

West Texas  
**ANGELUS**



Most Rev. Joseph Fiorenza, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and fourth bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo, addresses the U.S. Bishops' fall meeting in Baltimore in October. Complete coverage, Page 4-5.

Serving the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

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DECEMBER 2012

Advent /  
Christmas  
2012



“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.  
Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill  
shall be made low.” -- *Luke 3: 1-6*

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2012  
Advent,  
Christmas  
dates

**December 2** -- First Sunday of Advent  
**December 8** -- The Immaculate Conception  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
**December 9** -- Second Sunday of Advent  
**December 12** -- Our Lady of Guadalupe  
**December 16** -- Third Sunday of Advent  
**December 23** -- Fourth Sunday of Advent  
**December 25** -- The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas)  
**December 26** -- Feast of St. Stephen  
**December 30** -- The Holy Family of Jesus,  
Mary and Joseph

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## From the Bishop's Desk

**Corporal works of mercy splendid way to celebrate Christmas, Year of Faith**

**Bishop Pfeifer**

**By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI**

The Year of Faith that we began in October is a time for us to renew our loving relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, to recommit ourselves to being faithful to the teachings of our Catholic Church and to express our faith in action. As we prepare for the great celebration of God giving His Son to us on Christmas, this is a wonderful time to express our faith by fulfilling the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Practicing these merciful Works is a means of grace and sanctification, and of expressing our

faith in acts of charity, mercy and service for our neighbor. Let us take time to carefully review how we can live these Catholic essentials of mercy and service during the Advent and Christmas season.

**The Corporal Works of Mercy:**

- ▶ To feed the hungry
- ▶ To give drink to the thirsty
- ▶ To clothe the naked
- ▶ To shelter the homeless
- ▶ To care for the sick
- ▶ To visit the imprisoned
- ▶ To bury the dead

Jesus tells us in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 25 that when we perform these simple but profoundly meaningful works to help our needy neighbors with their basic needs, that we are doing it to Christ Himself. Jesus tells us "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me." When we express our faith by living these corporal works of mercy, Christ is truly born again in our world, and we are celebrating Christmas. A blessed, peaceful Christmas for all!

## DIOCESAN BRIEFS

### Scholarship deadline for Catholic laity approaches

SAN ANTONIO—Catholic laymen and women pursuing a graduate degree in theology or religious studies in order to serve their church in a professional capacity must submit applications for the Rev. Msgr. Larry J. Droll Scholarship by **February 15, 2013**.

The renewable \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded to two candidates in need of tuition assistance for additional education who serve or want to serve his or her parish as an administrator, youth minister, parish coordinator or other role.

"Today many dedicated Catholics, who are not ordained clergy or women religious, serve parishes as parish coordinators or administrators, as pastoral associates, directors of religious education, youth ministers, liturgists, and many other roles," said Msgr. Droll. "This scholarship can help provide the funds to earn the advanced educational degree in theology or religious studies that is often required for these positions."

The scholarship is geared towards those who have already obtained their bachelor's degree and who are either enrolled or wanting to enroll into any Catholic graduate school in Texas, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma or Mississippi.

Applications may be obtained by submitting an application which may be found online at [www.cliu.com](http://www.cliu.com), contacting the Communications Department at (210) 828-9921 or 1-800-292-2548 or by writing to Catholic Life Insurance, Attn: Communications Department, P.O. Box 659527, San Antonio, TX 78265-9527.

### Charismatic Renewal in the San Angelo Diocese

The Charismatic Movement is a move of the Holy Spirit whereby those whose lives are touched and changed by the Holy Spirit live a New Life in Christ.

A quote from the document, the Constitution on the Church states, "It is

not only through the sacraments and church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues. Allotting the gifts "to everyone according as God wills" (1Cor. 12:11) God distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank.

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit" (1 Cor.12:7) ... these charismatic gifts are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the church. (Lumen Gentium, n. 12)

Our diocese has representatives in each deanery:

The Diocesan Service Committee.  
Abilene: Dee Halbert, Mike and Gail Waldman, Mike and Buffy Awrey, Raymond and Ofelia DeLeon.

San Angelo: Daniel and Sandy Seidel, Angie Gonzalez and Marissa Casillas (youth)

Midland: Richard and Linda Light, Jesse and Lupe Estrada.

Odesa: Pilar and Romelia Ornelas. Some of our goals this year are to have English and Spanish "Life in the Spirit" seminars, quarterly deanery prayer meetings, and to plan a conference for next year.

Our emphasis is to bring the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to all the baptized and to empower families to live a conscious life with God.

We are blessed to have prayer groups in our diocese in every deanery where the Charismatic gifts are exercised and the fruit in people's lives is evident. The people are active in many roles in the Church, beginning first in our families. Some of the ministries people are active in are; lectors, Eucharistic ministers, CCD teachers, jail ministry and many more.

The essence of being charismatic is to be used by God and to love others. Please call the parishes in your deanery to find the prayer meeting closest to you. You can always expect God to pour out more grace than we can imagine. Come and see.

— By Daniel Seidel

### Letter to the Bishop

Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer  
Bishop of San Angelo  
San Angelo, Texas

Your Excellency:

As the personal representative of the Holy Father in the United States, I write with gratitude for the check in the amount of \$38,055.11, which you sent to the Apostolic Nunciature as the Peter's Pence contribution from the Diocese of San Angelo for 2012.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI in his address to the Members of the Circle of St. Peter on February 24, 2012, "Peter's pence is a practical assistance offered to the Successor of Peter to enable him to respond to innumerable requests that come to him from every part of the world, especially from the poorest countries. I warmly thank you for all the work you carry out so generously in a spirit of sacrifice that is born from your faith, from your relationship with the Lord, nurtured every day. May faith, charity and witness continue to be the guideline of your apostolate.

I assure you that this sum will be transmitted to the Secretariat of State on your behalf.

May God, who is infinitely generous, reward you and continue to bless you and the faithful under your pastoral care.

With prayerful regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Carlo Maria Viano  
Apostolic Nuncio

## Nobel prize for medicine both beautiful, ethical

**By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI**

The awarding of this year's Nobel Prize in medicine to John Gurdon and Shinya Yamanaka for their pioneer adult stem-cell research has been held as both beautiful and ethical. This prestigious award should encourage institutions to switch funding from embryonic stem-cell research to adult stem-cell research which is more effective and without moral controversy.

The awarding of the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine to these two pioneers represents an important milestone in recognizing the superior potential of adult stem-cell research over the unethical, destructive experimentation on human embryonic stem-cells.

In the past years, the attempts to clone human embryos and the bizarre experiments to create mixed human/non-human embryos have delivered nothing. In contrast the transformation of adult stem-cells is making great progress. This is indeed science at its best: both beautiful and ethical.

Both of these scientists were involved in research into changing mature cells into stem-cells which can be harvested in the potential treatment for a variety of diseases. This wonderful discovery stresses the key role that non-embryonic stem cells play in the development of new medical therapies.

The work of these two outstanding pioneer scientists should encourage government and institutions to switch funding from embryonic stem-cell research to adult stem-cell research.

Since science serves human ends, not its own, scientific research must always respect the moral law. The dedicated research by these two scientists offers significant progress using adult stem-cells which is a sound moral alternative and offers better clinical results.

## DIOCESAN DATES

### Bishop's Calendar

#### DECEMBER

8 — **SAN ANGELO**, Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at 12:00 Noon

9 — **SAN ANGELO**, Fort Concho Christmas Mass, 11 a.m.

11 — **SAN ANGELO**, Christ the King Retreat Center — Annual Christmas Party for Sisters, Priests, Deacons & Wives, 5:30 p.m.

12 — **SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral- Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass, 6:30 p.m.

13 — **ABILENE**, Holy Family — Abilene Deanery Advent Night of Prayer for Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives

14 — **SAN ANGELO**, Bishop's Residence — Annual Christmas for Diocesan Pastoral, Retreat Staff.

16 — **SANDERSON**, St. James — Mass, 11:30 a.m.

18 — **SAN ANGELO**, Christmas Mass at Baptist Memorial, 1:30 pm.

19 — **SAN ANGELO**, San Angelo Community Hospital,

Christmas Mass, 11 a.m., Chapel

20 — **SAN ANGELO**, Diocesan Pastoral Center — Pre-Christmas Lunch for Seminarians, 11:30 a.m.

21 — **SAN ANGELO**, Angelo Catholic School, Christmas Mass with Students, Faculty, 8:30 a.m.

22 — **CARLSBAD**, State School — Christmas Prayer Service, 11 a.m.

24 — **SAN ANGELO**, Tom Green County Jail — Mass, 9 a.m.

24 — **SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral Christmas Vigil Mass, Midnight

25 — **SAN ANGELO**, Goodfellow AFB, Christmas Day Mass, 9:30 a.m.

26-30 — **SAN ANTONIO**, Rest and Prayer

#### JANUARY 2013

1 — **SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral — New Year's Day Mass honoring the Mother of God at 10:00 a.m.

3 — **SAN ANGELO**, Diocesan Pastoral Center — Meeting of Catholic Charitable Foundation Trustees at 11:00 a.m.

5 — **SAN ANGELO**, St. Joseph — Meet with Cursillo Leadership at 11:00 am

6 — **OLFEN**, St. Boniface, Mass, 11 a.m.

7-11 — **SAN ANTONIO**, Annual Retreat for Bishops of Region X

11-13 — **COLORADO SPRINGS**, Anniversary Mass for Father Frank Quesada

16-18 — **ALBUQUERQUE, NM**, Southwest Liturgical Conference

20 — **BRONTE**, St. James, Mass, 5 p.m.

21 — **SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral — Martin Luther King Prayer Service at Noon

22 — **SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral — Pro Life Mass at Noon

24-25 — **WASHINGTON, DC** — March for Life

26 — **MIDLAND**, Youth 2000

27 — **SAN ANGELO**, Santa Angela Celebration

29 — **SAN ANGELO**, Diocesan Pastoral Center — Staff Mass at 8:30 am.; Staff Meeting, 11 a.m.

### Christ the King Retreat Center

#### DECEMBER

10 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

11 — Adoration

17 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

18 — Seminarian Gathering

24-25 — Office Closed-

Christmas Holiday

31-1 — Office Closed New

Year's Holiday

31 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

#### JANUARY 2013

1 — Office Closed for New

Years Day

4-6 — The Blessing Team

7 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

Group

8 — Adoration of the Blessed

Sacrament

11-13 — Engaged Encounter

13 — Natural Family Planning

14 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

Group

14-15 — Palo Duro Presbytery

15 — Adoration of the Blessed

Sacrament

21 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

Group

22 — Adoration of the Blessed

Sacrament

25 — Natural Family Planning

Outreach-Priests

26 — Natural Family Planning

Outreach —

26 — Deacons, Wives, & Laity

27 — CKRC Confirmation

Retreat

28 — Heart of Mercy Prayer

Group

28-30 — West Texas Anglicans

29 — Adoration

### NECROLOGY

#### JANUARY

10-Rev. Francis Beazley, OMI (1992)

13-Rev. Joseph Walter (1989)

16-Rev. Cyril Lange (1971)

16-Msgr. Timothy Murphy

(2004)

18-Rev. Patrick Ryan, O.M.I.

(1975)

19-Fr. Robert Kelly (1999)

23-Deacon Jose Esparza (2011)

24-Bishop Thomas Tschoepe

(2009)

26-Deacon D.J. Goetz (2003)

26-Deacon Jack Peterson

(1987)

From the Editor

## Through tragedy comes goodness

By Jimmy Patterson  
Editor

The news broke as a murmur late on the afternoon of November 15. Texts began to come and go, Facebook posts popped up, Twitter messages were soon everywhere.

By 6 p.m., what had only an hour and a half earlier been but a rumor was now full blown, devastating reality: a speeding freight train had collided with a flatbed full of war veterans as the the out-of-town vets were in town to be honored as part of Midland's ninth annual Hunt for Heroes.

The horrifying nature of the tragedy left most people in tears, asking "How?"

And of course the answer is no one really knows. And anyone who claims to have the answer doesn't.

We can say one thing for certain, though, in that God did not allow the tragedy. But he is there with his grace in the aftermath. The deaths

of the four vets and the injury of many others that afternoon did bring out good, just as weeks earlier Hurricane Sandy had brought about God's grace on the East Coast.

I often wonder whether my hometown is different than others; I hear so often that it is. "There's just something about Midland," people will tell me. There's also something about Toms River, N.J., Queens, NY, and the scores of other towns and villages affected by the devastation of the late October hurricane. Abilene, San Angelo, Odessa, Big Spring, Andres, Odessa? Good. All.

People are good. Everywhere. Not all people, surely, but when there is evil or bad or devastation or a tragic accident, we respond. And we do it because it is yet another example of the grace that comes to us thru God. Though most of us, I would believe, are inherently good, it is God's grace that makes us even better for people in their greatest hours of need.

In Midland we lined up by the hundreds to give our blood, cook our lasagna dinners and no doubt offer our private planes to members of families of the dead and injured

so they could get here as quickly as possible.

This is nothing new. The times we have responded to the call of need are uncountable. It didn't start with Baby Jessica and it won't end with the deaths of the four veterans.

God is not responsible for terrible accidents, neither does he abandoned us in their time. He is there, as is evidenced in the people who help the suffering, most felt when alone. Being in the presence of others and of course in God's presence can turn the suffering into ultimately a growing of one's faith.

C.S. Lewis once reminded us that we were promised suffering. Such a sentiment likely won't serve to transform anyone in this tragedy so soon felt. Yet it is in the book of Matthew where Jesus himself, atop the mount, also told us, 'Blessed are those who mourn. They will be comforted.'

Comfort is not easy to give sometimes. It is more easily received if and when offered. As Christians, neighbors and friends, our prayers and acts of kindness have and will continue to provide solace where it's needed most, regardless the tragedy. Thanks be to God.



Patterson

Del Escritorio del Obispo

## Las obras de misericordia corporales son una manera esplendida para vivir el ano de la fe y la navidad

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer,

El Año de la Fe que hemos iniciado en octubre es un tiempo para

renovar nuestra relación amorosa con la persona de Jesucristo, y de comprometernos de nuevo a ser fieles a nuestras enseñanzas de nuestra Iglesia Católica y de expresar nuestra fe en acción. Al prepararnos para la gran celebración de Dios dándonos a Su hijo en la Navidad, este es un tiempo maravilloso para expresar nuestra fe por medio de cumplir

con las Obras de Misericordia Corporales.

La practica de estas Obras de Misericordia son un medio de gracia y santificación, y de expresar nuestras obras de caridad, misericordia y servicio a nuestro vecino. Tomemos tiempo para revisar cuidadosamente como podemos vivir estas esenciales Católicas de misericordia y servicio durante la temporada del Adviento y la Navidad.

Obras de Misericordia Corporales

- ▶ Alimentar a los hambrientos
- ▶ Dar de beber al sediento
- ▶ Vestir al desnudo
- ▶ Albergar a los que no tienen techo
- ▶ Cuidar a los enfermos

▶ Visitar a los presos

▶ Enterrar a los muertos

Jesús nos dice en el Evangelio de Mateo, capítulo 25, que cuando hacemos estas sencillas pero profundas obras significativas de ayudar a nuestros vecinos necesitados con sus necesidades básicas, se la hacemos a Cristo mismo. Jesús nos dice, "Amen, les aseguro que cada vez que lo hicieron con el más pequeño de mis hermanos o hermanas, lo hicieron conmigo."

Cuando expresamos nuestra fe por medio de vivir estas obras de misericordia corporales, Cristo verdaderamente renace en nuestro mundo. Estamos celebrando la Navidad. Una Navidad llena de paz y bondad para todos.



Obispo Miguel Pfeifer OMI

## New evangelization calls all Catholics to share faith

By Mark Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The church's new evangelization and its call to share the faith is the responsibility of all Catholics, said Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington.

"It's our moment ... it's our turn to share in this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, this new Pentecost," he said.

That sense of a "new Pentecost" unfolding in the church, he said, was shared by the 250 bishops from around the world who participated in the world Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization convened by Pope Benedict XVI Oct. 7-28.

Cardinal Wuerl was appointed by the pope to serve as the relator of the synod, summarizing and reporting on the bishops' suggestions and recommendations. In that role he introduced the synod's work Oct. 8 with a global overview of the challenge of evangelization today, and laid out the values that he said must be the foundation of the church's outreach.

After his return to Washington, he gave an overview of the synod Nov. 5. On the first day of the U.S. bishops' annual fall general assembly in Baltimore, a couple of the U.S. bishops who were synod delegates gave a brief report to the body of bishops.

In a recent talk at the Catholic Information Center in downtown Washington, he gave an overview of the

synod.

Just as the first disciples were called by Jesus to be his witnesses, Cardinal Wuerl said, today's Catholics must be witnesses to the good news and help others encounter the risen Christ in a world where many have not heard the Gospel or have drifted away or grown lukewarm in their faith. The challenges that the early church faced in bringing Christ to an indifferent or even hostile culture mirror those of our times, he said.

"We have to inspire (others) with the witness of our own faith, by our own lives," the cardinal said.

Pope Benedict's call to Catholics to take up the work of the new evangelization is a key priority of his papacy, Cardinal Wuerl noted. "Who's involved in the new evangelization? ...The answer is, every one of us."

Bishops at the synod emphasized the central role of families in sharing the faith, the cardinal said. "It begins in families. The task of telling the story of Jesus, of passing it on begins in every family."

Young people have a key role in the new evangelization, Cardinal Wuerl added. Many young Catholics, he said, realize there's more to life than what the secular world offers.

Cardinal Wuerl said the synod also underscored how people must remain connected to the church and its teachings as they deepen their own faith, grow in confi-

dence in its truth, and share that truth with others. Bishops at the synod also emphasized that the new evangelization must unfold at parishes, where people encounter Jesus sacramentally and hear the word of God proclaimed.

The synod "was positive, united and pastoral," the cardinal said, and emphasized a practical, not a theoretical, approach for Catholics to take up that call.

"We were there to talk about how to renew the face of the earth, to proclaim again that Jesus Christ is Lord, and invite people into that personal encounter" with Christ, he said.

The cardinal said that Pope Benedict in his opening homily for the synod emphasized three elements of the new evangelization. "The first element is recognizing the need for renewal of our own personal faith," Cardinal Wuerl said. "You can't participate in sharing something if it has not been renewed and revived in your own heart."

Prayer and studying Scripture, the cardinal said, are critically important to that personal renewal of faith. "That's how we learn of the presence of God in our lives."

With the renewal of faith comes a confidence in the truth of its message, which is the second element of the new evangeliza-

(Please See **EVANGELIZATION/23**)



YEAR OF FAITH 2012  
2013

### December Study Question

To celebrate the Year of Faith as proclaimed by Pope Benedict and focusing on the New Evangelization, excerpts from the Papal document on the Year of Faith and from the document of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on the New Evangelization were sent to all Pastors and Pastoral Coordinators. Bishop Pfeifer has asked that these excerpts and questions for reflection be discussed at each Pastoral Council meeting along with meetings of other pastoral leaders of the communities as well as by all Catholics in the Diocese. The excerpt and question for reflection for December:

*The renewal of the Church is also achieved through the witness offered by the lives of believers — by their very existence in the world. Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord has left us. (Porta Fidei No.6)*

*Who are the people (saints) who radiate the Gospel today? How can we share their stories?*

## Bishops agree on need for better preaching, more penance

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- During their annual fall general assembly in Baltimore Nov. 12-15, the U.S. bishops voted down a document on the troubled U.S. economy, passed documents on penance and better preaching, approved a reorganization of their Communications Department and endorsed the sainthood cause of Dorothy Day.

The bishops were to meet in executive session Nov. 14 and 15, which were not open to the media.

On the assembly's opening day, the bishops discussed on the nation's troubled economy and what their response to it should be, but a day later their proposed document "The Hope of the Gospel in Difficult Times: A Pastoral Message on Work, Poverty and the Economy" did not gain the two-thirds vote required for passage.

When it was introduced Nov. 12, some bishops criticized the document for being too long to be practical and for failing to include a variety of points and historical references.



Galveston-Houston Archbishop, Most Rev. Joseph Fiorenza, former bishop of San Angelo, speaks before the annual fall meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. (CNS Photo) At right, a new USCCB logo.

On the assembly's second day, the bishops approved their first new document in 30 years on preaching. The document, "Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily," encourages preachers to connect the Sunday homily with people's daily lives.

The document was prepared by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops'

preaching that would help them rediscover their faith."

The bishops also overwhelmingly approved -- in a 236-1 vote -- an exhortation encouraging Catholics to take advantage of the sacrament of penance, or reconciliation.

The text was prepared by the bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, chaired by Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis. The exhortation, to be made available in pamphlet form,

will aim to ease the fears of Catholics who have not gone to confession for some time.

It will be made public in time to allow for dioceses to prepare for Lent 2013.

(Please See **USCCB/22**)



# Bishops, bloggers discuss how tweets, blogs help evangelization

By Carol Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — A group of U.S. bishops and Catholic bloggers discussed — and tweeted about -- how to use social media to spread the Gospel message during a Nov. 11 session prior to the start of the U.S. bishops' annual general assembly in Baltimore.

In the nearly three-hour session, the group of two dozen bishops and even more bloggers talked about the challenges in keeping up with the all-pervasive social media but also acknowledged the absolute necessity of doing so in order to reach people and connect them more deeply with their faith -- or put simply: to evangelize.

In question-and-answer sessions, a panel discussion and in small groups, the bloggers repeatedly urged the bishops to use social media tools at their disposal such as blogs and Twitter or Facebook accounts as a means to communicate a living faith in the modern world.

"(Archbishop) Fulton Sheen would give his right arm to have the tools we have today," said Brandon Vogt, a 26-year old Catholic blogger and author of the 2011 book "The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists and Bishops Who Tweet." Archbishop Sheen, who was declared venerable this year, was known for his preaching on television and radio in the 1950s.

Rocco Palmo, author of the popular Catholic blog "Whispers in the Loggia," urged bishops to recognize that they have something unique to bring to the broad social media table.

He gave the example of Bishop Alexander K. Sample of Marquette, Mich.,



Paul Smeaton, author of the blog "Smeaton's Corner," talks with others at a meeting for bloggers and others involved in Catholic media at an Irish bar in Rome May 3, the day after the Vatican's first meeting for bloggers. The "alternative" blognic gave people who didn't have a chance to attend the Vatican's meeting an opportunity for informal discussion. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

who kicked off the Year of Faith by traveling more than 1,000 miles across Michigan's Upper Peninsula to visit parishes and tweeted about the trip along the way.

"That's something you bring that can't be replicated," Palmo said, noting that people can relate to bishops when they share their experience and also feel close to them.

"Your job as guarantors of the faith is to make sure the message has integrity and resonates with people."

If the bishops had any doubt about the number of people, Catholics in particular, who use social media, a new study by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, confirmed that there is indeed a big audience

out there, and that audience wants material that is relevant and also entertaining.

Mark Gray, director of Catholic polls and a research associate at CARA, gave the bishops and bloggers highlights of the study, "Catholic New Media Use in the United States, 2012" commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Department of Communications.

The survey, of 1,047 Catholics from Sept. 10-18, showed that 62 percent of adult U.S. Catholics, representing an estimated 36.2 million people, have a profile on Facebook; 58 percent of Catholics age 30 and under share content such as pictures, articles and comments at least once a week on social media; and nearly a third of all surveyed said they would like their

pastors and bishops to blog.

An immediate takeaway from the survey was that the sheer number of Catholics online cannot be ignored.

Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Communications, said the CARA report "suggests many opportunities for the church to engage with those who live on the 'digital continent,'" described by Pope Benedict XVI and urged bishops and Catholic laity to approach this online world as missionaries.

The bishop read a letter to the session's participants from Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, which similarly described the online mission field.

"In this context, the role of the laity becomes ever more central," the archbishop said in his letter, noting that the "voices of the many Catholics who are present in blogs, social networks and other digital forums are reaching people who might not otherwise encounter the message of Jesus."

Archbishop Celli also said he was pleased that the gathering of bloggers and bishops was described as a dialogue, pointing out that the conversational form of communication is a key part of the "new environment" of online communication and media.

Some of the bishops at the meeting expressed a hesitancy to jump into the online social media world, noting that it could take a lot of time and that there can be a lack of civility in many online discussions and comments.

In a small group discussion, one bishop

(Please See **BLOGGERS/23**)



American social worker  
Dorothy Day.

## Bishops endorse sainthood cause for Dorothy Day

By Mark Pattison  
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — The U.S. bishops, on a voice vote, endorsed the sainthood cause of Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, who was famously quoted as saying, "Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily."

The endorsement came at the end of a canonically required consultation that took place Nov. 13, the second day of the bishops' annual fall general assembly in Baltimore.

Under the terms of the 2007 Vatican document "Sanctorum Mater," the diocesan bish-

op promoting a sainthood cause must consult at least with the regional bishops' conference on the advisability of pursuing the cause.

In the case of Day, whose Catholic Worker ministry was based in New York City, the bishop promoting her cause is Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. bishops' conference. The cause was first undertaken by one of Cardinal Dolan's predecessors in New York, Cardinal John O'Connor.

Cardinal Dolan had earlier conducted a consultation with bishops in his region, and subsequently chose to seek a consultation with the full body of U.S. bishops.

He and the other bishops who spoke dur-

ing the consultation, some of whom had met Day, called her sainthood cause an opportune moment in the life of the U.S. church.

Cardinal Dolan called Day's journey "Augustinian," saying that "she was the first to admit it: sexual immorality, there was a religious search, there was a pregnancy out of wedlock, and an abortion. Like Saul on the way to Damascus, she was radically changed" and has become "a saint for our time."

"Of all the people we need to reach out to, all the people that are hard to get at, the street people, the ones who are on drugs, the ones who have had abortions, she was one of

(Please See **DAY/21**)

‘For unto you this day, a child is born ...’

# Jesus in manger offers cure for pride

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer

“While they were there (Bethlehem) the time came for her (Mary) to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:1-14) These few simple words described for us in a very human and earthly manner how the eternal word of God began to live among us when he was born on that first Christmas of Mary his mother, who laid him in a manger where the animals would feed because there were no room for them in any other place. As we reflect on how the birth of Jesus Christ, the savior of the world, took place, it requires some radical change in our way of thinking, our behavior and the standards that we live by.

The humility of the Word of God become flesh as described in the Christmas scene of Luke’s gospel, being born in a stable, is a constant exhortation and a cure for our pride. his modest humble birth in a stable among the animals is an example for us.

If the almighty God, who was rich in every way, became in the birth of Christ, the poorest of the poor and the most needy among the needy, we must ask the question — can there be then any other way forward in our journey toward eternal happiness, without overcoming our pride and practicing the virtues of humility and simplicity of Christ? Can we continue to let our hearts be overly-attached to material things? These are especially profound questions for all as we go through this Year of Faith, as we seek to deepen our loving relationship with the person of Jesus Christ.

The first Christmas describing how Christ as God was rich in every way, chose to be born in a stable, has always been a cry that disturbs the conscience of the materialistic world, which rest on its first principle of competition and an unbridled race for riches and material possessions most often at the expense of the poor. when people refuse to share worldly goods in a spirit of solidarity, then money and material things become idols. When this happens, there is a separation of our lives from our God who is the giver of all life.



A woman stops to pray beside the life-size outdoor creche in Chicago’s Daley Plaza Nov 24. Volunteers from area parishes -- who refer to themselves as the God Squad -- set up the Nativity scene each year around the start of Advent. (CNS/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

the poor and helpless baby Jesus lying in the manger is the Saviour of the whole world. His humble birth and His whole life of simplicity, His suffering and His death and resurrection were meant to bring God’s love to all people of all times. His being born in the stable reminds us that He has a special care for the poor of the world who form the biggest part of the population on planet earth, and is a call for all of us to reach out in loving care and service for others. As we joyfully celebrate the birth of Christ this Christmas, we must be mindful that 1 billion of the world’s some 7 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. Two billion people— our sisters and brothers—live on less than \$2 a day.

Our hearts often prefer to limit ourselves to loving those nearest to us. However, as we mark the birthday of Jesus, the love as manifested by the child Jesus in the manger is the love that extends out to the whole world. God’s love manifested in Jesus in the manger is a call to extend our love throughout the world, and for every person we meet, because the measure of love should be to love without measure.

The love and simplicity as manifested in the baby Jesus in the manger, who was called the Prince of Peace for the whole world, calls us to be concerned for all people on planet earth who are god’s people and to be people who promote peace and not violence, to be more actively involved in working to overcome the hatred, war and violence that is prevalent in our world. This love should open our hearts to a spirit of hospitality and availability towards all people especially the poor and to break down walls of separation and isolation. As we do this, we are sharing in the new evangelization called for by Pope Benedict XVI in this Year of Faith. Evangelization means to share the good news of Christ and His gospel message, especially by lives of witness.

Every Christmas, for over 2,000 years, we exchange best wishes with each other because we feel that the birthday of Jesus is also our birthday — a new birth of hope, life, love, sharing and giving. However, our contemporary Christmas is threatened by a false Christmas that forcefully invades, menaces and drugs our lives to the point of not seeing or hearing anymore the call of the real Christmas—the Christmas that we

need most, the spirit of Christmas that Christ brought to our world on that first Christmas. The child in the manger calls us to totally be dependant on our loving heavenly Father, to center our lives on Christ, to not let material things become our idols—our false gods.

At Christmas time, many colorful lights fill the streets and shops during this season, but the question is do people know that Jesus is the true light and that these material lights should remind us that we are to be lights in the world to remove darkness. We ask ourselves then— Do we Christians emanate in light with our lives? Do families and parishes really resemble Bethlehem? Can one see the Christmas star in our eyes filled with goodness? At this time of the year, music resounds from houses and places of entertainment that intend to call for joy. But the question is what kind of joy? People have exchanged joy for pleasure; and pleasure tickles and pleases the body and thus fades suddenly, needing to be continually and insatiably repeated. True joy that is given to us by the poor Jesus in the manger is the thrill of the soul that reaches the Bethlehem of our hearts, and sees the face of God in each human being we meet.

Jesus in the manger reminds us that our God and Savior was born poor. He chose the humble way of coming into our lives, through the body, heart and the arms of his dear mother, Mary. How beautiful would it be if at Christmas time we would empty, instead of filling, our house with more material things in order to share with those who have nothing, in order to have the marvelous experience of giving, and live our Christmas together with Jesus by sharing our love, our goods with our family members in need and the poor who surround us. Yes, let us share gifts, especially our love, and service with family members and friends as we celebrate the birthday of Christ, because Christ wants the joy of his birthday to be celebrated by all people. But, do not let our hearts be absorbed by material things, but focus our attention on the baby in the manger, the God-made man, who humbled Himself to become one of us to bring us the true meaning of life, and how to arrive at eternal life. May all have a joyful Christmas as we center our celebration on the baby in the manger.

## 'We thank God Abilene Planned Parenthood has closed its doors'

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

After much constant prayer for many years, and especially after praying countless rosaries in front of Planned Parenthood, we thank God that Planned Parenthood has closed the doors of their death center in Abilene which offered chemical abortions. To show our gratitude to God for this favor, at the Bishop's request, Msgr. Fred Nawarskas, Dean of the Abilene Deanery, gathered with priests and the faithful of that area to offer a rosary of gratitude on the day of closing of this center, November 9, 2012. To show our commitment to assist with the health care of women and families, the following letter was read at all the Masses in the city of Abilene and the surrounding area. Here is a copy of that letter:

*The Catholic Church Marshals Resources to Provide Healthcare for Women*

*Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI; the priests; and the Catholic People of the city of Abilene and surrounding area thank God that the Perini Planned*

### Health care resources for women in, near Abilene

Some of the institutions that provide services for women in the Abilene area are:

- ▶ Pregnancy Resources of Abilene, 2110 N. Willis St.; (325) 672-6415.
- ▶ Medical Care Mission, 857 Pine Street; (325) 657-5601
- ▶ Alliance for Women and Children, 1350 N. 10th St.; (325) 677-5321

The St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores welcome any pregnant women and their families who need help and will assist them at no charge with the items they have available. St. Vincent de Paul can be contacted at (325) 677-6871 [Abilene] and (325) 646-7455 [Brownwood]. Another very useful agency is the United Way's Call for Help (2-1-1). This is a "clearing house" for persons who have any problems, not just health related issues.

*Parenthood Center will no longer be doing chemical abortions which destroy the lives of the precious unborn. This action, some say, leaves a void for women's healthcare in the Big Country. That is not the case. There are several institutions in Abilene that are willing and able to provide health assistance to*

*women, especially women who struggle with a pregnancy decision. They will provide services to whoever needs care, especially low income families.*

*The Diocese of San Angelo, and the Catholic Churches of the Abilene, Brownwood, and Sweetwater areas are also very concerned about access to*

*health care for women, particularly those who may be struggling with a pregnancy decision. The Catholic Churches of the Abilene, Brownwood, and Sweetwater areas, as well as the Abilene Pro-life Committee, will increase support and actually work with organizations such as Pregnancy Resources, and St. Vincent de Paul in Abilene and Brownwood to do what we can to assist with women's health issues. The Catholic Churches of the city of Abilene, Brownwood, and Sweetwater areas invite all women who have health care concerns, particularly those who are pregnant, to call or come to their local Catholic Church for pastoral, spiritual, social support, and financial assistance. We also ask the doctors, nurses, and social workers of our Catholic parishes to offer their professional skills to the various Abilene health organizations that assist women.*

*This is a time to cultivate a "heart which sees." The Catholic Church will marshal resources needed to assure women in need that they are not alone, and will provide help to them and their newborn children.*

## When our bodies are used as God intends, life, joy, inner peace are brought forth

In preparation for Confirmation I write a letter to the candidates, asking that they write me a letter about their thoughts on Confirmation and the virtue of chastity. This is a letter that was sent to me from the Confirmation Class with whom I celebrated Confirmation on October 12, 2012.

— Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

*By The Confirmation Class of St Mary's Church-Odessa*

"In getting ready for Confirmation in a few weeks we read as a class and individually your letter on chastity addressed to us, and we are grateful for your significant message to us which gives us a clear understanding of how chastity plays a big role in a Catholic's life especially for us as youth.

We talked about "sex at school," and some of us even with our parents; but your letter really pointed out to us how our bodies are temples of and for God. We discussed how we try our best to respect our bodies through abstinence which is the right decision to choose when it comes in considering sex. When our bodies, which are gifts from God, are used as God intends life and happiness are brought forth along with liberation and inner peace. Our bodies are sacred and through chastity, which means self-control, we can have control over our decisions of loving ourselves and others.

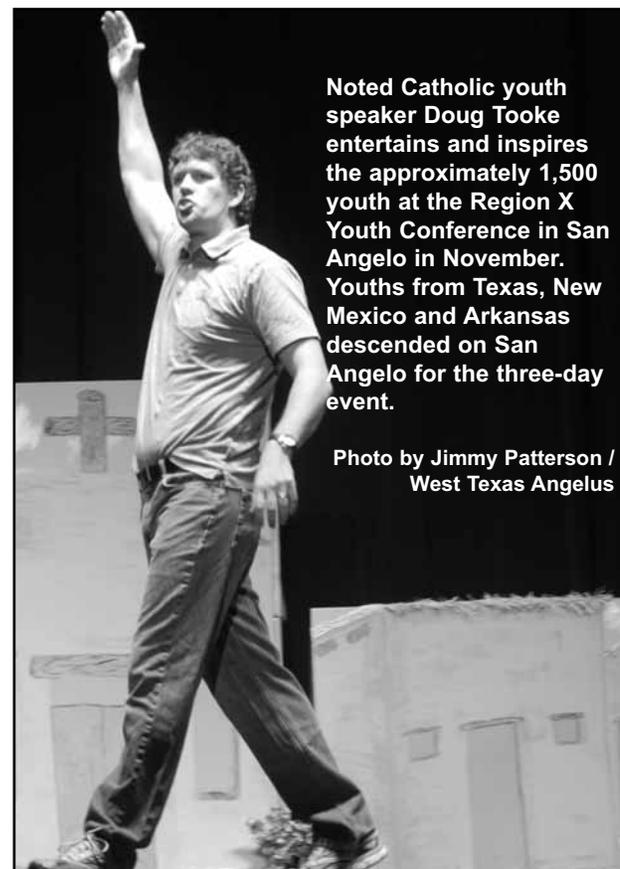
But this is not easy. In fact, as teenagers we are often tempted by sexual pleasure. The media gives us this false image that sex is necessary for a relationship and advertises that sex has little or no consequences. In the world we live in today, "un-holy" sex is a common

thing. But what many people don't realize is that the "fun" and "promising" act of sex that is advertised by the media actually leads to a pathway of misery and shame along with AIDS and other STDs. This so-called safe sex then leads to abortions, teen pregnancies, or depression.

Studies have been conducted that prove that teenagers having sex isn't about the sex alone. Non-direct sexual factors and unmet emotional needs are large contributors to premarital sex. Another factor which influences teens is our parents' behavior towards sexuality. By being aware how sexuality ties into our emotions especially when attraction is there, we hope to keep our sacred temples undefiled and consecrated.

Bishop, you have reminded us that through our Confirmation we will be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit that will give us guidance and strength to not fall into the pressure of having sex outside of marriage. The Holy Spirit helps to live our sexuality in a meaningful, enriching, and self-fulfilling way. We constantly ask God for the knowledge, wisdom, and reverence to live out the virtue of chastity with fortitude and determination. Confirmation will help us to stay in Faith and to lead holy, happy, and good moral lives, so that one day we may be led to a "holy" sex within the Sacrament of Matrimony through the Church. For our Confirmation we say "yes" to the gifts we will receive through the Holy Spirit and "no" to the tainting our souls with lustful acts, condoms, birth control which push us further from Christ. Thank you for your letter of encouragement and wisdom in guiding us to the truth."

### Region X Youth Conference



**Noted Catholic youth speaker Doug Tooke entertains and inspires the approximately 1,500 youth at the Region X Youth Conference in San Angelo in November. Youths from Texas, New Mexico and Arkansas descended on San Angelo for the three-day event.**

**Photo by Jimmy Patterson / West Texas Angelus**

## Catholic Voices

# The rich meaning of Christmas is all around us

By Father Ron Rolheiser

What does Christmas mean? Christmas is like a perfectly-cut diamond twirling in the sun, giving off an array of sparkles. Here are just some of its meanings:

- A four-year-old child woke up one night frightened, convinced that there were all kinds of spooks and monsters in her room. In terror she fled to her parents' bedroom. Her mother took her back to her room and, after soothing her fears, assured her that it was safe there: "You don't need to be afraid. After I leave, you won't be alone in the room. God will be here with you!" "I know that God will be here," the child protested, "but I need someone in this room who has some skin." The word was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)
- God is not found in monasteries, but in our homes. Wherever you find husband and wife, that's where you find God; wherever children and petty cares and cooking and arguments and reconciliation are, that's where God is too. The God I'm telling about, the domestic one, not the



Rolheiser

monastic one, that's the real God. (Nikos Kazantzakis)

- Every year of life waxes and wanes. Every stage of life comes and goes. Every facet of life is born and then dies. Every good moment is doomed to become only a memory. Every perfect period of living slips through our fingers and disappears. Every hope dims and every possibility turns eventually to dry clay. Until Christmas comes again. Then we are called at the deepest, most subconscious, least cognizant level to begin to live again. Christmas brings us all back to the crib of life to start over again: aware of what has gone before, conscious that nothing can last, but full of hope that this time, finally, we can learn what it takes to live well, grow to full stature of soul and spirit, and get it right. (Joan Chittister)

- After a mother has smiled for a long time at her child, the child will begin to smile back; she has awakened love in its heart, and in awakening love in its heart, she awakes also recognition. In the same way, God awakes Himself before us as love. Love radiates from God and instills the light of love in our hearts. (Hans Urs Von Balthasar)

- At Christmas, through his grace-filled birth, God says to the world: "I am there.

I am with you. I am your life. ... Do not be afraid to be happy. For ever since I wept, joy is the standard of living that is really more suitable than the anxiety and grief of those who think they have no hope. ... This reality, this incomparable wonder of my almighty love, I have sheltered safely in the cold stable of your world. I am there. I no longer go away from this world. Even if you do not see me. I am there. It is Christmas. Light the candles! They have more right to exist than all the darkness. It is Christmas. Christmas lasts forever." (Karl Rahner)

- Even at Christmas, when halos are pre-tested by focus groups for inclusion in mass market campaigns, they are hard to see. ... This is how halos are seen, by looking up into largeness, by tucking smallness into folds of infinity. I do not know this by contemplating shimmering trees. Rather there was a woman, busy at the Christmas table, and I looked up to catch a rim of radiance etching her face, to notice curves of light sliding along her shape. She out-glowed the candles. All the noise of the room left my ears and silence sharpened my sight. When this happens, I do not get overly excited. I merely allow love to be renewed, for that is the mission of haloes, the reason they are given to us. ... But when haloes fade,

they do not abruptly vanish, abandoning us to the lesser light. They recede, as Gabriel departed from Mary, leaving us pregnant. (John Shea)

- Some of the Church Fathers compared Jesus to a singer with a strong voice and a perfect pitch who joins a discordant choir and completely transforms it. It is not that Jesus gave us a different set of songs to sing, but helped us instead to perform our standard repertoire in an entirely new and more beautiful way. (Richard McBrien)

- The incarnation does not mean that God saves us from the pains of this life. It means that God-is-with-us. For the Christian, just as for everyone else, there will be cold, lonely seasons, seasons of sickness, seasons of frustration, and a season within which we will die. Christmas does not give us a ladder to climb out of the human condition. It gives us a drill that lets us burrow into heart of everything that is and, there, find it shimmering with divinity. (Avery Dulles)

- Looking for God these days requires the willingness to investigate the small. (Aztec Poem)

*Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio.*

## Preventing war by keeping a loving heart open to dialogue

By Father Eugene Hemrick  
Catholic News Service

Fear suddenly gripped me as I viewed Washington, D.C.'s National Archives exhibit on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. I lived through it but never realized that planes carrying nuclear bombs were airborne, and our submarines and silos were prepared to launch nuclear warheads. It led me to think, How can a nuclear holocaust be avoided?

One place we might start is history. We need to meditate on the horrors of the past as a means of instilling in us the dreadfulness of a nuclear war. History reveals wars causing the random killing of innocent civilians, total devastation of cities and desolation lasting years. Although a nation may rebuild, its psyche never fully recov-



Hemrick

ers.

History needs to be revisited to learn of the virtues practiced that maintained peace. One of those lessons teaches that heartfelt dialogue possesses enormous powers for keeping harmony. We can only wonder what would have happened had not U.S. President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Secretary General Nikita Khrushchev stayed in dialogue during the missile crisis.

In his encyclical "Ecclesiam Suam," Pope Paul VI gives us a wonderful summation of the essential qualities of dialogue.

First, language must be clear. Nothing could be more important in our world of differing cultures and languages. Ambiguous, poorly chosen words thrown out carelessly can create a riot. For dialogue to succeed, words need to be clarified repeatedly, re-examined so they do not offend and re-crafted until they resonate with the intended audience.

Dialogue requires kindness. This does not

imply the lack of prudence; rather it encourages those going to the bargaining table to be well-disposed toward one another, desiring the common good.

Dialogue implores us to put those involved in the conversation in the place of the other person. This implies studying the particular traditions of a nation and what its population is presently undergoing. Also implied is visiting and experiencing a nation firsthand.

Love is the heart of dialogue. Its essential qualities translate into a spirit of forgiveness and avoiding hardness of heart, exhausting all means possible for keeping peace, preferring a joyful disposition to a warlike demeanor and practicing a spirit of beneficence for the benefit of the common good.

As much as military and economic strength help to keep the peace, our most powerful means for accomplishing peace is a loving heart.

Dialogue must be clear, kind and from the heart in order to bring results.

## Catholic Voices II

# The elections of 2012 may be over, but the issues remain

By Stephen Kent  
Catholic News Service

It's as if the house is quiet once again, the kids have gone out to play, the neighbor has shut down the snarling power mower for the fall.

The election is over, a respite has come, at least until the first working day after New Year's when scores emerge to be "mentioned" to occupy the White House and state capitols in four years hence. It's the political version of orders: advancing from mentioned to contender to candidate and ultimately incumbent.

In this interim, here are some thoughts on the past campaign season and hopes for the future.

The 2012 elections -- nationally and at



Kent

the state level -- are already being described as the most contentious in recollection. That is an overstatement, but what can be said is the efficient distribution of slander and calumny in both legacy media and social media meant mud was slung faster and further.

Negative advertising seemed to be more overwhelming. The only people not relieved to see these ads end are the now unemployed announcers with their quiet soothing voices assuring that famine, pestilence, war and riot would surely result if the opponent were elected.

It is disturbing that those spending millions of dollars on negative advertising thought that people would believe them. Even more disturbing is that more than a few people actually did believe and cast their vote accordingly.

Two-thirds of the states now permit early voting -- an average of three weeks prior to Election Day. Two more states conduct mail-only elections. Political scientists will no doubt study how these

scattered elections affect the outcome. Election Day has ceased to exist. That is too bad, for it is one of the few things remaining that brought people together by doing the same thing on the same day. Lack of a unifying event is a loss to us as a nation. The Super Bowl is no substitute.

The language of violence -- "war" on women, "battleground" states -- while off-putting, happily remained in the realm of metaphor showing that this nation, despite differences, changes it government peacefully, not in the streets as seen too often throughout the rest of the world.

The contention will not be going away. Religious freedom will continue as a political issue. Disputes over values in the public arena will continue. And for that reason, the need for more informed Catholics is essential.

Those elected to office now face challenges. They have to replace competition with cooperation and collaboration to carry out the best interests of the com-

mon good.

An excerpt from an invocation presented decades ago by then-San Francisco Archbishop John R. Quinn, at a meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures, remains timely:

"May they always be mindful of the awesome nature of their vocation -- a position in which they profoundly affect so many lives. May they have the common sense to recognize that good, truth and beauty, not re-election, are wise priorities.

"Never allow them to be carried away with their own importance. Grant them the serenity of realizing that the crisis of confidence in government is not current, but as old as government itself."

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*Kent is the retired editor of archdiocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle. He can be contacted at [Considersk@gmail.com](mailto:Considersk@gmail.com).*

## Do you want to be healed?

By Francis Hymel  
West Texas Angelus

Do you want to be healed?

Simple question and yet a complicated answer.

And why is that?

Because after the last Association of Christian Therapist's International Conference, I learned there are some reasons why I *don't* want to be healed. I had been limping around the whole conference with a painful hamstring and groin. I attributed it to running without stretching, something that will eventually go away with time and gentle walking. But the pain remained the same. Over-the-counter meds made it manageable but there was no improvement. I believed that I just had to tough it out and learn to live with it.

The other underlying beliefs were: This is the cross I have to carry; God doesn't care about my little physical pains; they're not important to him;

it's not worth praying for; there are more important things in life to pray for; other people have bigger needs, mine are very little; it's better to suffer in silence; don't ask for help. I basically went through the whole conference with these beliefs and attitudes, even after two healing services!

Then God planted a seed.

A fellow ACT brother in Christ said to me, "We need to pray over you." "Yeah right, I thought!" Nice sentiment. I was appreciative of his concern and offer. Next, came the Christian service on Sunday morning. The ministers asked that if anyone would like prayer to please come forward. I sensed the Holy Spirit moving me to step out in faith and trust. I humbled myself and hobbled up for prayer. Even though Austin's taxi was waiting for him, he remained. I was being convicted in my heart. I was overcome with emotion (love) as Austin prayed over me. Once again, I had to admit my own brokenness, come out of denial and false pride, and ask for God's healing touch. In that moment, there was no physical cure, however, there was emotional and spiritual healing. It was healing my

relationship with God. I felt His love and presence. It was okay to ask. It was important to God. It was okay to give myself permission to be healed. He really did care about my physical pain.

Now what? It put me on the path to physical healing. As any doctor will tell you, a correct diagnosis means everything. I felt led to get X-rays. I had been misdiagnosing myself all along. The results showed a stress fracture of my left pelvis. What a surprise! My heart, mind and spirit had been opened to receive His truth and love, now my body could also. The Divine Physician had diagnosed me correctly. And now He can heal me as well. YES, I DO WANT to be healed! Thank you Jesus!

"Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Mark 10:49-51

*Francis Hymel is a Licensed Family Therapist, and a Licensed Family and Marriage Therapist in Midland. He is a parishioner at St. Ann's Church.*

## Be Careful What You Ask For



Making Sense of Bioethics

# Thinking clearly about abortion and consciousness

By Rev. Thad Pacholczyk

Imagine a deadly scenario like this: a successful businessman is rendered unconscious by medical professionals to help him heal after a serious car accident, using powerful pharmaceutical agents to cause a medically-induced coma. A few days later, a business competitor, wanting him dead, enters the hospital and kills the comatose patient. During his trial, when questioned about the murder, the competitor tries to argue, with an unnecessarily detailed explanation, that, "the medically-induced coma rendered him quite incapable of feeling any pain, because those parts of his brain involved in sensory processing and pain perception were clearly decoupled from consciousness. So killing those who are unconscious, at least on the grounds that they might feel pain, should not be seen as problematic nor should it be restricted as a personal choice."



Pacholczyk

Anyone would appreciate the absurdity of such an argument, much as they ought to recognize the unreasonableness of a similar conclusion reached by neuroscientist Dr. Daniel Bor in a recent piece in *The Dallas Morning News*:

"The evidence is clear that a fetus can respond to sights, sounds and smells, and it can even react to these by producing facial expressions. The evidence is equally clear, however, that these responses are generated by the most primitive parts of the brain, which are unconnected to consciousness, and therefore these actions don't in any way imply that the fetus is aware. Furthermore, the fetus is deliberately sedated by a series of chemicals produced by the placenta, so even if it had the capacity for consciousness, there is almost no chance it could ever be conscious in the womb. Consequently, it can't consciously feel pain. ... There are therefore no scientific reasons for restricting abortion on the grounds that the fetus will experience pain, at least until very late in pregnancy. This evidence has heavily influenced my views here, and consequently I am very much pro-choice."

As a neuroscientist and an ethicist myself, it's clear how Dr. Bor's conclusion does not follow from his premises. He seeks forcibly to crown consciousness as king, turning it into the highest good, elevating it above life itself. Consequently, he misses the deeper truth that human consciousness (and particularly self-consciousness) is a feature of certain kinds of beings, namely human beings, who are valuable in and of themselves. Our humanity precedes our consciousness, and affords the necessary basis for it, with our value

and inviolability flowing not from what we might be capable of doing (manifesting consciousness or awareness) but from who we intrinsically are (human beings and members of the human family).

Regardless of whether we might or might not be able to manifest consciousness at a particular moment (as when we are asleep, under anesthesia, in a coma, or growing at early timepoints in utero), our humanity is still present and deserving of unconditional respect. Those who lack consciousness or awareness are still human, and should be cherished and protected as much as anyone else with limitations or disabilities.

Some might reply that a sleeping or comatose person's consciousness is merely dormant. If they wake up, they will have memories, awareness, etc. For a very early human embryo, on the other hand, no consciousness exists yet, since the brain has not developed, or may not have developed sufficiently. Until that development occurs, the argument continues, there is "nobody home," and therefore nothing important can be stripped away by abortion.

But it would be false to conclude that "nobody is home." As that embryonic human continues to grow up, she will develop a brain, as well as memories, awareness, and consciousness. Such carefully choreographed and remarkable embryonic development will occur precisely in virtue of the kind of being she already is, namely, a very small human being. All of us, in fact, are embryos who have grown up. The human embryo is special because of her humanity, not because of her consciousness, which will invariably arise as long as she is afforded even the smallest chance at life. We actively deny her the right to manifest her future personality, her individuality, her consciousness and her genius by selecting her for termination.

Hence, we should appreciate an argument like Dr. Bor's for what it really is, namely, an attempt to carve out a subclass of human beings (those deemed weaker than the rest of us due to their diminished personal consciousness) so that they can be singled out for death by abortion. This move constitutes an unjust form of discrimination against a voiceless class of humans, cloaked in a specious intellectual construct that misconstrues both the essential character of being human, and the essential moral obligations we have towards each other.

*Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncb-center.org](http://www.ncb-center.org)*

# Eradicating child marriage today

By Carolyn Woo  
Catholic News Service

When I was growing up in Hong Kong, I listened with amazement to the stories about girls who were married off when they were hardly 12 years old. I was relieved that such an old-fashioned practice had vanished. Cramping for exams didn't seem so bad after all.

Unfortunately, I was wrong.

Child marriage has not vanished. It prevails today in various parts of the world. Girls under 15 and the babies born to them face mortality rates several times greater than those who are over 18, according to the World Health Organization. These young mothers also are subjected to the risk of obstetric fistula. This condition, says Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres, leads



Woo

to leakage of urine and feces for the rest of their lives.

In my recent travel to the coastal area of Kenya, I observed the efforts of the Catholic Church to eradicate child marriage. Working in partnership with the Catholic Diocese of Malindi and a council of interfaith leaders that included Christians, Muslims, Hindus and African traditionalists, Catholic Relief Services sponsored a three-year initiative that reached out to 5,000 girls, 140 clerics, 60 community leaders and 120 adults.

The game plan calls for raising awareness of the dangers associated with early child marriage; promoting the rights of children, including those of girls for education and proper treatment; increasing the income of adults to reduce their dependence on dowries as a source of money; connecting with the proper government ministries to enforce these rights; and educating the children of their rights and the actions they can take to protect themselves.

As the practice of child marriage is steeped in the cultural traditions of the communities, the religious leaders convened forums to educate the public using texts from their holy books, inviting women scholars to talk to the mothers and daughters, lifting up role models and celebrating women and children through events such as International Women's Day and Day of the African Child.

Child marriage and the use of young girls for prostitution often are seen as ways to relieve economic hardship.

To combat this, special programs were started to help communities expand livelihood options, such as growing vegetable gardens, breeding livestock and starting cottage craft industries. Savings circles that set aside communal funds to address emergencies as well as pay school levies and fees were another addition.

Most powerful for me was a visit to a school where 150 students in fourth to eighth grade crowded into the classroom to show us what they had learned about children's rights from their weekly after-school meetings of the "peace club."

They opened with prayer and sparkled their presentation with spirit, curiosity and pride. They sang and chanted in English the verses that resonated from deep within, an unflinching proclamation of their rights to a happy life, one enabled by health, education and love.

They called on the elders to continue the care and protection that had been provided when they were younger.

Most important, they know that they could report any unwelcome practices, whether these are forced on them or on other children. Boys and girls were there in solidarity, and I could not help but feel the promise of these young people.

*Woo is president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services.*

# 'There is an urgent call for all government leaders to focus on the common good'

By Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer  
Bishop of San Angelo

After the recent elections there are some old faces and new faces in government offices, there are some changes within political parties, but there is still an urgent call to all elected leaders to come together to fulfill their responsibility to the electors and focus on the common good for all the people of our great country. The attitude and approach of the current Congress must change to give better things for our country as a new government. This change must also happen in our re-elected President who faces the same monumental problems he has been unsuccessful at resolving in the last four years.

## RESPECT AND A COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT ARE URGENTLY NEEDED

Now what is important is that all parties achieve the respect and collaborative spirit needed to move our great nation forward for the benefit of all. The incivility, animosity, and partisanship of the past four years cannot continue, otherwise there will be years of turmoil to the detriment of the well-being and prosperity of our country and severe loss of American prominence at home and abroad. Someone has to take charge; obstructionism on both sides of the political aisle is not conducive to good government nor the common good. A President, whose personality has made negotiations and compromise difficult, needs to change and both parties must abstain from fomenting gridlock and overcome the deep political and fiscal disagreements that have stymied them time after time. Another two to four years of legislative gridlock will have grave economic implications and could tip the country back into recession and will have the greatest negative impact on the poor, on families and on children. Not only must our President do a better job of leading and reset the national discussion, but true statesmanship must find its way back into the halls of Congress. Our leaders need to apply their minds and hearts in a spirit of cooperation to work to promote justice and fairness within our national political and economic life. The current wounded state of our economy and social fabric manifests itself in a great number of people in our communities who experience a deep distrust of government and



College volunteers distribute bread during a food giveaway sponsored by Our Lady of the Angels Mission in early March in Chicago. During a Sept. 24 event at the United Nations, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Vatican secretary for relations with states, said providing support to families, the fundamental unit of society, is critical to helping youth overcome poverty. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World) (Sept. 25, 2012) See story to come.

economic institutions. Now is the time for all leaders to come together and work to build up the spirit, the character and the prosperity of our country.

## A WOUNDED ECONOMY

At this time our nation's economic difficulties are especially acute. Particularly debilitating is the high level of unemployment and under employment and the poverty that results from it, and those affected have no real voice in their economic life. As a result countless other aspects of the economic and social fabric of the nation is suffering. Both workers and employers in our nation are in great distress. We also have a problem involving capital investment, necessary in the contemporary economy, which at times is scarcely available, poorly used and often selfishly squandered.

Our wounded economy poses serious challenges to healthy family life. Families are under great stress. Mothers and fathers struggle to find work that is sufficiently steady and gainful to support their families. Right now, in the United States, 44 million people are classified by the federal government as living in poverty—that is 1 out of every 7 Americans, and 1 out of

every 5 children.

It is a huge number of people. Sometimes people make bad choices. But a lot of other factors can send a family below the poverty line—and keep others there who are already poor; a minimum wage that earns a full-time worker less than \$16,000/year; a housing market that has become inaccessible to low-income people; 12 million pay more than half their annual income for rent or mortgage payments.

The current situation foments a sense of powerlessness among our people which can lead to a condition of spiritual dejection and despair that smothers a sense of hope and purpose, and progress towards a more just and compassionate society. Tragic as material poverty is more devastating still is to condition of despair and spiritual emptiness it frequently engenders, especially in children who see adults working diligently but not being able to provide for the necessities of life. Today's young children and adolescents are tomorrow's workers and employers, and providing them with a good education is the doorway to economic well-being and serves the common good.

The poor and underprivileged need to be provided with more opportunities to par-

ticipate in the decision and actions that affect their lives, offering them a hand up, not a hand out, thus involving all people and communities to overcome injustice, all working for the common good.

As Americans, as committed citizens, who seek to contribute to the common good of our local and national communities, we ask the question: What can we do to help restore hope to those in poverty, to the unemployed, to youth and young adults, to the working people, to those in retirement or approaching it and to the homeless?

## ECONOMIC LIFE IS MEANT TO SERVE THE COMMON GOOD

The matrix of relations that make up the economic life of a nation is meant to serve the common good. But what is the common good? The common good involves at least three basic elements:

First, it entails respect for the whole person as such. This means that a just economy and a just society are ordered to safeguard the life of the human person, and the proper development of his or her legitimate freedom. A justly ordered society

(Please See **GOOD/21**)

# The Second Vatican Council

## 'The biggest meeting in the history of the world'

Msgr. Jim Plagens shares memories of his seminarian years during Vatican II

By Jimmy Patterson  
Editor / West Texas Angelus

MIDLAND — Rev. James Plagens was a seminarian at American University in Rome for the entire three-year period during which the Second Vatican Council was convened in Rome. Now a Monsignor and on retired senior status in Midland, Plagens recalls well the pageantry and significance of a meeting of the global Church's leaders that dramatically changed the way the faith was presented after centuries of little change.

Described as both "The biggest meeting in the history of the world" and "a tsunami of divine energy," Vatican II, as it is commonly called, brought together over 2,000 of the world's bishops.

The council endured the deaths of not only its convener, Pope John XXII, but also of U.S. President John F. Kennedy, assassinated in Dallas during the first year of the council.

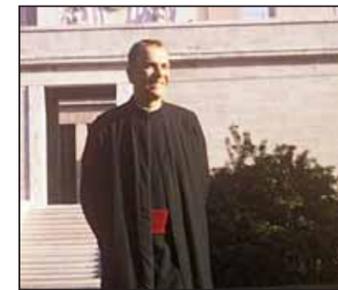
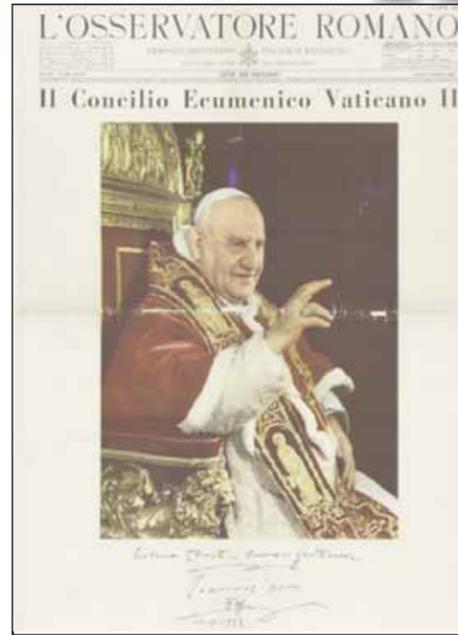
At a presentation at St. Ann's Chapel & Commons in Midland that detailed events both historical and personal as they related to the council, Msgr. Plagens was joined by Norbert Dickman, also a former seminarian at American University during the time of the Church-altering event.

Being a seminarian in Rome during those years gave Msgr. Plagens a clearer view of the purpose and meaning of the Church.

"The Council was the first time I ever truly realized the Church was truly universal, beyond the borders of Texas and the United States," said Msgr. Plagens.

"In pre-Vatican II days, we said the Mass in Latin, usually we had another seminarian like an altar server and no one else was around. It was a very, very private experience. I look at that and say I am glad I had that experience but

(Please See **PLAGENS/20**)



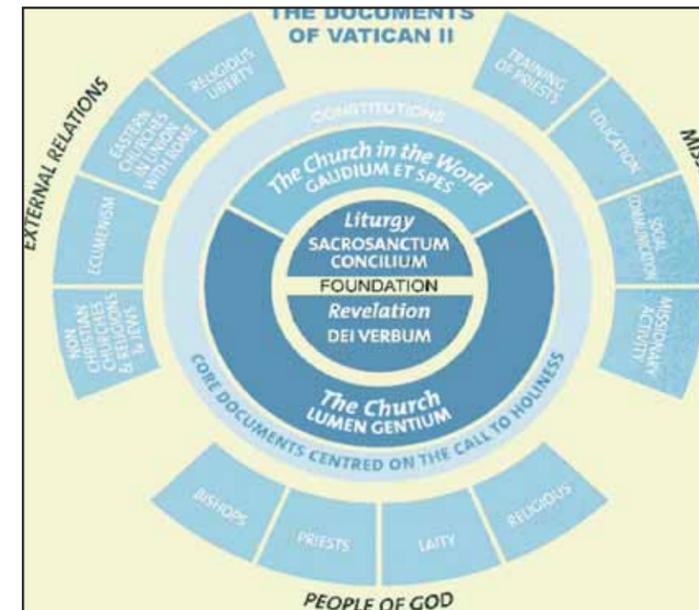
Nine Texas bishops were Council Fathers during the Second Vatican Council. Front row, from left, Bishop Sydney Metzger of El Paso; Bishop Louis J. Reicher of Austin; Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio; Bishop Thomas K. Gorman of Dallas-Fort Worth and Bishop Wendelin J. Nold of Galveston-Houston; Back row, from left, Bishop Adolph Marx of Brownsville; Bishop John L. Morkovsky, co-adjutor of Galveston-Houston; Bishop Thomas Drury of San Angelo and Bishop Lawrence DeFalco of Amarillo.

Clockwise from top left, the cover of the Vatican newspaper announces the opening of Vatican II; bishops in St. Peters; the New York Herald Tribune tells of Pope John XXII's grave condition; mourners file into St. Peter's Square after Pope John XXIII's passing; Pope Paul VI is celebrated after his election as Pope John XXIII's successor; bishops reconvene; the documents of Vatican II; Msgr. Plagens (left) with fellow American University seminarians; timeline of Vatican II; Msgr. Plagens at American University, and the bishop contingent from Texas is photographed. (All photos of St. Peters, Pope Paul, Plagens by Msgr. Plagens.)



### Vatican II: Season of Renewal

1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
 <p><b>Oct. 28</b> John XXIII becomes pope.</p>	<p><b>Jan. 25</b> He announces plans to convoke the council, citing a need to update the church and promote Christian unity.</p>	<p><b>June 6</b> He issues a Motu Proprio establishing 11 commissions and two secretariats for the council.</p>	<p>Administrative and preparatory work continues.</p>	<p><b>Oct. 11-Dec. 8</b> <b>SESSION 1</b> 36 general meetings take place. Key discussions: liturgy, mass communication, the Eastern Catholic churches, and the nature of revelation.</p>
 <p><b>June 21</b> Paul VI becomes pope.</p>	<p><b>Sept. 29-Dec. 4</b> <b>SESSION 2</b> 43 general meetings end with documents on liturgy and social communications.</p>	<p><b>Sept. 14-Nov. 21</b> <b>SESSION 3</b> 48 general meetings end with the publication of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and separate decrees on ecumenism and Eastern Catholic churches.</p>	<p><b>Sept. 14-Dec. 8</b> <b>SESSION 4</b> 41 general meetings end with decrees on the office of bishops, priestly formation, religious life, priestly ministry, missionary activity and the role of laity. Also issued were declarations on Christian education, on religious freedom and on relations with non-Christian religions; the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.</p>	



### Vatican II Timeline

**January 25, 1959** -- Pope John Paul XXII announces council

**December 25, 1961** — Pope John XXIII formally convokes the Second Vatican Council with the apostolic constitution *Humanae Salutis*.

**July 20, 1962** — Letters sent to separated Christian churches and communities inviting them to send delegates or observers to Council.

**October 11, 1962** — The Council opens. The first official prayer is *Veni, Creator Spiritus*.

**October 11-December 8, 1962** — First Session. Discussion focuses on the liturgy.

**October 20, 1962** — Council issues "A Message to Humanity."

**June 3, 1963** — Pope John XXIII dies.

**June 21, 1963** — Pope Paul VI (Giovanni Battista Montini) is elected.

**September 29-December 4, 1963** — Second Session.

**January 4-6, 1964** — Pope Paul makes ecumenical journey to Holy Land.

**September 14-November 21, 1964** — Third Session

**September 14-December 8, 1965** — Fourth Session.

**October 4-5, 1965** — Pope Paul addresses United Nations in New York and reports to Council on his visit.

**October 28-December 7, 1965** — Council promulgates, or enacts, 16 documents that are created at Vatican II.

**December 8, 1965** — Council closes in St. Peter's Square.



## Pope: Young people should be open to Christ's embrace, share his love

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- When young Catholics from around the world gather in Rio de Janeiro in July, they will be under the gaze of the city's famous statue of Christ with outstretched arms, a reminder of his desire to embrace all people, Pope Benedict XVI said.

In his message for World Youth Day 2013, the pope asked young people to welcome Christ's embrace and share with others the joy of being loved by him.

In preparation for the international youth gathering July 23-28, Pope Benedict asked young Catholics to "reread your personal history," looking at how the faith was passed down to them from previous generations.

The pope also asked them not to wait to begin the task of sharing their Christian faith with others.

"We are links in a great chain of men and women who have transmitted the truth of the faith and who depend on us to pass it on to others," he said in the message released Nov. 16 by the Vatican.

The theme of World Youth Day

2013 is: "Go and make disciples of all nations."

"This mandate should resound powerfully in your hearts," the pope told young people.

In fact, he said, the heart has a major role to play in bringing them closer to Christ, motivating them to share his Gospel and determining the words and actions they should use in approaching others.

"Many young people today seriously question whether life is something good and have a hard time finding their way," the pope said.

(Please See **POPE/23**)

### Your Family

## Memories, sharing can be treasure of Christmas

By Bill and Monica Dodds  
Catholic News Service

As Christmas approaches, you may be feeling the need to create the perfect Christmas. You want the family to have a wonderful, holy Christmas, but reality kicks in. Your family lives in the real world. Suddenly, your wonderful holy Christmas in the real world is not the one you planned or imagined.

Let's face it. The only perfect Christmases are the ones bathed in nostalgia's rosy glow. It's not that we're lying to ourselves. But we're not remembering them accurately.

Even when we hear the Gospel on Christmas, we tend to daydream through "no room in the inn" and "sta-

ble" and "manger" and drift off until "a multitude of the heavenly host (sings) with the angel."

There's no Christmas hymn titled "No Vacancy" or "Welcome to the Barn" or "Put the Messiah in the Feed Box." From time to time, we should consider the bleak location and grim circumstances the Holy Family faced, but we see them as romantic.

It seems safe to speculate that Joseph and Mary didn't view them that way. They saw them as their only choice. But by the grace of God, that first Christmas worked out just fine.

We need that faith in 2012, especially as we realize that there are many items on our to-do list that we aren't going to begin or finish.

We won't have the perfect gift that was readily available in mid-October. It disappeared by the time we got serious about shopping. We won't have the fully decorated tree tips. The dinner rolls will burn and the in-laws will steam you.

There will be family and friends who can't make it this year, some because of distance, cost or other commitments and some because of death. Our grief over that loss, still fresh and raw, will at times feel overwhelming.

As family and friends gather during this Christmas season, ask what particular gift each person remembers from those Christmases past. What was that one item as a child, a teen or young adult they remember?

Sharing those stories, being able to tell them and being able to hear them, can be this year's true Christmas treasure, a priceless gift.

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Bill and Monica Dodds are the founders of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver and editors of My Daily Visitor magazine. Their website is [www.FSJC.org](http://www.FSJC.org). Bill's latest books are "How to Write Your Novel in Nine Weeks" and "The World's Funniest Atheist."

### Coming of Age

## Today's teens can bring tomorrow's election civility

By Karen Osborne  
Catholic News Service

Now that the ballots have been cast, the attack ads shelved and the lawn signs pulled up from their moorings, we can breathe easy.

Or can we?

My Facebook wall is still full of people attacking each other and the beliefs of others. And that saddens me.

When people vote, they vote because they firmly believe their candidate is the one who will best advance their interests and the interests of the country. There was a large voter turnout across the country this year. We can conclude that ours is a country that believes deeply that democracy is a fantastic way to support a bright, shining future.

However, the sharply divided vote counts make it obvious that the two sides believe that our bright, shining future consists of completely opposing philosophies. We had a choice this year: do we listen to the other side and work together to make a better world for everyone, or do we shout and shut out those who hold beliefs different from ours?

It's pretty obvious from the way everyone seems to be hurting now that we -- Democrat, Republican and independent -- chose the second way.

I know a lot of teenagers who feel discouraged by the stunning lack of civility held by the competing campaigns during this election -- teens who feel that their voice isn't heard and who find it hard to believe in anything any politician says.

I also know a lot of teenagers who have learned, from TV pundits, newspaper columnists, impassioned Facebook posts and ill-considered hate speech, that having beliefs means that you have to be single-minded in purpose. You can't listen to anyone else.

The truth, as always, is somewhere in between.

The election controversy feels similar to the battle between scientists and creationists: those who believe humans evolved over an almost impossibly long period of time, and those who believe that Genesis is literally true and that the world was created 6,000 years ago.

Who is right? How can we tell? Evolutionists say that creationists are bonkers because fossil and carbon-dating records indicate that the world started millions of years ago; creationists say that evolutionists are crazy because humans were made in the image of God and aren't the result of random chance.

(Please See **OSBORNE/21**)



Osborne



Bill and Monica Dodds

## JUST 4 KIDS



### Luke 2 Q&A

1. Why did Joseph go to Bethlehem?
2. How did the shepherds know about the birth of Jesus?

### BIBLE TRIVIA

Who was the Old Testament shepherd boy who became a king and was an ancestor of Jesus?

Answer: David.

### BIBLE ACCENT

The story of the birth of Jesus is one of the most loved stories in the New Testament. We can read about angels announcing what is one of the most important messages they ever delivered: Jesus Christ was about to be born.

Faithful and humble Joseph takes care of Mary and brings her to Bethlehem for the census. Elizabeth, who has prayed for God to give her a child, becomes the mother of John the Baptist and utters words that we use for the "Hail Mary" prayer.

A special star directs the Magi from the East to the spot where Jesus lay in a manger and then they are warned by an angel to take a different route home to avoid the wrath of King Herod.

And even shepherds who are merely watching over their sheep see a multitude of angels, and they, too, are privileged to visit the Christ Child.

### SPOTLIGHT ON SAINTS St. Anastasia

Anastasia (d. 304) was born into the family of a Roman nobleman and was privileged to

have St. Chrysogonus as her adviser.

Although she married a pagan man, she showed compassion to the religious who were in prison because of their faith, and she visited them often.

Her husband did not approve of this and would no longer let her leave the house. When he died, Anastasia also ministered to the Christians in Aquileia.

She herself was arrested for her work and was put adrift on a prison ship along with a number of pagan prisoners. A vision of St. Theodota appeared and he directed the ship to safety on an island. Unfortunately, Anastasia was arrested again and killed because of her ministry.

We honor her Dec. 25.

### PUZZLE

Based on the Gospel of Luke, circle T if the following statements are true and circle F if they are false. Chapter numbers have been provided as hints.

1. The angel Michael visited Joseph (Ch. 1). T F
2. Shepherds were keeping night watch (Ch. 2). T F
3. Simon was a carpenter (Ch. 5.) T F
4. Jesus said we should love our enemies (Ch. 6). T F
5. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a camel (Ch. 19). T F
6. Jesus was betrayed by Judas (Ch. 22). T F
7. Mary found the tomb of Jesus empty (Ch. 24). T F
8. Jesus remained on earth after his resurrection (Ch. 24). T F

# Shepherds are told of the birth of Jesus

By Joe Sarnicola

Caesar Augustus ordered a census to count the population of the world. As part of this order, every man would have to bring his family to his hometown to be counted.

A man named Joseph was living in Galilee, in the town of Nazareth, but he had to travel to Bethlehem, also called the city of David, in Judea, for the census. He also had to bring Mary, his betrothed, with him. Mary was expecting her first child, so Joseph knew the journey would be difficult for her.

While in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to the baby, a son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, which was normally used as a feeding tray for livestock. Because so many people were in Bethlehem for the census, the inns were full, so there was not a suitable room for Joseph and Mary to sleep in.

In the region of Judea, shepherds who lived in the fields were keeping a night watch over their sheep. Their quiet evening was transformed into one of glory when an angel of the Lord appeared to them, surrounded by the glory of the Lord. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel reassured them with a message from God.

"Do not be afraid," he said to them, "for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born to you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

As soon as the angel finished his message, he was joined by a multitude of heavenly beings who praised God by saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

After the angels had gone, the shepherds said to each other, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

They immediately went into the town and found Joseph and Mary and the baby, just as the angels had told them. They shared what had happened to them and then they returned to the fields, praising God that they had witnessed the birth of the Messiah.

*The  
Nicene  
Creed*

*I believe in one God,  
the father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.*



*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.*

*He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

*He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.*



*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.*

*I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

## Our Faith

# Can a non-Catholic Christian receive a Sacrament?

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Catholic News Service

**Q. My mother, a baptized member of the Baptist tradition, is 92 years old. She is currently hospitalized with some very serious health issues that may result in the end of her natural life.**



Doyle

**I am a Roman Catholic, an ordained permanent deacon. I would like to know your view on whether to have my parish priest administer the sacrament of anointing [of the sick] to my mother. She is not asking for this, is likely not sufficiently lucid to understand and would not have understood the sacrament even before the deterioration of her health.**

At some level, I suppose having her

**anointed would provide a sense of peace to my wife and me. Are we off base? (Evansville, Ind.)**

A. The church's Code of Canon Law, in No. 844, speaks to your situation. In reference to the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and anointing of the sick, that canon provides that "if the danger of death is present ... Catholic ministers administer these same sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these sacraments and are properly disposed."

The effects of the sacrament of anointing include, among others, "the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul; (and) the preparation for passing over to eternal life" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1532).

Given those effects, I can understand why it would be of great comfort to you to have your mother anointed. However, a key element here is that your mother never asked to be anointed, and I would consider it a violation of her privacy and privilege to confer the sacrament on someone who (as the canon stipulates) has not sought it on her own accord.

Certainly it would be proper for you and/or your parish priest to pray at your mother's bedside that God will bless her with strength and peace. I would suggest, too, out of respect for your mother's religious preference, that you might invite a Baptist minister to pray over her. (I'm not sure of her state of awareness, but that might give her added comfort.)

Be at peace. No doubt your mother has lived a good life (including raising a deacon for the church). I'm quite sure that God has this all figured out and is waiting to bring her home.

# Sitting down because of what she stands for

By Effie Caldarola  
Catholic News Service

It was a breezy October day when Norma Fleisher settled her 86-year-old body into a foldout camp chair on a Nebraska street corner in front of the state Capitol, with the governor's mansion directly at her back.



Caldarola

Norma's been doing this every Monday from noon to 1 p.m. for 13 years, holding signs with a group of activists to protest Nebraska's death penalty.

Through snow, heat, humidity and the Great Plains' punishing winds, Norma has been faithful to her belief that "it's ridiculous to kill people to prove killing is wrong."

This day was special, however. It was Norma's last day on the street corner. She's tired.

"I used to take an hour, maybe two- or three-hour nap every day, but yesterday I slept for five hours." Something has to give, and this weekly trek is one of those things.

Someone in our little group of eight brought homemade ginger cookies to honor Norma's tenure, and we chatted as people drove by. Some passers-by gawked, some turned away. Norma sat, bundled in coat and

gloves, and visited in her amiable, self-deprecating Midwestern way. She's just someone who "wants to spread the word anyway I can."

Norma's legs are weak, and on particularly hot or cold days, the group moves inside the Capitol rotunda to demonstrate. There, the rules say "no chairs," so someone brings a wheelchair for Norma.

"I sit for what I stand up for," she laughs.

On this particular day, I saw the governor emerge from his house just as I was driving away. Although he barely acknowledges the protesters, the governor, a capital punishment advocate, was always friendly. One brutally hot day, when Norma was a solitary protester, he sent someone out with ice water for her. Norma liked him despite his opinions.

When Norma retired as a certified public accountant, having raised four kids, she was a 65-year-old widow. A devout Methodist, she volunteered to be a missionary, with her eye on Africa. The Methodists had other uses for an accountant, however, and settled her in Nashville, Tenn., where she kept books for a retreat center for more than seven years.

Like many of her generation, Norma grew up accepting capital punishment as part of the justice system. But in Tennessee, she became involved with prisons and death row and had an epiphany. The Methodists have a long history of opposition to the death penal-

ty, and they're joined by many denominations.

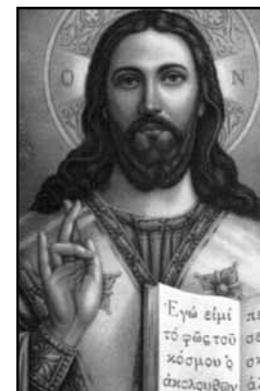
The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has dedicated part of its website to the fight for abolition, and at a recent pro-life conference in Nebraska, we were reminded that opposing capital punishment is part of the Catholic Church's "consistent ethic of life."

After returning to Nebraska, Norma had one of her "harebrained ideas" as she modestly terms it. She visited all 93 counties in Nebraska -- a far-flung, sometimes desolately rural trek -- to talk about the death penalty.

Armed with magnetic signs on each side of her car and peanut butter and Cheez Whiz for the loneliest spots, Norma drove 4,000 miles over one summer in a 19-year-old car to find folks in every county seat with whom to talk about abolition. That adventure could probably fill a book.

Norma reminds me of many who prayerfully witness outside what used to be called the School of the Americas, outside abortion clinics, at nuclear arms facilities.

Norma's joke about sitting for something she stands for reminded me of what Senator Paul Wellstone, the late activist from Minnesota, said: "If we don't fight hard enough for the things we stand for, at some point we have to recognize that we don't really stand for them."



## Our Holy Father's 2012 Monthly Intentions DECEMBER

**General Intention:** That migrants throughout the world may be welcomed with generosity and authentic love, especially by Christian communities.

**Missionary Intention:** Christ, light for all humanity. That Christ may reveal himself to all humanity with the light that shines forth from Bethlehem and is reflected in the face of his Church.

### JANUARY 2013

**The Faith of Christians.** That in this Year of Faith Christians may deepen their knowledge of the mystery of Christ and witness joyfully to the gift of faith in him.

**Missionary Intention:** Middle Eastern Christians. That the Christian communities of the Middle East, often discriminated against, may receive from the Holy Spirit the strength of fidelity and perseverance.

### Daily Offering Prayer

Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.

**Answers (from Pg. 15):** 1. F (Gabriel), 2. T, 3. F (fisherman), 4. T, 5. F (a colt), 6. T, 7. T, 8. F (he ascended into heaven).

## Nation

# Catholic advocates monitoring issues facing lame-duck Congress

By Mark Pattison  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- The 2010 lame-duck session of Congress handled a huge workload two years ago, but it may seem like a trifle compared to what's on the agenda for the 2012 lame-duck session.

Foremost on many people's minds is the impending expiration of several tax cuts and tax breaks -- which, when coupled with budget deficits and the need to raise the nation's debt ceiling yet again, has led to the popularization of the term "fiscal cliff" to describe the situation.

Catholic advocates have joined a multi-faith effort calling for a "circle of protection" around the poorest and most vulnerable Americans.

The effort started in 2011, even before last year's midsummer debt showdown between the Democratic-occupied White House, the Republican-dominated House, and a Democratic-led Senate that had a large Republican minority threatening to invoke filibusters. Not to mention the House-Senate "Gang of Six" and the "supercommittee" bids to present palatable debt-relief options after the 2010 Simpson-Bowles debt reduction commission's recommendations went largely ignored by lawmakers.

During a Nov. 20 conference call with reporters, "circle of protection" advocates pointed out that during debate on last year's Budget Control Act, they were able to take off the table programs benefiting the poor, and were hopeful they could repeat that success in the month ahead.

Any fiscal deal "must be comprehensive and balanced," said Kathy Saile, director of domestic social development for the



The U.S. Capitol dome is seen behind the entrance to the House of Representatives on Capitol Hill in Washington in early November. (CNS photo/Larry Downing, Reuters)

U.S. bishops. "It must involve deficit reduction. It must require tax increases. It must protect the poor and vulnerable." And to accomplish all that, she added, "it must be bipartisan."

The Rev. Gabriel Salguero, president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition, wanted to debunk the notion that government programs that help the poor promote dependency.

"My father was a hardworking man. He had two jobs. He was a pastor," he said.

"My mother was working. We were on food stamps. It helped us," Rev. Salguero added. "If it didn't help us, we'd go hungry. It's not anecdotal, it's straight from human experience."

But deficit cutting isn't the only item on the agenda.

For one thing, there's still a farm bill to approve. The measure is a reauthorization bill that comes up every five years or so.

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference is a member of the Sustainable

Agriculture Coalition. "There's a lot of groups out there, sustain agriculture groups, farm groups, conservation groups, even the administration and folks in the Democratic wing saying we need a 2012 farm bill in the current year," said rural life conference policy adviser Bob Gronski.

"But the reality is how do we get it done?" There's not a lot of time left on the calendar, he added, even if Congress were to meet between Christmas and New Year's Day to attend to the nation's business.

The House has not yet had floor debate on the bill its Agriculture Committee approved, and which looks markedly different from the Senate version, Gronski told Catholic News Service.

The farm bill's scope is wide-ranging, covering not only American farms, big and small, but also the nation's school lunch programs and the Supplemental Nutritional and Assistance Program, or SNAP, the renamed food stamp program, which benefits families in need.

Conservation and trade are among the farm bill's other components.

"There's a game of chicken that's being played here," Gronski said. "Most likely there's going to be an extension but what kind of extension I can't say." He outlined the options: a three-, six-, or 12-month extension, either "clean" with no changes or modified with disaster relief for livestock producers who suffered from the spring and summer drought, the restoration of a dairy insurance that expired, and/or funds for a conservation security program backed by the rural life conference.

If any debt deal is struck, all of that will likely have to be done with less money. And that doesn't even address food and nutrition programs, whose outlays spiked since the recession hit nearly five years ago.

In another arena, the U.S. bishops are behind the CAP Act. CAP stands for Community Access Programming, which would safeguard the public, educational and governmental access channels that were established when cities and counties first awards franchises to cable operators.

One change the bill promotes is the use of funds set aside for access channels to be used for operational expenses. Currently, the money can be used only for capital expenses; most cable systems built their community access studios long ago. It also will keep some channels from going dark, a byproduct of statewide franchising laws that took cable TV out of municipalities' jurisdiction.

"The Catholic bishops support (public) access television. These local channels are the voice of the community in an era of increased media consolidation," said Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City.

## Grateful tweets, thankful posts make social media a font of gratitude

By Gretchen R. Crowe  
Catholic News Service

ARLINGTON, Va. -- A little bird says gratitude is making a comeback.

With Thanksgiving in November, the days of the month are popular ones for calling to mind all for which we are grateful. And now, thanks to social media, those thankful thoughts can be read, commented on and shared by family, friends and, yes, even total strangers.

Maybe you've seen them?

On Facebook, there's the 30 Days of Gratitude Project (30daysofgratitude.org),

started by Annie Zirkel, author of "You'll Thank Me Later," and supported by international gratitude speaker and trainer Paul Taubman, a blogger at allaboutgratitude.com. It began Nov. 1.

Until Nov. 30, a Facebook user posts daily one thing for which he or she is grateful. It can be for husbands or for wives. For veterans or voting. For a stranger who lets you and your toddler ahead of him in line.

It could be for favorite burger joints or for weekends or for piles of leaves in the fall. For the sun, for the birds or for just another day.

The posts usually start as part of a trickle-down effect, as one friend inspires another to jump on board. That's what happened for Christi Landauer, a parishioner of St. Philip Church in Falls Church.

"It was really inspiring seeing everyone being thankful for something every day," she told the Arlington Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Arlington Diocese. And focusing on gratitude was a good antidote to the negativity she'd seen online following the Nov. 6 election.

"Social media is supposed to update family and friends about where your heart's at, and I wanted it to be this," Landauer said. "I

wanted it to be my gratitude."

And then there's Twitter.

The social media stream used by many Catholic bloggers was the perfect setting for Matt Swaim, producer of the Eternal Word Television Network's "Son Rise Morning Show" in Cincinnati to share his daily prayer of gratitude with the world.

He said he did this after spending too much time posting one negative tweet after another -- especially first thing in the morning.

"I thought, 'You know, what if I tithed that first tweet of the morning and made it a tweet of gratitude?'" he said.

## Culture

# 'Life of Pi': Inspiring but a complex treatment of religious faith

By John Mulderig  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Religious themes are central to director Ang Lee's visually artful screen version of Yann Martel's best-selling novel "Life of Pi" (Fox). Indeed, this exotic 3-D fable bills itself as a story calculated to make the agnostic reporter (Rafe Spall) to whom its unlikely events are recounted "believe in God."

Regardless of whether it has that effect on audiences, Catholic moviegoers will certainly welcome its positive portrayal of their faith, and the presence in the tale of a sympathetic priest.

The fact that the earnest spiritual quest of its protagonist results in his simultaneous adherence to Hinduism, Christianity and Islam is, however, problematic to say the least. All the more so, since screenwriter David Magee's script implicitly upholds this ultra-tolerant but illogical stance.

Concern over youthful viewers' reaction to this interreligious will-o'-the-wisp is the major element precluding endorsement of Lee's picture for any but adults.

And just who is our main character? Played in adulthood by Irrfan Khan but portrayed for most of the running time in his 17-year-old persona by Suraj Sharma,



Suraj Sharma and a fierce Bengal tiger named Richard Parker are seen in the movie "Life of Pi." The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children. (CNS photo/Fox)

he is an Indian-born Canadian known formally as Piscine Militor Patel -- but called Pi for short.

As flashbacks under the guise of memories being shared with the unnamed -- and unbelieving -- journalist reveal, Pi was bred in the picturesque former French enclave of Pondicherry. Growing up contentedly amid the natural beauty of the area, Pi was fascinated by the wondrous

creatures that inhabited the zoo his parents (Adil Hussain and Tabu) owned.

Discovering God in varied manifestations during the initial stages of the quest referenced above, Pi also made a less exalted discovery by falling for a local girl. So when Mom and Dad announced, shortly afterward, they were moving the family to the Great White North, Pi was crushed.

Upheaval turned to tragedy when the freighter carrying Pi's family -- as well as some of the animals from their former zoo -- sank in a terrible squall. Pi was the only human survivor. But his endurance was immediately put to a further test when he found himself forced to share a small lifeboat with a Bengal tiger.

Not for the impressionable or the poorly catechized, this psychological parable, whose meaning cannot be explained without spoilers, also becomes somewhat taxing as the rigors of the lad's unusual ordeal begin to rub off on viewers.

Aesthetic judgments will likely hinge on the degree to which audiences summon the hardiness necessary to follow Pi's adventures through to the end. Assessed from a religious perspective, his fictional memoir registers as honorable but ultimately somewhat misguided.

The film contains a complex treatment of religious faith requiring mature interpretation, potentially upsetting scenes of life-threatening danger and animal aggression, some mildly vulgar wordplay and fleeting scatological humor. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

# Day-Lewis' re-creation of 'Lincoln' the undeniable high point of movie

NEW YORK (CNS) -- With the unsurprising exception of Jesus Christ, more books are said to have been written about President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) than about any other person in history.

As for the screen, our most fascinating -- and arguably greatest -- chief executive has been portrayed by such Hollywood luminaries as Walter Huston ("Abraham Lincoln," 1930), Henry Fonda (1939's "Young Mr. Lincoln") and Raymond Massey ("Abe Lincoln in Illinois," 1940).

Those estimable names notwithstanding, it is hard to imagine that any actor has ever inhabited the persona of the legendary rail-splitter quite as convincingly as Daniel Day-Lewis does in director Steven Spielberg's splendid historical drama "Lincoln" (DreamWorks). Day-Lewis' bravura performance is undeniably the highlight -- though by no means the only asset -- of this engrossing profile.

The plot focuses on the Civil War president's passionate yet wily struggle, during the closing days of that conflict, to steer a

constitutional amendment abolishing slavery through Congress. Aided by his secretary of state, William Seward (David Strathairn), but distracted by his troubled personal life -- Sally Field plays his famously high-strung wife, Mary -- Lincoln uses rhetoric to win over his hesitant Cabinet and patronage to woo his congressional opponents.

As for the Great Emancipator's ostensible allies on Capitol Hill, irascible Rep. Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania (a marvelous Tommy Lee Jones) hurls withering sarcasm at all and sundry and openly avows his mistrust of Lincoln.

Whether in line with history or not, a scene showing Stevens sharing his bed with his mixed-race housekeeper presents a curious moral quandary: Assuming that they could not marry by law, but would have tied the knot if permitted to, the guilt, if any, attaching to their relationship must have been considerably mitigated by the force of unjust circumstances.

Along with the tension created by Mary's neurotic behavior, Lincoln is also burdened

by grief over the untimely death of his son Willie two years before the events of the movie. Though not especially close to his oldest son Robert (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) -- whose intense desire to join the Army poses a threat to Mary's sanity, and thus presents his father with a terrible dilemma -- Lincoln dotes on his youngest child, Tad (Gulliver McGrath). Like the Lincoln marriage, however, their touching bond is tinged by the tragedy of Willie's absence.

Still, some parents may consider the educational value and moral import of the film -- which is based, in part, on Doris Kearns Goodwin's 2006 book "Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln" -- sufficient to overcome the elements listed below, thus allowing for patronage by older adolescents.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



Daniel Day-Lewis as Abraham Lincoln in Steven Spielberg's 'Lincoln.' (CNS)

## PLAGENS

(From 12)

am so glad for the sake of the Church that we have moved beyond that. The Eucharist is not something that just a priest does. The Eucharist is something the priest leads the people in doing together. (Vatican II) was a huge, huge difference, and I am very grateful for the way we are able to celebrate Mass now."

Dickman detailed historical accounts of Church councils prior to Vatican II during the presentation, and Msgr. Plagens made mention of Acts 15, where it is written of what is believed to be the first meeting of Church leadership, a precursor to the councils that would follow.

"It is important to read the 15th chapter of Acts," Msgr. Plagens said. "It states that an issue had arisen for the Gentiles who wanted to become Christians, but the Jewish leaders in the Christian Church wanted them to be circumcised and become Jews before they could become Christians. It was like what our country is like now: some thought it a good idea, others did not. So the leaders convened and reached a decision and shared their judgment."

"The leaders in Jerusalem convened and reached a decision and shared that judgment with Judas and Silas and others, and as far as we can tell this is the first time the leadership of the church gathered and made a decision that was for the entire church."

The conference among Church leaders was called the Council of Jerusalem and is believed still today to be the first major council of the 21 that have followed, from the Council of Nicea in 325 to the Second Vatican Council in 1962-65.

Sixteen documents were promulgated as a result of Vatican II. Articles about each are posted at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' web site ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)). The documents addressed a wide range of topics, most notably being the more active involvement of the laity in Mass and the structure of the Church.

One of the documents stressed the Church's reaching out to all — to women, the poor, the sick, or, as Msgr. Plagens said, "... to everyone, which was previously unheard of in the Roman Catholic Church to reach out in that way."



Bishops process into St. Peter's for the convening of Vatican II in 1962.

(Photo by Msgr. James Plagens)

## A goat for Christmas? Thriving alternatives for less commercial gifts

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Should the Christmas shopping crowds, costs and commercialism be at odds with how one is trying to observe Advent and the celebration of the birth of Christ, there's a burgeoning world of alternative ways of gift-giving that are vying for attention.

-- Angel trees or giving trees set up in churches, schools or even restaurants and other commercial businesses around the country are an increasingly popular way to direct resources to needy individuals, usually children, in the local community.

-- About 500 Catholic organizations host sales of handicrafts from around the world through Catholic Relief Services and its partner, SERRV, a nonprofit fair trade and development organization, benefiting both the hosting church and impoverished craftspeople around the world.

-- Then there are alternative gift programs, in which one buys a gift that benefits someone in greater need, whether in a far-off land or at the social service program across town. In return, the buyer receives

just a card about the donation to pass along to someone on their gift list.

-- If those options don't seem quite right, a movement started in the 1960s by Canadian Mennonites promotes the idea of a "Buy Nothing Christmas," encouraging simple handmade gifts, an "abundance swap" where gift-able items are traded, and ready-to-print coupons for baby-sitting, back massages or desserts. Its materials may be found at [www.buynothingchristmas.org](http://www.buynothingchristmas.org).

In Los Angeles, members of St. Paul the Apostle Parish have for more than a decade been able to write checks after Mass on the first Sunday of Advent to an assortment of local and national service organizations. Recipient organizations this year include Meals on Wheels, a tutoring program for homeless children and Homeboy Industries, which gives youths an alternative to gang involvement.

Claire Henning, pastoral associate at St. Paul, said parishioners who participate in what they call Inspired Alternative Christmas Gifts write checks directly to the organizations, so she couldn't report what the level of donations works out to

be for the recipient charities.

She personally donates money to Homeboy Industries, she told Catholic News Service, and sends gift cards noting the donation in their name to several people.

"People feel very positively about it," she said. "It's a great way to transition from giving gifts to nieces and nephews who are now grown up," Henning said. "That generation is very appreciative of that kind of outreach."

Such programs have caught on all around the country, with each parish creating its own options for gift-giving. But international organizations also offer an easy way to do it, through their websites.

How about donating money in the name of the brother-who-has-everything to ensure a program for children with Down syndrome in Cuba can keep operating? Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, offers that as one of the alternative gifts one can support with a few clicks on its site, [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org).

Or maybe this is the year to buy -- in the name of that college-age niece who

doesn't need clothes but wants to save the world -- a goat or a sheep for a struggling family in a developing country.

Save the Children, [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org), and Heifer International, [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org), are a few of the charities that would be happy to match your money with a family in need of a farm animal, knitting supplies or a clean cooking stove.

Save the Children and CRS also both offer sales of handicrafts made by the beneficiaries of their programs.

Courtney Lare, economic justice program officer at CRS, oversees CRS online direct sales and its Work of Human Hands consignment sales. She said about 500 parishes and other organizations hold such sales once a year or more.

Fair trade coffee and chocolate are the biggest sellers, she said. "And Haitian wall art, especially since the earthquake, is very popular, as are Christian goods like olive-wood ornaments and Nativities." Handicrafts are provided through SERRV and include everything from inexpensive jewelry and Christmas ornaments to hand-knotted Tibetan rugs and other home decor.

## GOOD

(From 11)

leaves space for people to aspire and to act in a truly human way, to seek the truth, and to adhere to a religious faith according to the call of conscience. Second, the common good requires that economic life and society itself be ordered in such a way to make accessible to all in the community what is needed for a flourishing human life and to involve all in the process of achieving this goal. This includes food, clothing, health, work and education. It would also include the all-important rights to establish a family, founded on marriage as a union of a man and woman, and to raise children according to well-formed conscience of parents. Third, the common good involves a stable and peaceful order within the community. Strife and violence are opposed to this aspect of the common good. These priorities are basic to the promotion of the common good. Basic morality insists that the search for the common

good should prevail over the pursuit of narrow economic and political interests. The economic problems that surround the common good cannot be understood in isolation; they are interconnected with larger social and cultural concerns. One of the most profound concerns affecting our national and economic life is the breakdown of family life. For any society, healthy family life founded on God the Father's wise design for marriage and children is indispensable for economic health.

### JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR WORKERS

To have a strong economy also calls for the respect that is owed to those who work for a living and their right to collectively bargain together for respect for their basic human rights and for just wages. There is a great dignity and honor in human work. Human labor is a way of exercising our human gifts and putting them at the serv-

ice of the wider community. Work is more than just a burdensome necessity of life done in order merely to survive. It is a way of sharing in God's creativity. Human works is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question.

The common good to which our government leaders must give all their attention calls for both personal responsibility and to communal solidarity. The two elements are basic to how we as Americans are obliged to respond to the suffering of any kind. Respect for moral truth is an essential for a just economic life.

A cornerstone of every economic structure must be justice. If we want just and upright institutions, we must teach and form one another in what it means to have a just and upright conscience. A mature sense of justice can only arise in a human soul purified of selfishness, cowardice, or thoughtlessness.

Justice also requires fortitude. It is not enough to recognize what is owed in justice to another; it is also necessary that we have the fortitude to act on what we recognize. Unfortunately, many persons may see an injustice but lack the moral courage to act so as to remedy it.

### GOVERNMENT MUST PROMOTE A SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY

Profit is necessary in most economic exchanges, but maximizing profit is not the only criterion for a human judgment about whether an economic decision is in fact a just decision. Employers have a moral responsibility in justice to treat employees with equity and fairness and to provide a living wage that compensates the employee for true value of his or her labor.

To achieve the common good our government leaders must promote a spirit of solidarity which is first and foremost a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regards to everyone. Government has an important role to play in securing appropriate resources to assist those who suffer. Government though is not to be identified with the whole of soci-

ety; society includes also vigorous and active intermediate organizations such as churches, civic associations and public service and philanthropic institutions. Society also includes families and each of us individually.

As Americans in good conscience we can debate about what models and forms of governmental authority truly best serves the interest of the common good of the wider community. But even in these kinds of prudential matters we must stand firm on the principle that the poor and vulnerable are everybody's responsibility. The social safety net of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid must be strengthened so that the vulnerable will not be abandoned. To strengthen this net, jobs and the huge deficit and debt must be addressed. We must realize there are some who take advantage of our economy by not fulfilling their obligation to work and demanding benefits that they have not earned, but at the same time we recognize the millions of people who want work, and cannot find it. These are the unemployed and the millions who live in poverty. Two guiding principles must be kept in mind: The economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy; a fundamental moral measure of any economy is how the poor and vulnerable are faring.

### PROMOTE VALUES THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR GOOD HUMAN CHRISTIAN LIVING

As people of faith we clearly recognize that our economic and material purposes, influence in a powerful way how our spirits will influence for better or for worse our spiritual life, and also help from discouraging us from living those basic values that are necessary for good human Christian living—promoting justice, peace, respect for one another, service and reaching out with compassion and love especially to those who are hurting and to the needy.

## DAY

(From 5)

them," Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick said of Day. The retired archbishop of Washington is a native New Yorker.

"What a tremendous opportunity to say to them you can not only be brought back into society, you can not only be brought back into the church, you can be a saint!" he added.

"She was a very great personal friend to me when I was a young priest," said Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y. "To be able to stand here and say yes to this means a great deal to me."

Bishop Alvaro Corrada del Rio of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, recalled being assigned to Nativity Parish in New York City in the 1970s. "I had the privilege of being in that parish for the last years of her life. ... her final days and suffering"

and her 1980 funeral.

The work of the Catholic Worker movement is still active 80 years after Day co-founded the movement with Peter Maurin.

There are many Catholic Worker houses in the United States, some in rural areas but more in some of the most desperately poor areas of the nation's biggest cities. They follow the Catholic Worker movement's charism of voluntary poverty, the works of mercy, and working for peace and justice.

The Catholic Worker, the newspaper established by Day, is still published regularly, and still charges what it did at its founding: one penny.

"I read the Catholic Worker when I was in high school and I've read it ever since," said Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago.

same level of scientific knowledge that we do today. Some Catholics look at Genesis and see God as scientific: God created light just as the universe began in the Big Bang; he separated the earth from the water just as scientists believe the Earth cooled and continents were formed; he created birds and animals before humans,

which, some believe, fits with evolutionary theory.

If you're in high school, you'll probably be able to cast your first presidential ballot in 2016. Over these next four years, don't become part of hurtful, uncivil politics. Instead, stand up for truth, believe with your whole heart but also respect the

beliefs of others and try to find the common ground.

Teens today have the ability to change an entire generation's way of seeing the world -- not as a black-and-white place where only one way can truly prosper, but as a world where everyone has a say in creating a world that is perfect for all.

## OSBORNE

(From 14)

Just like politics, I think that the truth is found in the quiet place between the two loud sides.

As Catholics, we believe that the Bible is the word of God, but we also understand that the ancient Jews didn't have the

## USCCB

(From 4)

On a voice vote, the bishops endorsed the sainthood cause of Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement.

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, USCCB president, is promoting Day's cause; her Catholic Worker ministry was based in New York City. The cause was first undertaken by one of Cardinal Dolan's predecessors in New York, Cardinal John O'Connor.

Cardinal Dolan and other bishops who spoke Nov. 13, including some who had met Day, called her sainthood cause an opportune moment in the life of the U.S. church.

The bishops also approved expanding the memorial for Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, a German-born Redemptorist priest who ministered throughout ante-bellum-era America for more than 20 years. Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi of Mobile, Ala., noted that Blessed Seelos ministered at a time when "immigrants were not welcomed well in many circumstances," which he said has contemporary significance.

A year after U.S. Catholics began using a new translation of the missal at Masses, the bishops agreed to begin revising the Liturgy of the Hours -- updating hymns, psalms, various canticles, psalm prayers, some antiphons, biblical readings and other components of the liturgical prayers used at various parts of the day.

Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans, chairman of the Committee on Divine Worship, said the work would probably take three to five years to complete and the aim would be to more accurately reflect the original Latin texts.

The bishops approved a reorganization of their Communications Department that would include hiring a director of public affairs who would work to unify messages on the activities and stances of the USCCB -- not individual dioceses or bishops -- and better carry out church campaigns related to new evangelization, according to Cardinal Dolan.

Cardinal Dolan said the USCCB's communications effort must take advantage of new communications technologies. The cost of hiring a public affairs director and support staff and other services is estimated at \$400,000 annually, according to the supporting document.

The plan calls for a reorganization of the Communications Department, which includes a media relations office, cus-



**Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington speaks with a priest after a meeting of the Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization at the Vatican Oct. 9. The church's new evangelization and its call to share the faith is the responsibility of all Catholics (CNS photo/Paul Haring)**

strengthen the faith of Catholics and help them actively live out their faith.

During the first year, the focus will be on faith and activities closely tied to the Year of Faith. In 2014 and 2015, initiatives will strengthen parish life and worship. The final year calls for Catholics to be witnesses to the wider world.

The bishops also approved a 2013 budget of \$220.4 million and agreed to add a national collection for the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services. The budget for 2013 represents a 1.3 percent increase from 2012.

The new collection for the military archdiocese would begin in 2013. Under the plan, it would be taken voluntarily in parishes every three years. Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va., USCCB treasurer, said the 2013 budget includes a surplus totaling more than \$749,000. He also told the bishops that there was a projected surplus of \$250,000 for 2014, meaning there was no need to seek an increase in the annual diocesan assessment for USCCB operations.

In his presidential address to open the assembly, Cardinal Dolan Nov. 12 told the bishops they cannot engage culture, dialogue with others or confront challenges unless they first recognize their own sins and experience the grace of repentance.

The cardinal also said the sacrament of penance was something the USCCB planned to stress for all Catholics year-round with reflections on re-embracing Friday as a day of penance, including the possible reinstatement of abstinence on all Fridays.

The bishops' assembly, which opened nearly a week after Election Day, included discussions about religious liberty, marriage and immigration.

In a statement issued Nov. 13, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, as chair of the migration committee chair, urged President Barack Obama and congressional leaders to work together on a bipartisan immigration reform bill. He

tomer and client relations, creative services, which is responsible for online and video messages, and Catholic News Service.

The bishops were also urged to broaden their support for their national collections. In a Nov. 13 report, they heard that a decline in diocesan participation in these collections since 2009 has been a loss of \$8.7 million to Catholic programs that benefit from the collection.

Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas, chairman of the Committee on National Collections, described the collections as "an important mechanism for mobilizing collective action in the church universal and a way for all the faithful to participate in solidarity with the rest of the church."

The bishops were initially scheduled to consider a document titled "Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities for the Exercise of the Teaching Ministry of the Diocesan Bishop," developed by the Committee on Doctrine. The document urged bishops to take advantage of new technologies -- social media, blogging and cell phone technology -- to respond and explain church teaching when it is portrayed inaccurately, particularly by theologians.

Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, committee chairman, decided to withdraw the document in favor of a more comprehensive statement in line with the bishops' new communication plan and the ongoing work throughout the USCCB related to the new evangelization. The bishops Nov. 12 agreed in a voice vote to the appointment of a working group -- made up of the committee chairmen for doctrine, evangelization and catechesis, and canonical affairs and church governance -- to draft the document.

The bishops voted for a strategic plan that will guide the USCCB's work for the next four years, a "road map" to shape conference programs and activities to

also encouraged people to make their voices heard in support of an immigration system "which upholds the rule of law, preserves family unity and protects the human rights and dignity of the person."

During a news conference just after the statement was released, several bishops underscored their support for immigration reform.

The bishops' assembly, which opened nearly a week after Election Day, also included discussions about religious liberty and marriage.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said Nov. 12 the work of defending religious liberty would continue despite "setbacks or challenges."

### Spanish programming

Las estaciones de radio en las tres deane-ries de la diócesis de nuevo están transmitiendo programas regulares en español cada fin de semana por las mañanas. Las siguientes son las estaciones y el horario donde usted puede escuchar EWTN y otros esfuerzos de programaciones católicas en español en Abilene, Midland-Odessa y San Angelo:

**Abilene** -- KKHR (106.3 FM) está transmitiendo La Hora Católica de EWTN en español los domingos a las 10 a.m.

**Midland-Odessa** -- Padre Gilberto Rodriguez, el Vicario Parroquial de la parroquia San Esteban (St. Stephen's Church) de Midland, presenta el programa los sábados desde las 5-10 a.m. en KQLM (108 FM) con entrevista cada sábado con el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI a las 8:45 a.m.. Además, La Hora Católica de EWTN se puede escuchar los domingos a las 7 a.m.

**San Angelo** -- KSJT en San Angelo está transmitiendo la Hora Católica de EWTN los domingos a las 7 a.m.

#### EWTN Spanish programming

Radio stations in all three of the deaneries of the diocese are again running regular weekly programming on weekend mornings. The following is the stations and times where you can hear EWTN and other Spanish-programming efforts in Abilene, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo:

**ABILENE** -- KKHR (106.3 FM) is airing EWTN's Catholic Hour in Spanish, Sundays at 10 am.

**MIDLAND-ODESSA** -- Fr. Gilbert Rodriguez, parochial vicar at St. Stephen's Church in Midland, hosts a Saturday program from 5-10 a.m. on KQLM (108 FM). Additionally, EWTN Catholic programming can be heard Sundays at 7 a.m.

**SAN ANGELO** -- KSJT in San Angelo is airing EWTN's Catholic Hour Sundays at 7 a.m.

## POPE

(From 14)

Faith helps people see that "every human life is priceless, because each of us is the fruit of God's love," he said. "God loves everyone, even those who have fallen away from him or disregard him."

Pope Benedict asked young Catholics to reach out with love to their questioning or doubting peers, helping them find the hope and meaning faith brings.

As the Catholics most impacted by globalization and new technology, Pope Benedict said, young people need a special awareness and have special responsibilities in those areas.

"We are passing through a very particular period of history," he told them. "Technical advances have given us

unprecedented possibilities for interaction between peoples and nations. But the globalization of these relationships will be positive and help the world to grow in humanity only if it is founded on love rather than on materialism."

"Love is the only thing that can fill hearts and bring people together," he said.

While asking the young to bring their Christian values to their social media networks and other online activities, he also cautioned them to use the media wisely.

"Be aware of the hidden dangers they contain, especially the risk of addiction, of confusing the real world with the virtual, and of replacing direct and personal encounters and dialogue with Internet contacts," he said.

Pope Benedict also told the young people that the responsibility to share

the faith flows from their baptism into the church, is sustained by prayer, nourished by receiving the Eucharist, purified through confession and strengthened by confirmation.

"If you are to remain firm in professing the Christian faith wherever you are sent, you need the church," he said. "No one can bear witness to the Gospel alone."

*The full text of the pope's message in English is available at: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20121018\\_youth\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121018_youth_en.html).*

*The text in Spanish can be found at: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20121018\\_youth\\_sp.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121018_youth_sp.html).*

## EVANGELIZATION

(From 4)

tion, the cardinal said. Recent generations of Catholics had poor catechesis, and many don't understand what the church teaches and lack confidence in what they believe, said the cardinal, who has encouraged Catholics to use the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a sure guide for the church's authentic teaching.

The third element, the cardinal noted, "is the willingness to share the faith. That's probably where we're the shyest. We Catholics tend to be reluctant evangelists. ... We're so reluctant, even with friends, to talk about the important things. Young people are much more open to talking about the place of the Lord in our lives."

Especially in the face of today's challenges -- an ever-growing secularization of society, materialism and individualism, to name a few -- today's Catholics are called to pass on the faith, he said, so people come to know and love Jesus who was crucified, rose from the dead and sent the Holy Spirit to guide his church.

On the opening day of the U.S. bishops' annual fall general assembly Nov. 12-15 in Baltimore, two archbishops who were U.S. delegates to the synod gave a brief report on the proceedings.

Both Archbishops Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio and Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles cited the presence of Pope Benedict at many sessions -- and for considerable lengths of time -- as a highlight.

"The new evangelization continues to

be the task of communicating that experience to the people who have never met Christ (as well as) those who have heard of Jesus Christ but have never experienced him as living water," Archbishop Garcia-Siller said. He added the new evangelization calls for "the locus of the parish as a unit of faith, where movements, and all pastoral endeavors, should meet."

Archbishop Gomez quipped that with the strict five-minute time limit given for synod speakers, "every time I come close to a microphone, I get really nervous."

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*Zimmermann is editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese. Contributing to this story was Mark Pattison in Baltimore.*

## BLOGGERS

(From 5)

said he was overwhelmed by the concept of tweeting even a few times a day.

Sister Anne Flanagan, a Daughter of St. Paul who writes "Nun Blog," assured him that it wasn't that hard, noting that just during the group discussion she had already tweeted 10 times. The sister, who has more than 5,000 followers on Twitter, said she sees the value of making connections with people and drawing people into the church.

Other bloggers emphasized that the online world is a key place to reach young people.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., took that idea a step further by encouraging young bloggers to help the church in this work, suggesting that they call their pastor or bishop and offer to help.

Bloggers in turn advised bishops to talk about the faith -- in quick and entertaining ways -- by linking faith to current events or even discussing movies in blogs or video reflections.

The bloggers, many of whom live tweeted the session, not only showed how it can be done, but highlighted its urgency.

Palmo also stressed that participants in

Catholic social media should be aware of reflecting the changing personality of the church, particularly the Hispanic and Asian communities. "Otherwise, we are just talking to ourselves," he said.

Mary DeTurris Poust, former contributor to Our Sunday Visitor's "Daily Take" blog and the author of her own blog, "Not Strictly Spiritual," put it this way: "Facebook is the new parish hall" where people meet and look for spiritual guidance and connections.

"If they don't find it in our virtual walls, they will find it elsewhere," she said.

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## Diocese-Scenes



### MIDLAND

Members of the Midland honor guard stand solemnly during a community prayer vigil in Midland, November 17. The prayer vigil was held following a train accident that killed four war veterans who were in Midland to be honored as part of The 9th Hunt for Heroes event. The honor guard member second from left is holding the Honor Flag, a U.S. flag that, since September 11, 2001, has traveled around the country honoring those who have lost their lives in the line of duty protecting our lives, our homes and our country, and also those who currently serve our communities and our nation. ([www.ushonorflag.org](http://www.ushonorflag.org))

Several of the victims of the crash were Catholics. The event was to have ended in San Angelo for the hunting portion of the celebratory weekend.

Photo by Jimmy Patterson /  
West Texas Angelus



### ODESSA

Students at St. Mary's Catholic School honored war heroes during a special program at the school on Veteran's Day.

Photos by Alan P. Torre / [ap Torre.com](http://ap Torre.com)