, has made some impressive strides even before becoming a priest; this year he adds another, his 25th anniversary to the priesthood.

On Sunday, July 27, 2008, Father Samuel celebrated his anniversary to the priesthood with a Mass of Thanksgiving, concelebrated by Bishop David E. Fellhauer and Father Gabriel Bentil, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Inez.

In his homily, Father Gabriel told the story of how Father Samuel almost didn't become a priest. After his minor seminary studies he quit studying to be a priest because he had injured his right arm. He was in a lot of pain with severe swelling, and he was unable to use it. He prayed to God asking that his arm be healed; he said he would continue with major seminary if it were healed. After his prayer to God, the pain and swelling left; therefore he returned to priestly formation in the major seminary.

"Thank God, through that prayer and healing, he is here now – 25 years," Father Gabriel said.

Father Samuel was ordained in the Archdiocese of Accra, Ghana, July 17, 1983. He spent 14 years in Ghana, although he visited the United States several times filling in for vacationing diocesan priests. During the summers from 1994

to 1998 he helped out at Texas parishes in Meyersville, Yorktown, Runge and Port Lavaca. He came to the Diocese of Victoria on a permanent basis January 14, 1998. After spending some time at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral in Victoria, he was assigned to St. Peter's in Blessing on August 18, 1998, where he has been for 10 years.

After moving to the United States he applied for citizenship and became a U.S. citizen on June 21, 2006. On September 27, 2006, he was incardinated into the Victoria Diocese.

Following the Mass of Thanksgiving, the parish held a dinner reception for Father Samuel and his guests.

The hall was so beautifully decorated, Father Samuel said, that it looked like a wedding – which closest he'd get to having a wedding. Fellow Ghanaian priests, Fathers Charles Otsiwa of OLV Cathedral, Johnson Owusu-Boateng of Vanderbilt, Gabriel Oduro Tawiah of New Taiton and Augustine Nsiah Asante of El Campo attended the reception to celebrate with Father Samuel. They all joined together in a dance while they sang a Ghanaian folksong. Parishioner Pablo Dominguez organized the reception with the assistance of all the parish's societies.

Within a week of celebrating his anniversary, Father Samuel went on vacation to Ghana, his home country.



ALTAR SERVERS THANKED FOR THEIR VOCATION OF SERVICE—Altar servers from a dozen parishes around the Diocese of Victoria attended the first annual diocesan appreciation day at Splashway Family Water Park in Sheridan, Texas, on Saturday, August 23. The event was sponsored by the Vocations Office to thank the altar servers for their vocation to the liturgies of the Church. Father Dan Morales, vocation director, was seen eating hot dogs and flying down the water slide, but not at the same time!



6th Annual Worldwide Children's Eucharistic Holy Hour

ST. PAUL, MINN.—The World Apostolate of Fatima's Children's Program, "Children of the Eucharist, Friends of the Hidden Jesus," will host its 6th Annual Worldwide Children's Eucharistic Holy Hour at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., Friday, October 3, 2008.

Father Patrick Byrne, General Secretary of the Pontifical Mission of the Holy Childhood Association, will preside over the event and is inviting the children all over the world to unite their prayers and Eucharistic adoration with the school children at the Basilica, which is the Eucharistic epicenter of this global children's spiritual movement.

The theme of this year's event is "I WANT TO CONSOLE JESUS," in honor of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Francisco, the "Little Shepherd" of Fatima, who always desired to console Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament.

The World Apostolate of Fatima encourages bishops, priests, school principals and families around the globe

to plan "little pilgrimages" to their own cathedrals, parish churches and chapels on the first Friday in October (3rd), and gather their school children before the Most Blessed Sacrament to unite their prayers for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon all children and families of the world, in anticipation of the long-awaited Springtime in the Church.

The primary focus of the event is: On one day, always the First Friday in October, the children of the world gather before our Eucharistic Lord and, following the program, pray for peace in our families and the world. It is the responsibility of those leading the Holy Hour in their parish or school to help the participating children understand that they are spiritually united with other children around the world, and that Jesus, truly present in all the tabernacles of world, sees them united as ONE!

The "program" may be found at www.childrenoftheeucharist.org. EWTN will broadcast the event LIVE from the Basilica to over 40 different nations.

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Geraldine Streckfuss of St. Anthony Parish in Columbus is the August Family Puzzle Contest winner and has won "Mary in Her Own Words" by Father Gary Caster and published by Servant Books, an imprint of St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Brier Shimek (13) of Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville and Haley Mazac (13) of St. Anthony Parish in Columbus are the winners of the youth puzzle contest. They will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

The winner of the September contest will win a copy of "My Cousin the Saint" by Justin Catanoso and published by William Morrow, an imprint of Harper Collins.

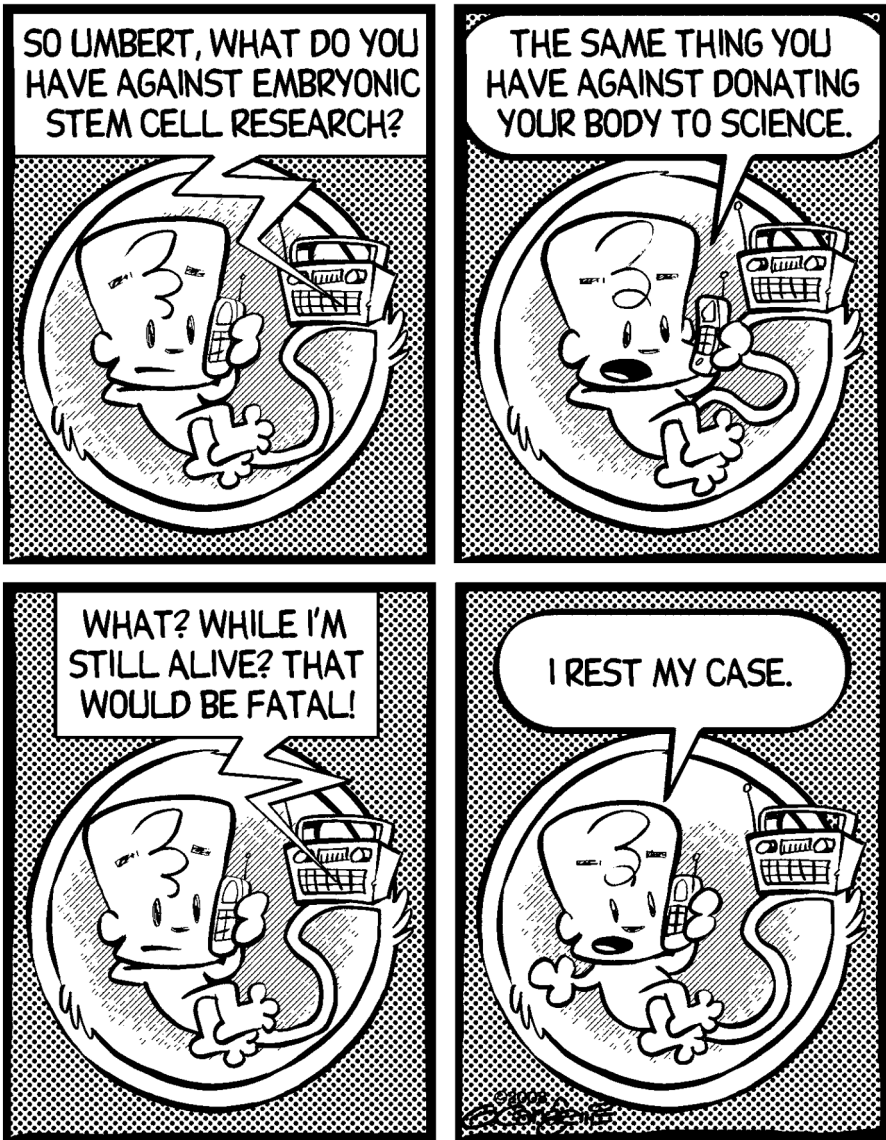
If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number and parish name by Sept. 25 for a chance to win "My Cousin the Saint." Send to: Family Contest, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age.

Pope Benedict XVI Intentions September 2008

General: That those who are forced to leave home and country because of war or oppressive regimes may be supported by Christians in the defense and protection of their rights.

Mission: That faithful to the sacrament of matrimony every Christian family may cultivate the values of love and communion in order to be a small evangelizing community, sensitive and open to the material and spiritual needs of others

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

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"My Cousin the Saint" to be Puzzle Contest prize

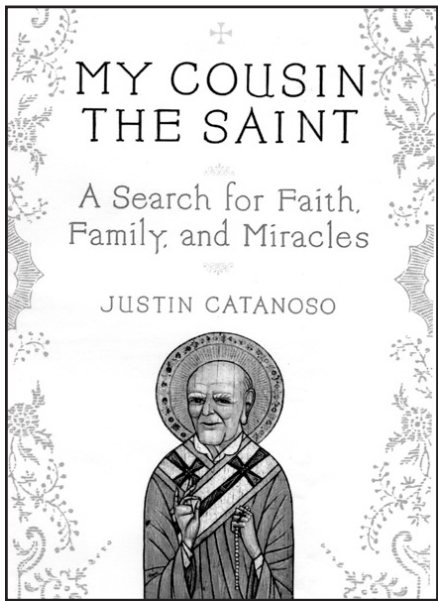
PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Not many people can say they have a cousin for a saint. But Justin Catanoso can, and he writes about it in his first book, "My Cousin the Saint: A Search for Faith, Family and Miracles," published this May by William Morrow. The book brings to life one of the church's newest canonized saints, St. Gaetano Catanoso, an Italian parish priest who served in a rural region with extreme poverty and a high rate of illiteracy and was a breeding ground for crime. Canonized in October 2005, the Italian diocesan priest was one of five men in the first group of saints proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI. He lived from 1879-1963. Known for a spirit of charity, humility and sacrifice, St. Gaetano was dedicated to the holy face of Christ. He revived Marian and eucharistic devotions in his local parish and founded an orga-

nization to help subsidize education for poor seminarians. "Padre Gaetano came to believe he could do no less than to love with the same kind of intensity that Jesus loved. How else could he soften so many

hardened souls?" Catanoso writes in his book. "Like St. Veronica, herself, Padre Gaetano would fall in step with the many, many poor hobbling all around him. He would wipe their faces of tears and blood. He would love them blindly, radically, unconditionally."

"My Cousin the Saint" will be the September Family Puzzle Contest Prize. If you have not won the puzzle contest in the past six months, please send in com-

pleted puzzle by Sept. 25 to *The Catholic Lighthouse* for a chance to win. It may also be purchased on the Web at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.



English, Welsh bishops launch Web site for children ages 10-13

LONDON (CNS) — The bishops of England and Wales are preparing to launch a Web site for children to explore the Catholic faith. The site, called Yfaith, is aimed at children 10-13 years old and will go online Sept. 7. It is funded by the English and Welsh bishops through their Catholic Agency to Support Evangelization as a unique "Web resource to equip children as confident evangelizers." Emily Davis, a coordinator of the site, told

Catholic News Service Aug. 27 that it was the result of four years of work that began in response to requests from Catholic parents. "I am very excited," she said. "We hope this is going to be a place where children can take their faith a step further. "There is an interest in spirituality among young people generally, and that seems to be growing," she said. The new Web site's address is www.Yfaith.co.uk.



The Joyful Catholic

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

Spiritual exercise is good for your soul

"My life has changed," said my friend.

She spoke with excitement and a big smile.

"Since I discovered the power of gratitude, I see everything and everyone in a new light. I no longer see the glass half-empty; now I see the glass half-full."

This woman struggled with a critical spirit and a self-proclaimed tendency to see a problem in every situation and a fault in every person.

She also worried that her kids were copying her bad habits.

Then she read "The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius" and discovered the power of gratitude.

On the first page, Ignatius stirred her heart with these words: "Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord."

As she practiced the spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius, she found herself allowing God to guide her to supernatural health. She had found a new personal trainer.

During her nightly examination of conscience, she reflected on her day. Then she thanked God for all his blessings and praised him for his own sake.

"I discovered," she recalled, how to put myself entirely in God's loving hands and praise him for all things. Nothing good or bad happens unless God allows it to pass through his fingers. So we can be grateful for everything."

"My life is transformed," she continued. "I feel like I've awakened from a delirious nightmare. Maybe I found the Holy Spirit. I just want to share this joy and wisdom with the world!"

She decided to offer her children an easy version of the spiritual exercises by asking them three questions.

Every night at bedtime, starting with the youngest, she sits on the side of the bed as they kneel and say their prayers.

She listens intently to them, just as God listens to her.

Then they jump into bed and she tucks them in, saying, "Name one thing you are thankful for."

At first, she recalled, they mentioned ice cream, flowers and birthday parties. Gradually they expanded their lists to include surprises like grandpa's laugh or a teacher's compliment.

This helps her children see the endless variety of God's blessings every day.

Previously they rocketed through the day without noticing God's blessings. Now they notice more blessings and it shows in their radiant faces.

Next she asks, "What is one thing you might have done differently today?"

This teaches them how to be more aware of their words and actions. They learn to be problem solvers and peace makers. They dream of creative ways to be better in the future.

Finally she says, "Name one time today when you felt God's presence."

This helps them recognize God's loving presence in their daily lives, in little ways and in big ways, in the beauty of nature and the warmth of the sun, in the people they meet and the friendships they make.

Her older children are starting to appreciate how God can bring good from bad and healing after hurt.

This gently moves them closer to God by helping them identify his certain presence every day of their lives.

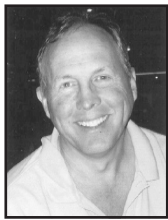
Gradually they see God in all the love they give and receive, for God is love.

Then the children drift off to sleep knowing the peace and joy of the Great Comforter.

"This nightly ritual," she says, "is giving them a much deeper faith than I had as a child. I actually see my children now as little saints in progress."

"I'm also starting," she adds, "to offer these same three questions to my husband, my nieces and nephews, and my students in Sunday School. They like the exercise and I enjoy helping God change their consciousness a little bit at a time."

Hermann is a Catholic columnist and speaker.



Help bring Europe back to Christ!

Aid to the Church in Need, an international Catholic charity under the authority of the Holy Father, is sponsoring an international and ecumenical Christian initiative "Europe for Christ!" to create a network of: PRAYER for a Europe built upon Christian values; EDUCATION on vital issues of concern for European Christians; and ACTION and SUPPORT when needed.

We Christians in the United States can also help Europe4Christ. Join this network spiritually by agreeing to pray one Our Father at noon — wherever you are — in whatever time zone — to help bring Europe back to Christ. Catholics may say the Lord's Prayer when they say the noon Angelus. To increase solidarity, sign up at www.europe4christ.net. In city box, just add the state and USA.

The "Europe for Christ!" Charter

Europe stands before a crossroads. Europe owes much of its culture to the Gospel lived by Christians: Solidarity and human rights, universities, hospitals and cathedrals. Today, however, we risk betraying the soul of Europe. A dictatorship of relativism and a culture of death are omnipresent. Christians are increasingly discriminated against and watch a political tendency in which a humanism inspired by the Gospel is ever increasingly banned into the private sphere. And yet we have also understood that when God is not our Father, that we are no longer brothers and sisters! For this reason it is important for the future of this continent that we base our culture again on Christ. We seek a Europe in which freedom of religion and conscience is respected, a young and dynamic Europe, one that is a sign of hope for the world. For this we pray and work.

Sunday readings from Sept. 14 to Oct. 19

September 14 —
Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Numbers 21:4b-9
Psalm 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

September 21 —
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 55:6-9
Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18
Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a
Matthew 20:1-16a

September 28 —
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 18:25-28
Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Philippians 2:1-11
Matthew 21:28-32

October 5 —
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 5:1-7
Psalm 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20
Philippians 4:6-9
Matthew 21:33-43

October 12 —
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 25:6-10a
Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Matthew 22:1-14

October 19 —
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6
Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10
1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b
Matthew 22:15-21

THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

St. Paul preached to all due to fascination of Gospel, says pope

By Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — St. Paul's missionary travels, his writings and his perseverance despite suffering demonstrate the strength of his conviction that all people need the salvation of Christ, Pope Benedict XVI said.

During his Aug. 27 weekly general audience, the pope dedicated his main talk to the biography and travels of St. Paul as part of the celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of the apostle's birth.

The pope told the crowd that the fact that St. Paul was born a Jew, was raised speaking Greek and held Roman citizenship placed him on "the border of three different cultures, and perhaps this is why he was open" to proclaiming the Gospel to pagans as well as fellow Jews.

"We see in him a commitment that can be explained only by a soul truly fascinated by the light of the Gospel, in love with Christ and having a deep conviction that it is necessary to give the world the light of Christ, to proclaim the Gospel to all," Pope Benedict said.

In St. Paul, he said, "we see the greatness, the beauty or, rather, the necessity of the Gospel for all of us."

Pope Benedict prayed "that our hearts, too, would be touched by Christ's words so that we, too, can give the light of the Gospel, of the truth, to the world that is thirsting for it."

The pope said St. Paul's speech at the Areopagus in Athens, Greece, reported in Chapter 17 of the Acts of the Apostles, was a model for demonstrating how the Gospel message responds to the yearnings and aspirations of all people.

The apostle helped "the Greeks understand that this God of the Christians and the Jews was not a God foreign to their culture, but is the 'unknown God' they had been expecting and the true response to the deepest questions of their culture," the pope said.

Pope Benedict also spoke about the dispute among the leaders of the early Christian community over the degree to which new Christians who had been pagans and not Jews had to follow Jewish law in order to share in the promises God had made to the people of Israel.

The pope said the discussion included "observing the Sabbath, circumcision and the dietary restrictions that separated the Israelites from the rest of the world."

The question, he said, was a "fundamental problem for the birth of the future church" and would determine "whether or not a truly universal church would be born."

The apostles and leaders of the early church decided the only necessity was to be truly faithful to Christ, "to live with Christ and according to his words," he said.

Near the end of his life, St. Paul was sent as a prisoner to Rome to plead his case before the emperor. In the city, he met with delegates from Rome's Jewish community, the pope said.

Pope Benedict said St. Paul "had remained faithful" to his Jewish beliefs and "was convinced that Jesus was the hope of Israel and that suffering for Jesus, he suffered for the hope of Israel."

The Good News from St. Paul Year of St. Paul ~ Jubilee 2008-2009 Ephesians 5:1-14

1 So be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma. 3 Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting among holy ones, 4 no obscenity or silly or suggestive talk, which is out of place, but instead, thanksgiving. 5 Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure or greedy person, that is, an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the disobedient. 7 So do not be associated with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, 9 for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. 10 Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, 12 for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; 13 but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for everything that becomes visible is light.



Ciudadanos fieles

La Iglesia pide una solución humana e integral a la inmigración

Por Kevin Appleby



El debate nacional sobre inmigración ha generado grandes discusiones, a menudo emocionales, sobre el impacto del número creciente de inmigrantes indocumentados en nuestras comunidades. Predomina el diálogo acalorado sobre los aspectos económico, social y legal de la cuestión. Sin embargo, deberíamos entender que, por encima de todo, la inmigración es un asunto humanitario y, en última instancia, una cuestión moral.

Cada día en parroquias, programas de servicios sociales, hospitales y escuelas las consecuencias humanas de un sistema de inmigración inadecuado son patentes: familias separadas, trabajadores inmigrantes explotados por coyotes y empleadores sin escrúpulos, y seres humanos desesperados por sobrevivir que mueren en los desiertos de Estados Unidos. Al tiempo que nuestra nación se beneficia del trabajo duro de los inmigrantes indocumentados, nosotros fallamos en extenderles las protecciones legales básicas para el lugar de trabajo. Aún peor, algunos usan a los inmigrantes como chivos expiatorios de nuestros problemas sociales.

El documento de los obispos estadounidenses *Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles* urge a los católicos a que estudien temas como la inmigración antes de ir a las urnas.

Dadas algunas prácticas y políticas actuales en algunos estados y ciudades de los EE.UU., y el efecto perjudicial que éstas causan sobre la vida y la dignidad humanas, los obispos han afirmado que la situación actual es inmoral y han hecho un llamado a la reforma integral del sistema de inmigración. Su receta para remediar el sistema es enfatizar la *legalidad* sobre la ilegalidad mediante la creación de vías legales para la inmigración y la legalización, con un camino abierto a la ciudadanía, para los inmigrantes indocumentados. Desde luego, esto incluye un cumplimiento riguroso de las leyes, pero también sugiere una aproximación más integral que reforma todos los aspectos del sistema. Este remedio representa la forma más efectiva, humana y práctica para resolver nuestra crisis migratoria.

Algunos argumentan que los trabajadores indocumentados y sus familias no deberían recibir estatus legal porque viven fuera de ley. Antes de emitir juicio, debemos considerar que la política estadounidense ha creado, en realidad, condiciones que fomentan la inmigración ilegal y el incumplimiento de la ley. Por ejemplo,

mientras el gobierno federal ha gastado billones de dólares en reforzar la vigilancia y la seguridad en la frontera en los últimos 15 años, durante el mismo periodo el número de inmigrantes sin documentos se ha más que duplicado en el país. Esto se debe, principalmente al hecho de que una vez han entrado en los Estados Unidos, casi el 80 por ciento de los trabajadores inmigrantes varones encuentran trabajo en compañías estadounidenses. Este imán de trabajos disponibles induce a los inmigrantes a venir.

Para agravar el problema, las leyes de inmigración de Estados Unidos no proveen vías legales para que estos trabajadores puedan inmigrar de forma segura y legal. El número de visados de trabajo disponibles para trabajadores con poca preparación es absurdamente pequeño comparado con la demanda — 5,000 visas permanentes y 66,000 temporales por año. Los visados para mantener a las familias unidas pueden ser aún más escasos. Tiempos de espera de hasta 10 años para familiares cercanos de familias de México son algo bastante usual.

También debemos considerar la *intención* y el *efecto* de la trasgresión legal por parte del inmigrante, dos factores atenuantes que se consideran a menudo en los tribunales de EE.UU. La intención de los trabajadores inmigrantes es la de trabajar para poder sustentar a sus familias y el efecto es que ayudan a la economía estadounidense al trabajar en industrias importantes que necesitan mano de obra.

Por ejemplo, algunos líderes en el sector de la construcción estiman que si los trabajadores sin documentos se marcharan de los Estados Unidos, la construcción de viviendas se retrasaría entre seis y ocho meses y el costo subiría en un 30 a un 40 por ciento. El sector sanitario se apoya fuertemente en trabajadores inmigrantes para el cuidado de ancianos y enfermos. El Departamento de Trabajo predice que la demanda de trabajadores extranjeros en estas y otras industrias crecerá dramáticamente.

La reforma migratoria integral representa una solución humana a nuestra crisis. Permitirá a los inmigrantes y a sus familias permanecer juntos y, al mismo tiempo, contribuir sin temor sus talentos a la comunidad. También ayudará a reducir la explotación de los inmigrantes y a reducir el número de los que perecen en el intento de venir a los Estados Unidos.

Los oficiales electos deben examinar las causas que originan la emigración desde sus comunidades de origen y trabajar con sus gobiernos para crear puestos de trabajo en esos lugares. Esta es la solución a largo plazo que el alzamiento de un muro de 700 millas en la frontera no logrará. Es imperativo que ambos partidos y ambas cámaras del Congreso trabajen duro para producir leyes que creen un sistema de inmigración predicado en el cumplimiento de la ley y que enaltezca los valores que todos los americanos apreciamos — trabajo duro, oportunidad y compasión.

Kevin Appleby es director de la Oficina de Política Migratoria y de Refugiados de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos.

Seminaristas de Texas

ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA — Las obras de caridad evangélica como las que buscamos realizar entre nuestros discapacitados y pobres suscitan siempre la misericordia de Jesús hacia los últimos.

Nos complace ser punto de referencia también de parte de los centros formativos religiosos que envían a los seminaristas a compartir, aunque sea temporalmente nuestra vida entre los más necesitados.

Es el caso de unos frailes franciscanos, que nos acompañan los fines de semanas, así como de otros seminaristas diocesanos, y este mes, de 6 seminaristas de Texas (USA), acompañados por unos parroquia-

nos y sus asistentes el Padre Dan Morales y el Padre Gary Janak.

Todos, con humildad y disponibilidad, han prestado sus servicios y atenciones. Al concluir su permanencia en nuestra Institución, expresaron sentimientos de aprecio y agradecimiento, indicando que la experiencia había sido un fortalecimiento de su vocación religiosa y sacerdotal para los seminaristas, y una luz de Dios en su vida cristiana para los laicos, comprometiéndose a volver cuanto antes, y a contagiar de entusiasmo a otros, y juntos cooperar con los enfermos y necesitados.

Votar según la conciencia

Por el Padre Brian Bransfield



La única diferencia entre la cabina de votación y la conciencia es que normalmente tenemos que esperar en la fila para poder entrar a una de ellas. Aparte de eso, se supone que sucede lo mismo en ambos lugares, pues en ese pequeño cubículo nos revelamos a nosotros mismos.

Usted y yo sólo podemos votar una vez en las elecciones de este otoño. Sin embargo, es de esperar que antes de hacerlo hayamos visitado repetidamente nuestra propia conciencia. Mi conciencia es lo que separa a la máquina de votación de una máquina tragamonedas, y sólo la conciencia humana puede asegurarse de que a la boleta de votación no se la trate como un juego de apuestas.

Los obispos de Estados Unidos enfatizan el papel de la conciencia en el documento *Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles*, una guía para los católicos que se preparan para votar en las elecciones de 2008.

¿Qué es la conciencia? Es esa parte de mí que es mayor que yo. Muchos asuntos demandan atención: la inmigración, la educación asequible, la guerra, la violencia en los barrios; el cuidado de la salud, el aborto, el hambre, las personas sin hogar, el medio ambiente, la investigación genética sobre embriones humanos; la dignidad del matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer como la institución más reconocida de la historia; la desigualdad económica, los precios de la gasolina y la lista es interminable.

El malentendido más común es que la conciencia equivale a “lo que yo pienso” sobre un tema. La conciencia no es sólo “lo que yo pienso”, sino que soy yo “pensando sobre lo que es justo” y verdadero. No se trata de una valoración parcial basada en las palabras de un predicador, de un político o en las pasiones. El sentido moral interior no se construye a base de la suma total de lo que yo pienso, sino que es una manifestación relacionada con la verdad en sí misma independientemente de mis preferencias.

La conciencia no permite a un ciudadano olvidarse de que, ante todo, es una *persona*. Me dice que soy persona y, como tal, debo considerar los dilemas de acuerdo a un cierto orden: ¿Cómo es que este acto, aquí y ahora, en sí mismo, va de acuerdo con el ser humano y no simplemente con precios más bajos? La conciencia insiste en que los dilemas humanos son asuntos morales mucho antes de que se conviertan en puntos de vista políticos. La conciencia me dice que para ser libre debo aceptar que algunos actos son inevitablemente malos y que ninguna clase de circunstancias o intenciones pueden, de algún modo, hacerlas buenas. La conciencia quita todos los

velos: conoce la diferencia entre acertado y equivocado, entre el bien y el mal, pero no basada en la verdad de las circunstancias o la mejores intenciones sino, sobre todo, en la verdad de las cosas en sí mismas.

La conciencia debe formarse. Como tal, debe mirar en tres direcciones al mismo tiempo: a uno mismo, al dilema moral que se presenta, y considerar la verdad de ambos sin favoritismos. Muy a menudo, el votante apela sólo a las primeras dos categorías: yo y el dilema. La mera opinión sustituye entonces a la conciencia. Tomar una decisión en conciencia significa consultar con la verdad de las cosas en sí mismas. La conciencia empieza de afuera hacia adentro. La realidad objetiva me llama a la responsabilidad y forma la coordenada central de la conciencia. La conciencia debe comenzar con el bien verdadero. Este punto de partida asegura que la libertad y la verdad no sean enemigas.

Existe una facultad en lo profundo de mi interior que yo no he creado. No está programada. Esta región es más que el súper-ego o una convención social. Sin embargo, ésta se forma. El sentido moral de la conciencia debe moldearse, no desarrollarse simplemente con sentimientos, opiniones, circunstancias, intenciones o movimientos, sino con el sentido moral profundo del que participamos por el hecho de ser humanos y dotados de razón. La conciencia no decide simplemente lo que es feliz o triste, sino que distingue entre el bien y el mal. La conciencia organiza los dilemas en orden de tamaño y ve las semejanzas. El matrimonio, el racismo, el medioambiente, el hambre, el aborto, no son asuntos que compiten entre sí. Están profundamente relacionados. La conciencia se niega a que ninguno de ellos se convierta en un asunto de opinión.

La conciencia da un respingo cuando escucha a un candidato decir que tiene la solución para el sistema de salud pública y, sin embargo, está de acuerdo en que un niño en el vientre puede ser asesinado. La conciencia sabe que si un candidato está a favor de la investigación de células madre en embriones humanos, lo cual siempre implica matar a una persona humana, nuestros barrios nunca estarán libres de violencia — pues acabamos de votar por la violencia. El sentido moral sabe que si tratas el medio ambiente como te da la gana tarde o temprano tendrás que recibir tratamiento a causa del medio ambiente. La conciencia se da cuenta de que si apoyas la tortura estás plantando la semilla de una guerra dentro de veinte años.

La conciencia tiene miras amplias. Rompe las burbujas, aparta los cortinajes, tira de la palanca y con el peso de la verdad honesta puede cambiar, transformar, el mundo.

El padre Brian Bransfield trabaja para el Secretariado de Evangelización y Catequesis de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos.

**El día de las
elecciones 4 de
Noviembre**



Church Urges Humane, Comprehensive Solution to Immigration Issue

By J. Kevin Appleby



The national immigration debate has generated tremendous, often emotional, discussion about the impact of the growing number of undocumented immigrants on our communities. Heated talk about the economic, social, and enforcement aspects of the issue predominates. We should understand, however, that above all,

immigration is a humanitarian, and, ultimately, a moral issue.

Each day in parishes, social service programs, hospitals, and schools the human consequences of an inadequate immigration system are apparent. Families are separated; migrant workers are exploited by smugglers and unscrupulous employers; and human beings, desperate to survive, perish in the American desert. As our nation benefits from the hard work of undocumented workers, we fail to extend to them basic

workplace and legal protections. Worse, some scapegoat immigrants for our social ills.

The U.S. bishops' statement *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* urges Catholics to study issues such as immigration before going to the polls.

Because of current practices and policies of many U.S. cities and states, and their harmful effect on human life and dignity, the bishops have stated that the status quo is immoral and have called for comprehensive reform

of the immigration system. Their prescription for mending the system is to emphasize legality over illegality through the creation of legal avenues for migration and the extension of legal status and a path to citizenship to undocumented immigrants. This includes rigorous enforcement of the laws, to be sure, but also suggests a more comprehensive approach which reforms all aspects of the system. This remedy represents the most effective, humane, and practical approach to solving our immigration crisis.

Some argue that undocumented workers and their families should not receive legal status because they live outside the law. Before rendering judgment, we must consider that U.S. policy actually creates conditions which encourage illegal immigration and law breaking. For example, while the federal government has spent billions on border enforcement over the past 15 years, during the same period the number of undocumented immigrants in the nation has more than doubled. This is primarily because, once they arrive in the United States, almost 80 percent of male migrant workers find jobs with U.S. companies. This magnet of available jobs induces immigrants to come.

Compounding the problem, U.S. immigration law fails to provide legal channels for these workers to migrate safely and legally. Work visas for low-skilled workers are absurdly small compared to demand — 5,000 permanent and 66,000 temporary ones per year. Family unity visas can be even scarcer. Waiting times as long as ten years for immediate members of Mexican families is not unusual.

We also must consider both the intent and effect of the law-breaking by immigrants, two mitigating factors often considered in U.S. courts. The intent of immigrant workers is to work

and support their families, and the effect is that they support the U.S. economy by working in important industries in need of laborers.

For example, leaders in the home building industry estimate that if the undocumented workforce left the United States, housing construction would be delayed six to eight months and housing costs would increase 30 to 40 percent. The health care industry relies heavily on immigrant workers to care for the elderly and other infirmed patients. The Department of Labor predicts that demand for foreign-born workers in these and other industries will increase dramatically.

Comprehensive immigration reform represents a humane solution to our crisis. It will enable immigrants and their families to remain together and allow them to contribute their talents to their communities without fear. It will also help reduce the exploitation of migrants and the number of those who perish in attempts to come to the United States.

Elected officials must examine the root causes of migration from home communities and work with their governments to create jobs for migrants at home. This is the long-term solution that the erection of a 700-mile border fence will not provide. It is imperative that both parties and both chambers of Congress work hard to produce legislation that creates an immigration system predicated on the rule of law and that upholds values all Americans cherish—hard work, opportunity, and compassion.

To learn more about Catholic teaching on immigration, go to: www.justiceforimmigrants.org or www.usccb.org/bishops/immigrationreform.shtml.

Kevin Appleby is director of the Office of Migration and Refugee Policy, for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Poverty and the 2008 Elections

By John Carr



In his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI places love and care for the poor at the center of Catholic life: "Love of God and love of neighbor have become one: In the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God.... Love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind is as essential to her [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel." (*Deus Caritas Est* # 15, 21)

This priority for the poor also needs to be at the center of the national discussion in this election year. The facts about poverty in our land raise significant moral and policy issues.

Poverty is pervasive. One in eight Americans lives in poverty, which represents more than 37 million people.

The younger you are in America the more likely you are to be poor. One in six children, or 13 million children, lives in poverty.

Family factors contribute to poverty. A child born to unmarried parents who have not graduated from high school, without a worker in the family has an 80 percent chance of growing up poor. A child born to a family without these factors has an 8 percent chance.

Poverty is not distributed evenly. While most people who live in poverty are white, one out of four African-Americans, and one out of five Hispanics, lives in poverty. (See the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's Poverty USA Web site, www.povertyusa.org/povfacts_race.shtml).

Such statistics show the kind of nation we are becoming.

U.S. Catholics have a moral obligation to protect the lives and dignity of all God's children, especially the poor and vulnerable. We can debate how best to pursue economic opportunity and justice, provide decent jobs for all who can work, and ensure adequate health care and housing. However, we cannot escape the moral duty to work actively to overcome the poverty and deprivation which diminishes the lives of so many children and families.

Unfortunately, debates about poverty often become polar-

ized by ideological and partisan divisions. This political season, campaigns need to move beyond false ideological choices that often paralyze national discussion. Catholic teaching and experience insist that reducing poverty will require *personal* responsibility and *social* responsibility, better choices and behaviors by *individuals*, and better policies and investments by *government*.

In their statement, *A Place at the Table*, the U.S. bishops outline a four-part strategy to address poverty. It calls for:

- Individuals to pursue education and work, to build strong families and to make sacrifices for children
- Churches, faith-based and community organizations to support families, confront discrimination and injustice, strengthen neighborhoods and communities and stand with and help poor and vulnerable families
- The market, businesses and unions to work to secure jobs at decent wages, health care and other benefits, a voice in the workplace, and efforts for growth and opportunity
- Government to live up to its responsibility to protect the weak and vulnerable, promote human dignity and human rights, act effectively when other institutions fall short and promote greater economic opportunity and justice for all.

Sadly, some advocates embrace just one element rather than all. Some insist individual responsibility is the real answer,

or that just faith-based institutions can make the difference, or that the market by itself can solve the problems or that government action is the only effective response. A comprehensive national commitment that addresses the complicated causes and diverse steps to overcome poverty is needed.

Isolated efforts cannot promote integral human development that is the foundation of effective efforts to overcome poverty, deprivation and despair (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org and www.usccb.org/sdwp/placeatthetable/index.shtml). In the upcoming elections, U.S. Catholics ought not to focus on individual economic interests, but rather seek to lift up "the least of these." In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the U.S. bishops call for a new politics, focused more on:

- moral principles than on the latest polls
- needs of the weak than on benefits for the strong
- pursuit of the common good than on the demands of narrow interests.

How we treat "the least among us" (Mt. 25:40) is a moral measure of our lives, as individuals and as a nation. In Scripture, this is the question on judgment day. It should be a central question on election day.

John Carr is executive director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

2nd Annual Immigration Symposium — San Antonio — Oct. 10-11

The Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC), a national Catholic institute for pastoral leadership and language studies will host the 2nd Annual Bilingual Immigration Symposium, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-37) in San Antonio, October 10-11.

The symposium begins at 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 10, with the play, "The Line in the Sand: Stories from the U.S./Mexico Border," to be held free of charge at the Assumption Seminary Auditorium located at 2600 West Woodlawn Ave.

On Saturday, MACC will host workshops beginning at 8 a.m. at 3115 West Ashby Place. Dynamic speakers to address relevant immigration topics

include: Jorge A. Bustamante, Ph.D., on "Guest Workers and the New Slavery"; Rubén Garcia, "A Story of Becoming a Good Samaritan"; Arturo Chávez, Ph.D., "Who is my neighbor?"; Testimonies, "Protecting the Rights of Immigrant Children"; Catalina Nieto, "Welcoming Community Initiative Project"; Diana Molina, "Seven String Barbed Wire Fence"; and music by Los Inocentes.

Saturday requires a paid tuition of \$125. Tuition assistance may be available. Room and board is available at \$150 for 2 nights. To register, contact (210) 732-2156, ext. 7102, or visit www.maccsa.org.

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Abortion and Faithful Citizenship

By Deirdre A. McQuade

Abortion is the most widespread direct attack on innocent human life in the United States. Today, nearly one in four pregnancies ends violently in abortion. As a pre-eminent threat to human dignity with far-ranging social and political consequences, abortion warrants sober consideration as we head to the polls this fall.

Catholics are called in a special way to examine candidates' positions on the issue against their own conscience, a conscience which is well-formed by Church teaching. Far from being simply the sole choice of a mother, the question of having an abortion involves matters of justice and compassion for all involved: For unborn children and their mothers, but also their fathers, siblings, and grandparents, and the character of our society.

Over 35 years have passed since Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion for almost any reason throughout the nine months of pregnancy. Approximately 48 million defenseless lives have been lost. Countless women regret their abortions, many men grieve lost fatherhood, and others involved often suffer in silence.

The U.S. Catholic bishops are unequivocal in their defense of human life from its earliest stages to natural death. In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, they state that abortion is intrinsically evil, which means that abortion is "always opposed to the authentic good of persons" and is never justified by circumstances. Abortion "must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned" (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 22).

The bishops advocate for constructive policies to help make abortion unthinkable in our society:

We also promote a culture of life by supporting laws and programs that encourage childbirth and adoption over abortion and by addressing poverty, providing health care, and offering other assistance to pregnant women, children, and families

(*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 65).

Catholics are not alone in opposing abortion. The New York Times, MTV, and CBS News co-sponsored a poll in the summer of 2007, and found that 62 percent of young adults reject abortion on demand. In June 2008, a survey of likely voters by the polling company, inc. found that 54 percent would prohibit abortion in all circumstances, or allow it only in cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the mother.

There are signs that the Supreme Court is beginning to acknowledge the harm abortion causes. In *Gonzales v. Carhart*, the 2007 decision upholding the federal partial-birth abortion ban, the Court candidly recognizes abortion as a form of killing and cites the grief, sorrow and depression reported by women involved in it.

Government officials, regardless of party affiliation, should take the courageous stand to protect the unborn and their mothers from abortion. When they fail to honor the basic right to life — and even abandon it in the name of "choice" — they undermine the foundation for all other human rights.

Citizens deserve to know candidates' positions on abortion so they can vote with fully informed consciences. The bishops say that a well-formed conscience will recognize "that all issues do not carry the same moral weight and that the moral obligation to oppose intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions" (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 37).

Abortion is a pivotal issue as we approach the upcoming state and federal elections. Longer-range, we await the day when U.S. law protects human life from conception to natural death, parents welcome children whether "planned" or "unplanned," and the wounds of abortion have healed. A culture in which abortion is unthinkable is one in which all lives will be honored.

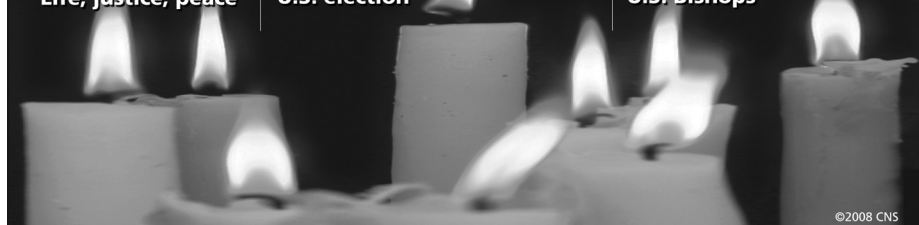
Deirdre A. McQuade is assistant director for Policy and Communications at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Devotional Novena

- + Prayer repeated in public or private for nine successive days.
- + Held prior to a special feast or for a special intention.
- + Comes from the Latin word *novem*, meaning nine.
- + First appeared in the Middle Ages in France and Spain.

RECENT PUBLIC NOVENAS

Intention	Held before	Called by
Church in China	Beijing Olympics	Diocese of Hong Kong
Life	Feast of the Visitation	U.S. Bishops
All the sick	World Day of the Sick	Indianapolis Archdiocese
Life, justice, peace	U.S. election	U.S. Bishops



The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked U.S. Catholics to pray a novena for life, justice and peace prior to the November election. Here's a brief description of a devotional novena. For a copy of the Novena or its Podcasts, go to www.faithfulcitizenship.org/resources/podcasts. (CNS graphic/Emily Thompson)

A Decade Later: Time for a Dose of Reality on Stem Cells

By Richard Doerflinger

In 1998, Dr. James Thomson of the University of Wisconsin first isolated human embryonic stem cells (ESCs). These early, unspecialized cells were hailed as a way to create all cell types of the human body at will, a Holy Grail for curing diseases. Moral qualms about killing embryos for the cells were swept away in this wave of enthusiasm. In a few years, it was said, life-saving medical advances would show that such objections should be ignored.

A decade later, it is time for a reality check. ESCs have been involved in some interesting experiments, but are not close to producing cures. This is not due to limited federal funding — it is equally true in countries with no such limits, and in states pouring their own public funds into the research. ESCs in fact are unpredictable, difficult to control, and prone to causing tumors in animals. Experts now admit that human treatments using them may not emerge for decades, if ever.

The bishops' statement *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* urges Catholics to become informed on important moral issues in public life, including this issue of destroying embryos for stem cell research.

One fact is that treatments are emerging from stem cell research. But these use stem cells (once seen as less versatile) found in adult tissues and in umbilical cord blood from live births. In human trials, these cells have repaired heart damage, restored vision, and helped reverse autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis and juvenile diabetes, as well as some cancers. A search on "stem cell" on the federal site www.clinicaltrials.gov shows over 2,000 clinical trials using these cells, half of them still recruiting patients.

Last November an additional breakthrough transformed the stem cell debate. Scientists in Japan and in Wisconsin — the latter team led by the same James Thomson who first isolated human ESCs — learned how to "reprogram" ordinary adult cells into cells with the properties of ESCs, without producing or destroying a human embryo. These "induced pluripotent stem cells" (iPS cells) have already been used to reverse disease in animals. Dr. Thomson says this is "the beginning of the end" of the ethical debate, as fewer and fewer laboratories will see any need to kill embryos for stem cells.



Americans are pragmatic. We find it hard to focus on an ethical principle when medical benefits are placed on the other side of the scale. But the noise about the benefits of ESCs may now die down enough to let us hear that message about ethics again.

Though at a very early stage of development, the human embryo is one of us — a living individual of the human species, with the innate potential to grow into a mature human being if given nourishment and protection. Here, as in all human research, we must never harm or kill an innocent, unconsenting human being solely for alleged benefit to others. Crossing that moral line leaves more ethical abuses in its wake.

This has proved true. The problem of tissue rejection has led researchers to support cloning human embryos, to obtain cells that genetically match individual patients. This means mass producing human lives in the laboratory solely to destroy them. Researchers have hired women to take fertility drugs to produce many eggs at once for cloning attempts, risking the women's health. Some propose using animal eggs instead, to produce bizarre human/animal hybrid embryos for stem cell research. Some, to address ESCs' tendency to form tumors, have proposed gestating cloned embryos in the womb to a stage where more usable cells may be obtained — the grotesque practice of "fetus farming" that Congress has prohibited.

Most Americans abhor the idea of cloning human embryos for research, as well as these other abuses. Polls show they are ambivalent on the ESC question generally. In a survey published in the Spring 2008 issue of *The New Atlantis*, 69 percent of respondents said they support "stem cell research." But 51 percent agreed that it is unethical to destroy human embryos for such research, notwithstanding the hope of curing disease. When told about the new alternative of iPS cells, 61 percent said public funding should go to that avenue and not to research that destroys human embryos.

Americans want to be fair and humane. They do not seek out the most unethical way to pursue medical progress — rather, they want science and ethics to move forward hand in hand. It is not too much to ask the same of our researchers and policy makers.

Richard Doerflinger is associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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& TURKEY DINNER

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National convention draws over 800 Catholics to address key moral and political issues

PHILADELPHIA—During an election year when Catholics are being aggressively courted by both political parties as key swing voters, national Catholic social justice organizations are launching a new campaign – Faith Can Move Mountains: Vote the Common Good — that will empower Catholics to put the common good before narrow partisan agendas.

More than a dozen organizations including NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Pax Christi USA; Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; Sisters of Mercy of the Americas; the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious have joined the campaign at www.votethecommongood.com.

The Campaign was launched at an unprecedented Convention for the Common Good held July 11-13 in Philadelphia, attended by over 800 Catholics. The Convention delegates also affirmed a Platform for the Common Good that will be sent to

both presidential candidates and national political parties. The platform may be viewed at the above Web site. Over 2500 Catholics in more than 40 states contributed to the platform over the last several months at the grassroots level.

The campaign will also include print, broadcast and online advertising this fall that will highlight Catholic teaching about economic justice, humane immigration reform, universal health care, peace and building a consistent culture of life that honors human dignity at all stages.

Sister Simone Campbell, NETWORK Executive Director, stated: “The Convention is a step in the process of the people in the United States reclaiming their Constitutional role. It is “We the People” who must insist that government act to fulfill its mission as outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution. We are excited to see this message take hold as ordinary citizens take action in order to ‘form a more perfect union.’”

Critic says pope protests sculpture of crucified frog

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Benedict XVI has protested a sculptural portrayal of a crucified frog exhibited in a museum in the northern Italian city of Bolzano. The exhibit has prompted heated debate over the summer, when the pope was vacationing nearby. However, on Aug. 28 the museum directors met and decided it would not be removed. A work of the late German artist Martin Kippenberger, it depicts a green frog nailed to the cross, holding a beer stein in one hand and an egg in the other. Its eyes are crossed and its tongue hangs out of its mouth. Franz Pahl, a regional government official who has led a campaign to remove the work, told the Italian news agency ANSA Aug. 27 that he had received a letter of support from the Vatican Secretariat of State expressing the pope's sentiments. According to Pahl, the letter said the pope believes the sculpture “has wounded the religious sentiment of the many people who see in the cross the symbol of God's love and our salvation.” (See Europe4Christ story, p. 13)



District Deputy #153 Bob Leach and his wife, Frances, attended the annual international Knights of Columbus convention in Quebec August 5 – 7; Bob attended as the delegate from the Diocese of Victoria. As a delegate, he was involved in adopting many of the Knights of Columbus pro-life, pro-family resolutions.

Knights of Columbus convention delegates adopt pro-life, pro-family resolutions

QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC - Delegates to the annual, international convention of the Knights of Columbus in Quebec August 5 to 7, 2008, adopted a resolution opposing “any governmental action or policy that promotes abortion, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, euthanasia, assisted suicide and other offenses against life.”

The delegates also challenged “our fellow Catholics who are elected officials to be true to the faith they claim to profess by acting bravely and publicly in defense of life, affirming with Pope Benedict XVI that ‘there can be no room for purely private religion.’”

The resolution stated that the organization reaffirms its “commitment to building

a culture of life by promoting policies that favor the family,” and reaffirmed the organization’s “long standing policy of not inviting to any Knights of Columbus event persons, especially public officials or candidates for public office, who do not support the legal protection of unborn children.”

The resolution on life issues follows by several days the opening convention address by Supreme Knight Carl A.

Anderson, in which he called on Catholic voters to “stop accommodating pro-abortion politicians,” and encouraged them to “say ‘no’ to every candidate of every political party who supports abortion.”

Delegates also adopted a resolution calling for “legal and constitutional protection ... for the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.”

The resolution declares that “marriage is a natural institution based on ancient human values that have evolved over time into a unique and deeply rooted social, legal and religious institution, and that it “reflects the natural biological complementarity between man and woman which predates the state and which is woven into the social and religious fabric of every major culture and society.”

Marriage between man and woman “provides the most favorable environment in which to protect the rights and the best interests of children,” the resolution also stated.

Convention delegates adopted resolutions dealing with other public policy issues as well, including building a culture of life, religious liberty, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, decency on the Internet and in the media, Catholic education, and the Pledge of Allegiance. The texts of all the resolutions can be found at: www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/convention_2008/resolutions/index.html. For complete coverage of convention events, go to the “Convention Central” web page at: www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/convention_2008/index.html.

Pope to go to France

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI is traveling to France in mid-September, making a four-day visit that is loaded with events and charged with pastoral challenges. The Sept. 12-15 trip was designed primarily to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Marian apparitions in Lourdes, one of the world's most popular pilgrimage sites. For the 81-year-old pope, it will be a trip to the heart of an increasingly de-Christianized Europe, an area where, as he once put it, the “great churches seem to be dying.” The pope wants to encourage a revival of Christianity in Europe. (See Europe4Christ story, p. 13)

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Creating a Culture of Respect for the Worth and Dignity of All Human Life

By Jean Van Steenburg, Co-Chair, TCADP Religious Outreach Committee



"The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience" U.S. Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (2007).

This fall, Catholic parishes throughout the United States will be heeding the call to Faithful Citizenship in order to make sound moral choices regarding the political challenges facing our country. The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP), a statewide, grassroots organization, invites parishes to consider incorporating the death penalty issue and the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty into your Faithful Citizenship activities.

There has never been a more important time for faith communities to engage in education and action on the death penalty. National momentum is clearly moving in the direction of abolition, as evidenced by the number of states that are examining the necessity and utility of capital punishment. Even in Texas, which accounts for the vast majority of executions carried out in the United States each year, juries have begun to accept alternatives to the death penalty as more people come to recognize the fatal flaws that characterize the Texas criminal justice system.

While executions were on hold for more than seven months, pending the

outcome of the U.S. Supreme Court case *Baze vs. Rees*, they now have resumed at an alarming pace. In its *Baze* decision, issued April 16, 2008, the Supreme Court found that the current lethal injection protocol used by most states (including Texas) does not constitute cruel and unusual punishment. The Justices did not address the real concerns associated with the death penalty: the risk of executing the innocent, the arbitrary and biased imposition of death sentences, and the diversion of critical resources from meaningful victims' services and effective crime prevention measures.

The unfolding impact of the *Baze* decision and the approaching 2009 session of the Texas Legislature both provide significant opportunities for parishes to become involved on the death penalty issue. Here are some ideas for activities your parish might undertake this fall:

- Distribute information on the death penalty issue during October's Respect Life activities, in keeping with the first key theme of Catholic social teaching — "The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person"
- Collect signatures for TCADP's postcard campaign calling for a prohibition of the death penalty for offenders with severe mental illness and for increased funding for mental healthcare in Texas
- Hear testimony from a murder victim's family member who opposes the death penalty or from an exonerated death row inmate
- Watch a film and hold a discussion. Options include: "At the Death House Door," a new film that presents the spiritual journey of Reverend Carroll Pickett, the former Texas death house chaplain

who accompanied 95 men to their executions; "A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death" a short educational film from the U.S. Bishops; "The Empty Chair," a balanced and compelling portrayal of four families that have lost loved ones to murder; and "Executing the Insane: The Case of Scott Panetti," the story of a man who was sentenced to death in Texas despite his long, documented history of paranoid schizophrenia.

Written materials, petitions, postcards, speakers, DVDs, and discussion guides for all of these suggested activities are available at no cost from TCADP. To learn more about any of these initiatives or to request resources, please visit the TCADP website at www.tcadp.org; under

Programs, click on "Religious Outreach." You can also send an e-mail to outreach@tcadp.org or call the TCADP office at (512) 441-1808. A member of the TCADP Religious Outreach Committee will contact you shortly to follow up. For more information regarding the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty, please visit www.ccedp.org.

TCADP believes that a thoughtful examination of the death penalty issue will inform the public conscience and will help to create a culture of respect for the worth and dignity of all human life in Texas and around the world. We invite each parish in the diocese to play a role in this important education endeavor.

After religious leaders ask for clemency, Missouri execution delayed

ST. LOUIS (CNS) — After the Catholic bishops of Missouri and other religious leaders urged clemency in the case of Dennis Skillicorn, the Missouri Supreme Court granted a 30-day stay of execution for the inmate who had been scheduled to die Aug. 27. In an appeal to Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt, the religious leaders said Skillicorn "has turned his life around, becoming a model of rehabilitation and service to others" and "a model prisoner who is a positive influence on other inmates and the prison environment. Dennis Skillicorn is not the same person who was arrested 14 years ago," they added. "He is no longer a threat to public safety. His execution would be senseless. Society and public safety would be better served if he were allowed to continue his worthwhile ministries in prison." The 30-day stay was granted Aug. 20 to allow Skillicorn's attorneys to gather information from prisoners and prison staff for a clemency petition to the governor. The attorneys are asking for his sentence to be commuted to life in prison without parole.

Peacemaking and Catholic social teaching

"Paulist Father Larry Rice talks about peace and peacemaking in the context of Catholic social teaching. Listen to the 1min., 47sec. podcast at: <http://ccc.usccb.org/audio/fc/PeaceandDisarmament.mp3>."



Father Larry Rice

Father Larry Rice is the director of the center for Catholic Campus Ministry at Ohio State University, and a weekly contributor to Catholic Radio Weekly (www.catholicradioweekly.com). He earned a Masters of Divinity from the Catholic University of America and a bachelor's degree in General Arts and Sciences from Pennsylvania State University. He entered the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle (the Paulist Fathers) in 1983, and was ordained a priest in 1989.

Election Day
November 4

Victoria County's 23rd Annual

Sunday, Sept. 28, 2008
10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Victoria Community Center

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Music By



Pat Matula	10 AM - 11 AM
Shiner Hobo Band	11 AM - 1 PM
Czechaholics	1 PM - 4:15 PM
Concert - Czechaholics & Red Ravens	3:45 - 4:15 PM
Red Ravens	3:45 - 8:00 PM

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EVENTS

The Catholic Lighthouse
Page 19 — September 2008



Special Collections

Retired and Needy Priest of the Diocese — Sept. 7

Mission Sunday — October 19

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**, or write to: Engaged Encounter, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903. The weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. The dates for 2008 are: Nov. 14-16. 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 next Retrouvaille weekend will be held in Victoria Sept. 12. 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 or to register for the Sept. 12 date, 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-be@yahoo.com; phone: (210) 734-2146.

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

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

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

Natural Family Planning—For English or bilingual sessions of the **Sympto-Thermal Method (S-TM)** in Palacios, call Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes. For information about the Sympto-Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Estella DeLos Santos (361) 894-6950. Introductory presentations on the **Creighton Model Ovulation Method** are offered in Wharton at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and in East Bernard at Holy Cross Catholic Church. Please contact Melissa Morse at (979) 335-7306 for more information or to register for classes. **Natural Family Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.**

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

Picnics, Activities, etc.

September

Hillje—St. Andrew Parish will hold a Giant Garage Sale to help the missions in Africa and India Sept. 11–13. Come and support the missions! To make donations, please contact Virginia at (979) 543-9555.

Bay City — Franciscan Parish Mission with Father Jim Van Dorn to be held at Holy Cross Parish Sunday, Sept. 14, to Wednesday, Sept. 17. To schedule a personal appointment with Father Van Dorn, call the parish at (979) 245-6379. Holy Cross is located at 2001 Katy Street in Bay City. See story on page 8.

Inez—St. Joseph Annual Parish Picnic, Sept. 14, at the community center. A fried-chicken, brisket, sausage dinner will be served starting at 10:30 a.m. with plates-to-go and 11:00

a.m. inside at \$7 p/p. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be games, country store, cakewalk and much more.

Yorktown—Holy Cross Festival, Sept. 14 at the community hall. A barbecue plate with homemade sausage dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. There will be a live auction beginning at 12:30 p.m., music, country store, children’s games, bingo, cakewalk and much more.

Victoria—Our Lady of Sorrows Parish will hold a “Fun” raiser at their parish on Sept. 14, in celebration of Our Lady of Sorrows feast day on the following day. There will be food booths, games for the kids, bicycle safety and registration, voter registration, health checks and information booths from community organizations. Donations accepted at food booths, but the emphasis is on raising “fun” not “funds.”

San Antonio — The 7th Annual Catholic Women’s Conference, “Come to Me,” Sept. 19 eve. – 20 day, with nationally known speakers, the rosary, Mass, eucharistic healing service, Divine Mercy Chaplet and more to be held at St. George Maronite Center, 6070 Babcock Road, San Antonio. Speakers: Father Mary David Hoyt, FJ, brother and priest of the Congregation of St. John in Laredo – “The Yes of Mary: The Reason for Our Hope;” Ramie Samour, MTS, Archdiocese of San Antonio – “Woman: Our Dignity, Our Mystery;” Mass with San Antonio’s Archbishop Jose Gomez, STD; Patty Schneier, Archdiocese of St. Louis – “Prove it, God! ... And He Did!;” Dr. Patricia Cooney-Hathaway, associate professor of spirituality and systematic theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit – “The Role of Friendship in our Relationships with God and with Others;” Terry Polakovic, cofounder and executive director of ENDOW (Educating on the Nature and Dignity of Women), “Catholic Women: Pillars of the Past, Hope for the Future.” Pre-registration: \$45 p/p, includes boxed lunch on Saturday. For more information, please go to www.pilgrimcenterofhope.org or call (210) 521-3377.

When & Where

Bay City—Our Lady of Guadalupe Festival Meal Sept. 21 at the parish hall (12th Street and Avenue D). A brisket dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at \$6 p/p with dine-in, pick-up or drive-thru available. The auction begins at noon. For more information, call the parish office at (979) 245-2010.

Moulton—St. Joseph Annual Parish Picnic Sept. 21 at the KC Hall. Open-air Mass at 10:00 a.m. at the city park. A kettle-fried chicken and stew dinner begins at 10:30 a.m. Music outside from 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., outdoor auction and games.

Port Lavaca—Our Lady of the Gulf Festival Sept. 21 at the Bauer Community Center. A shrimp dinner will be served starting at 11:00 a.m. The auction will begin at 12:30 p.m. Food will be served throughout the day along with a variety of booths, games and children’s activities.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Sept. 21 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council’s projects.

Victoria—Diocese of Victoria XXI Annual Conference for Catechesis and Ministry, Saturday, Sept. 27 at Holy Family Parish. Rev. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, the president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, will be the keynote speaker. There will be many workshops on important catechetical, liturgical, spiritual and social topics. For more information or to register call the catechetical office at (361) 573-0828 ext. 24 or e-mail: calvarez@victoriadiocese.org.

Bloomington—St. Patrick Turkey Dinner Sept. 28

El Campo—St. Philip the Apostle Parish Picnic Sept. 28 at the KC Hall.

Koerth—Queen of Peace Parish Picnic Sept. 28 at the Sweet Home community center. A stew and sausage dinner will be served starting at 11:00 a.m. There will be an auction at 1:00 p.m., games, music and other entertainment all afternoon.

Meyersville—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Festival Sept. 28 on the church grounds (11220 FM 237). The day begins with Mass at 10:15 a.m. followed by a barbecue-beef dinner until 1:00 p.m. at \$7 p/p with dine-in or plates-to-go available. The auction starts at 1:00 p.m. There will be games, country store, cakewalk and much more. The Nordheim Faculty and Friends Band will perform from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Victoria—Victoria County Annual Czech Heritage Festival, Sept. 28, beginning with a 9:00 a.m. Czech-English Mass at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral with Father Joseph Hybner presiding. Following Mass, there will be lots of entertainment, demonstration and more at the community center. For more information go to: www.vchs.homestead.com.

Galena Park—Fashion Show sponsored by Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary Council and Court No. 139 on Sept. 28. The show will be held at Alvin D. Baggett Community Center (1302 Keene St. [near Houston]) from 1:00-4:00 p.m. with a donation of \$20. Contact: Grand Knight Caldwell Prejean at (281) 686-7023 or Grand Lady Patricia Clark at (281) 457-1142 for more information.

Upcoming Events

Victoria— Spirit Wind Ministry is pleased to present a weekend retreat led by lecturer, columnist and author Father Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, titled The Deeper Secrets Inside the Gospels – The Challenge to a More Adult Discipleship, on Oct. 3-5 at the Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria. Father Rolheiser is currently serving as president of the Oblate School of The-

ology in San Antonio. His books, including *The Shattered Lantern*, *The Holy Longing* and *The Restless Heart*, are popular throughout the English-speaking world, and his weekly column is carried by more than 60 newspapers worldwide. Cost - \$150 (includes all meals and two nights lodging). For info contact: S. Oakley 361-576-1515/361-649-6391 or e-mail smoak53@msn.com.

Port Lavaca—Our Lady of the Gulf Annual Golf Outing Oct. 4 at Colony Creek Country Club in Victoria. Cost: \$400 per 4-person team or \$100 p/p. The price includes range ball, 18-holes of golf, carts, lunch and various awards. Registration starts at 11:00 a.m. with tee-off at 1:00 p.m. Hole sponsorships are available at \$150 each. For more information and to plan for this event contact Mike Elgin at mikeelgin112@gmail.com or contact the church office at (361) 552-6140 before Sept. 15.

Bay City—Holy Cross Fall Festival and Turkey Dinner Oct. 5 at the KC Hall (Hamman Road) starting with Mass at 9:30 a.m. in the multi-purpose building next to the KC Hall. A turkey and dressing dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at \$7.50 p/p with dine-in or drive-thru available. There will be live and silent auctions starting at 12:00 p.m. Also available will be children’s games, cakewalk and much more.

Hungerford—St. John’s Bazaar Oct. 5 with a barbecue-chicken, beef and sausage dinner including the ladies famous sauerkraut starting at 10:30 a.m. The auction begins at 12:15 p.m. There will be entertainment throughout the day including a country store, kids rides and games just to name a few.

Mentz—St. Roch Annual Picnic Oct. 5 on church grounds. The day begins with Mass at 10:00 a.m. followed by a barbecue beef, pork and homemade sausage dinner until 2:00 p.m. Dine-in a/c comfort or under pavilion with plates at \$8 p/p for adults and children under 12 at \$4 p/p. Hamburgers will be sold in the afternoon starting at 3:00 p.m. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. Music throughout the day by The Czechaholics. There will be games, grocery walk, country store, cakewalk and much more.

Shiner—Shiner Catholic School HSA Fall Festival, Sunday, Oct. 5, will have a barbecue-chicken dinner at the American Legion Dining Hall; drive-thru or dine-in from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be a live auction, games and battle of the classes.

Columbus—St. Anthony Fall Festival Oct. 12 at the KC Hall (I-10 West / Glidden Exit). A barbecue beef and sausage dinner begins at 11:00 a.m. Also serving pit barbecue, Mexican food and hamburgers. There will be lots of booths, auction and something for everyone to enjoy. Mass at church (located on the corner of Bowie and Bonham) will be at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

East Bernard—Holy Cross Parish Bazaar Oct. 12 at Riverside Hall. A barbecue beef, chicken and sausage dinner along with homemade dressing will be served starting at 11:00 a.m. Hamburgers will be served starting at 3:00 p.m. Czech pastries, refreshments and country store items available during the day. The auction begins at 12:30 p.m. There will be games, moonwalk, velcro wall and rock climbing and much more. “Patrick” the celebrity camel will make an appearance. Live music starting at noon see page 8 for more information.

Victoria—Our Lady of Victory Cathedral Parish Festival Oct. 12 at the community center doors open at 11:00 a.m. A buffet style barbecue beef and sausage dinner will be served for \$7 p/p, children under 12 \$4.50 p/p and all plates-to-go at \$7 p/p. There will be booths and games for the entire family to enjoy. Auction begins at 12:30 p.m. in the annex.

Austin —Diocese of Austin 2008 Ministry Conference will be held Oct. 17 & 18 at the Austin Convention Center. Friday evening’s presenters will be author and speaker Matthew Kelly of Sydney, Australia, and musician and singer Jaime Cortez. Saturday will provide fifteen workshops from which to choose. \$25 advance registration fee; for information and to register, go to www.austindiocese.org.

Eagle Lake—Parish of the Nativity Picnic at the pavilion located at 545 South Austin, Oct. 19. The meal will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. Food will be served throughout the day along with a variety of booths, games, activities and a dance.

LaSalle—St. Theresa Annual Parish Picnic Oct. 19 at LaSalle Hall serving turkey and dressing dinner from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. dine-in or plates-to-go available at \$7 p/p. The auction starts at 12:30 p.m. There will also be cakewalk, craft/ country store, ring toss, plant sale and much more.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Oct. 19 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council’s projects.

Victoria—St. Mary’s Altar Society will sponsor a retreat on Wednesday, Oct. 22, at the St. Mary’s Activity Center. Registration is from 8:45-9:15 a.m. at the center. Father David Berger from Our Lady of Victory will be the retreat master. Lunch will be served after the 12:05 p.m. Mass, which will be held in the activity center. The retreat will conclude after the Mass. There will be no charge for lunch and retreat, but you are asked to make reservations before Oct. 20 to Janell Kruppa at (361) 575-8166 or Geraldine Jurica at (361) 573-3949.

Benedictine Life Weekend —Are you searching for God’s direction in life? Do you wonder if monastic life could be the right fit? Would you like the chance to check it out? If so, we invite you to visit our community for a Benedictine Life Week, October 17-19, 2008, at Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana. Open to single, Catholic women, ages 19-40, discerning religious life. Contact Sister Agnes Marie Dauby or Sister Michelle Sinkhorn at 802 E. 10th Street, Ferdinand, IN, 47532 or call (800) 738-9999, or e-mail vocation@thedome.org.



XXI Annual Conference for Catechesis and Ministry Saturday, September 27, 2008



**THE WORD
OF GOD**

IN THE LIFE
AND MISSION
OF THE CHURCH



**LA PALABRA
DE DIOS**

EN LA VIDA Y
EN LA MISIÓN
DE LA IGLESIA

**Holy Family
Catholic Church**
704 Mallette Drive
Victoria

**Keynote Presentation: "Naming the Present Moment:
The Struggle to Be Missionaries to Our Own Children"**
Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Round A General / Family

- A-1** Setting our Ecclesial Gauges Correctly
– Commandments for the Long Haul
Rev. Ron Rolheiser
- A-2** Family Wellness and Communication:
Unlocking the Door to a Healthy Christian
Family
Rev. Gary Janak
- A-3** The Word of God in the Life and Mission
of the Church
Rev. Bob Knippenberg
- A-4** On Christian Hope
Sr. Odilia Korenek

Scriptural

- A-5** The Gospel According to Mark
Ron Friedel

Spirituality/Ministry

- A-6** "We Say 'Yes,' Lord"
Maurice & Bonnie Abadie

Catechetical

- A-7** What Month Is It? It Doesn't Matter
– I'm Still NEW!
Joyce Springer
- A-8** Renewing the True Meaning of the
Quinceañera
Sr. Miriam Perez
- A-9** First Communion/Reconciliation Retreats
Sr. Louise Miksch
- A-10** Mission Awareness: All Are Our
Neighbors
Rev. Ed Schoellman
- A-11** Prayer: A Primary Means of
Evangelizing Youth
Sr. Digna Vela
- A-12** Scared of Using Scripture in the
Classroom
Jeanie Janak

Español

- AS-13** Un vistazo a la Misa
Linda Krehmeier

Round B General/Social Justice

- B-14** The Life and Times of St. Paul the
Apostle
Bishop David E. Fellhauer
- B-15** Faithful Citizenship: A Call to
Political Responsibility (pt. 1)
Bonnie Abadie
- B-16** On Christian Hope
Sr. Odilia Korenek
- B-17** The Church vs. the "Prevailing
Pagan 'Culture of Death'"
Sr. Mildred Truchard

Liturgical

- B-18** A Walk Through the Mass
Linda Krehmeier

Spirituality/Ministry

- B-19** Spirituality: Becoming a Living
Prayer
Sr. Emilie Eilers

Catechetical

- B-20** If You Make It Fun, They Will
Learn!
Joyce Springer
- B-21** It's All About Discipleship...
Peter Rivera
- B-22** Preparing for First Reconciliation/
Communion...
Bill Smith
- B-23** All God's Children: Solidarity,
Spirituality, & Catholic Social Teaching
(pt.1)
Anna Huth
- B-24** Opening the Doors to Sacred
Scripture
Veronica Benson
- B-25** A Youth Ministry Retreat Experience:
Standing as One Human
Family – Global Solidarity (pt. 1)
Marcos Martinez

Español

- BS-26** La esperanza: inspiración para un
ministerio eficaz
Adrian Herrera

Round C General

- C-27** Faith and Reason!
Deacon Chuck Glynn
- C-28** Faithful Citizenship: A Call to
Political Responsibility (pt. 2)
Bonnie Abadie
- C-29** A Culture of Life and the Penalty
of Death
Sr. Mildred Truchard
- C-30** Judaism, Catholic Christianity, &
Islam
Ron Friedel

Liturgical

- C-31** It's Easter (or Advent, or Ordinary
Time) - What Will We Sing This Year?
Linda Krehmeier

Spirituality/Ministry

- C-32** Spirituality: Becoming a Living
Prayer
Sr. Emilie Eilers

Catechetical

- C-33** If You Make It Fun, They Will
Learn!
Joyce Springer
- C-34** Organizing a... Lesson:
Objectives and Goals
Peter Rivera
- C-35** Transformed by the Spirit:
Confirmation
Bill Smith
- C-36** All God's Children: Solidarity,
Spirituality, & Catholic Social Teaching
(pt.2)
Anna Huth
- C-37** SAINTS ALIVE!
Veronica Benson
- C-38** A Youth Ministry Retreat Experi-
ence: Standing as One Human Family
– Global Solidarity (pt. 2)
Marcos Martinez
- CS-39** Fuente de agua viva: renovando
nuestra fe a través de la Sagrada
Escritura
Adrian Herrera

Español

Registration Information

Early registration – \$14.00 per person
(On or before September 19, 2008)

Late Registration – \$16.00 per person
(If registering after September 19, 2008)

- * \$12.00 per person for groups of 10 - 15
- * \$10.00 per person for groups of 16 - 20
- * \$ 8.00 per person for groups of 21 or more

**To receive the group discount,
all registrations
MUST BE turned in to the
Catechetical Office
by
September 20, 2008**

Make checks payable and mail to:
Diocese of Victoria
Conference for Catechesis and Ministry
PO Box 4070
Victoria TX 77903

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2008
REGISTRATION AT THE DOOR
\$20.00 per person!

Schedule of the Day

Doors Open/Exhibits	7:30 a.m.
Opening Prayer	9:00 a.m.
Keynote Presentation	9:30 a.m.
Rolheiser's Book Signing	11:00 a.m.
Workshops begin:	11:30 a.m.
Lunch/Exhibits	12:30 p.m.
Closing Liturgy:	4:15 p.m.

Diocesan Vietnamese Community loses family, friends in Sherman bus wreck

Continued from p. 1

"This year I tried to get a bus; it was too expensive," he said. "I also called Angel Tours (the same owner of Igual BusMex), but they said parishes in Houston had booked all of them."

Therefore, Deacon Tran rented a van and drove with Palacios parishioners, while Seadrift parishioners rented their own van. Many families drove their own car, he said.

Unfortunately, Châm Nguyen and Bich Ngoc Tran went with Catherine Tran and her parish in Houston on the bus.

Deacon Tran had left in his rented van on Wednesday, August 6, and arrived in Carthage on Thursday. The bus left Houston on Thursday and crashed through a guardrail around midnight Friday morning.

During the 7:30 a.m. Mass on Friday, Father Louis Nhlen Vu, CMC, a priest in

charge of the event, announced the accident. "That priest was so emotional; he couldn't talk," Deacon Tran said.

"The majority of that bus were Legion of Mary members from Houston," he said. "Eleven of the 17 who died were Legion of Mary members."

The deacon knew many of those who died. In 1981 he had spent three months forming two Vietnamese Legion of Mary groups in Houston. "I was shocked when I heard the news," he said.

Speaking of the pilgrims on the bus that crashed, he said, "They probably did the same thing as when we've gone on a bus – sing, say the rosary, and at 3 p.m. say the Divine Mercy Chaplet."

"We believe the Blessed Mother takes care of us," he said. "I believe they're all in heaven. Forty to fifty thousand people prayed for those in the accident

every day."

"Everyone of us has to die one day," he continued. "That bus could have been our bus if it had been available. We all have decided to go again next year, even after the crash."

Five parishes in Houston held the funerals. Deacon Tran served as the deacon at two funerals – for the president and vice president of the Legion of Mary Curia. They were President Khiem Thanh Nguyen, 81, and Vice President Mrs. Tuong So Lam, 62.

The Vietnamese community is active on the Gulf Coast of the Diocese of Victoria. A few families attend Our Lady of the Gulf, while 40 families attend St. Patrick in Seadrift and another 100 families are parishioners in Palacios at the Vietnamese Apostolate Assumption Chapel.

Father Dan Morales, pastor of Our

Lady of the Gulf, said the Vietnamese community as a whole supports the Catholic community in Seadrift and Port Lavaca. They get involved at the parish festivals and prepare stir-fried rice and egg rolls.

Father Dan has known Mrs. Nguyen's family for about 13 years, since he came to Port Lavaca. When he first came to the parish, he would spend every Christmas at their home. They had a big Vietnamese feast after Midnight Mass and would sing Karaoke into the wee hours, he said.

"The great-grandchildren of Mrs. Nguyen attend (OLG) school and of course they're always at Mass," Father Dan said.

They are a very closely united family, he said. "She (Mrs. Nguyen) didn't speak any English, but she was very devout and

See Diocesan Vietnamese, p. 4