Bishop Farrell said in preparing for the march to commemorate "an opportunity for youngsters to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime event. Her classes watched the coverage with pencils in hand to write down questions and their impressions.

"They’re living this experience," the teacher explained. "They won’t have to pick up a book and read about it. This is a piece of history they can tell their children and grandchildren."

The 90 boys and girls enrolled in the school will also benefit from a first person account of the inauguration. Dr. Carolyn Yusuf, their principal, traveled to Washington D.C. for the event and promised to share what she saw and heard with the students on her return. They’re also hoping she brings back a few Obama souvenirs.

“They really seem to understand the historical significance of this event,” Inglehart said. “And I’m encouraging them to ask questions about the dignitaries they see.”

Seventh grader Ida Mingo enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony, but she was eager for the speeches and cheering to end.

“I’m just looking forward to seeing Barack Obama walk into the White House,” explained the 12-year-old who had never seen an inauguration before. “This is a really exciting event.”

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Dallas March for Life doubles attendance, draws crowd of 3,000

By David Sedeño
Editor, Texas Catholic
Diocese of Dallas

With a call to march peacefully to change the minds and hearts of those who do not believe in life, a record number of more than 3,000 Catholics and Protestants undertook the annual journey through downtown Dallas Jan. 17 for the March for Life.

Organizers of various events that coincided with the annual Mass and march credited Bishop Kevin J. Farrell for his call last year to double the number of faithful at the events marking the Supreme Court’s decision of Roe vs. Wade that legalized abortion on Jan. 22, 1973.

“It is not just a procession or a march to commemorate,” Bishop Farrell said in preparing the overarching worshippers at the Mass at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

“This is a prayerful event,” he said. “We give greatness to God and we give greatness to life and we should invoke God as the Israelites did as they marched out of slavery and into the Promised Land.

“It is a march invoking God to change the minds and the hearts of those who do not respect life,” he said, acknowledging that abortion has claimed nearly 50 million lives in the United States since 1973.

The Dallas march coincided with numerous events across the country, including pro-life rallies and the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., that attracted hundreds of thousands of people on Jan. 22, the 36th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling.

Six BISHOP, p. 25

Keep policies protecting unborn, Cardinal George urges Obama

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — It would be “a terrible mistake” for President Barack Obama to reverse current policies on embryonic stem-cell research, conscience protection, and other life-related matters, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops told him in a new letter.

Such actions “could introduce significant negative and divisive factors into our national life, at a time when we need to come together to address the serious challenges facing our people,” said Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago in a letter dated Jan. 16 and made public Jan. 19.

The letter came less than a week after Cardinal George sent another letter to Obama, Vice President Joseph Biden and each member of Congress outlining the bishops’ broad policy agenda as the new administration and Congress begin their work.

“I expect that some want you to take executive action soon to reverse current policies against government-sponsored research,” the letter said. "It is not just a procession or a march to commemorate,“ Bishop Farrell said in preparing the overwhelming worshippers at the Mass at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

"This is a prayerful event," he said. "We give greatness to God and we give greatness to life and we should invoke God as the Israelites did as they marched out of slavery and into the Promised Land.

"It is a march invoking God to change the minds and the hearts of those who do not respect life," he said, acknowledging that abortion has claimed nearly 50 million lives in the United States since 1973.

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Six BISHOP, p. 25

Denecia Green sat with her 7th and 8th grade classmates at Our Mother of Mercy School on Jan. 20 and waited for history to unfold. 

Moments later Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States becoming the first African-American to hold the highest political office in the country. For youngsters at Our Mother of Mercy, a predominantly black school, the occasion generated applause, cheers, and optimism.

“He’s going to change America," enthused eighth grader Green. "He’s going to help people become better people for the community and the whole world.

Linda Inglehart, who teaches history, English, and reading at the school, says watching the presidential inauguration was an opportunity for the students to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime event. Her classes watched the coverage with pencils in hand to write down questions and their impressions.

“They’re living this experience," the teacher explained. "They won’t have to pick up a book and read about it. This is a piece of history they can tell their children and grandchildren.

The 90 boys and girls enrolled in the school will also benefit from a first person account of the inauguration. Dr. Carolyn Yusuf, their principal, traveled to Washington D.C. for the event and promised to share what she saw and heard with the students on her return. They’re also hoping she brings back a few Obama souvenirs.

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Seventh grader Ida Mingo enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony, but she was eager for the speeches and cheering to end.

“I’m just looking forward to seeing Barack Obama walk into the White House," explained the 12-year-old who had never seen an inauguration before. "This is a really exciting event."
As Bishops, we approach public policy as pastors and teachers. Our moral principles have always guided our everyday experience in caring for the hungry and homeless, offering health care and housing, educating children and reaching out to those in need... From our experience and our tradition, we offer a distinctive, constructive and principled contribution to the national dialogue on how to act together on issues of economic turmoil and suffering, war and violence, moral decay and human dignity.

Our nation now faces economic challenges with potentially tragic human consequences and serious moral dimensions. We will work with the new Administration and Congress to support strong, prudent, and effective remedies to address the terrible impacts and injustices of the economic crisis. In particular, we will advocate a clear priority for poor families and vulnerable workers in the development and implementation of economic recovery measures, including new investments while strengthening the national safety net. We also support greater accountability and oversight to address irresponsible abuses of the system that contributed to the financial crisis.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States have worked for decades to assure health care for all, insisting that access to decent health care is a basic human right and a requirement of human dignity. We urge comprehensive action to ensure universal health care coverage which protects all human life including pre-natal life, and provides access for all, with a special concern for the poor. Any such legislation ought to respect freedom to choose by offering a variety of options and ensuring respect for the moral and religious convictions of patients and providers. Such an approach should seek to restrain costs while sharing them equitably.

On international affairs, we will work with our leaders to seek a responsible transition in an Iraq free of religious persecution. We especially urge early, focused and persistent leadership to bring an end to violent conflict and a just peace in the Holy Land. We will continue to support essential U.S. investments to overcome poverty, hunger, and disease through increased and reformed foreign assistance. Continued U.S. leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases in ways that are both effectively and morally appropriate have our enthusiastic backing. Recognizing the complexity of climate change, we wish to be a voice for the poor and vulnerable in our country and around the world who will be the most adversely affected by any dramatic threats to the environment.

We will work with the new Administration and Congress to fix a broken immigration system which has burdened this nation and immigrants. Comprehensive reform is needed to deal with the economic and human realities of millions of immigrants in our midst. It must be based on respect for and implementation of the law. Equally it must defend the rights and dignity of all people, recognizing that human dignity comes from God and does not depend on where people were born or how they came to our nation. Truly comprehensive immigration reform will include a path to earned citizenship with attention to the fact that international trade and development policies influence economic opportunities in the countries from which immigrants come.

We stand firm in our support for marriage which is a faithful, exclusive, lifelong union of a man and a woman and must remain such in law. In a manner unlike any other relationship, marriage makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the common good of society, especially through the procreation and education of children. No other kinds of personal relationships can be justly made equivalent to the commitment of a man and a woman in marriage.

With regard to the education of children, we will continue to support initiatives which provide resources for all parents, especially those of modest means, to choose education which best address the needs of their children.

We welcome continuing commitments to empower faith-based groups as effective partners in overcoming poverty and other threats to human dignity. We will work with the Administration and Congress to strengthen these partnerships in ways that do not encourage government to abandon its responsibilities, and do not require religious groups to abandon their identity and mission.

Most fundamentally, we will work to protect the lives of the most vulnerable and voiceless members of the human family, especially unborn children and those who are disabled or terminally ill. We will consistently defend the fundamental right to life from conception to natural death. Opposed to abortion as the direct killing of innocent human life, we will encourage one and all to seek common ground that will reduce the number of abortions in morally sound ways that affirm the dignity of pregnant women and their unborn children. We will oppose legislative and other means to expand abortion. We will work to retain essential, widely supported policies which show respect for unborn life, protect the conscience rights of health care providers and other Americans, and prevent government funding and promotion of abortion. The Hyde Amendment and other provisions which for many years have prevented federal funding of abortion have a proven record of reducing abortions. Efforts to force Americans to fund abortions with their tax dollars would pose a serious moral challenge and jeopardize the passage of essential health care reform.

This outline of USCCB policies and priorities is not complete. There are many other areas of concern and advocacy for the Church and the USCCB especially: religious freedom and other civil and human rights, news media and communications, and issues of war and peace. For a more detailed description of our concerns please see Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship (USCCB 2008), pages 19-30.

Nonetheless, we offer this outline as an agenda for dialogue and action. We hope to offer a constructive and principled contribution to national discussion over the values and policies that will shape our nation’s future. We seek to work together with our nation’s leaders to advance the common good of our society, while disagreeing respectfully and civilly where necessary for preserving that same common good.

In closing, I renew our expression of hope and our offer of cooperation as you begin this new period of service to our nation in these challenging times. We promise our prayers for you, that the days ahead will be a time of renewal and progress for our nation and that we can work together to defend human life and dignity and build a nation of greater justice and a world at peace.

Sincerely yours,
† Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archbishop of Chicago
President, USCCB
Pope congratulates Obama on his Inauguration Day, offers prayer for wisdom

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI, congratulating Barack Obama on his inauguration as U.S. president, prayed that he would remain steadfast in his dedication to promote understanding, cooperation and peace in the world.

In a telegram, Jan. 20, told Obama that he prayed God would "grant you unfailing wisdom and strength in the exercise of your high responsibilities."

Pope Benedict traditionally sends a telegram of congratulations to new presidents of the United States on the day of their inauguration.

In his message to Obama, Pope Benedict said, prayed, under the new president’s leadership, “may the American people continue to find in their impressive religious and political heritage the spiritual values and ethical principles needed to cooperate in the building of a truly just and free society.”

The pope said he hoped the future of the United States would be “marked by respect for the dignity, equality, and rights of each of its members, especially the poor, the outcast and those who have no voice.”

“At a time when so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world yearn for liberation from the scourge of poverty, hunger, and violence, I pray that you will be confirmed in your resolve to promote understanding, cooperation, and peace among the nations, so that all may share in the banquet of life which God wills to set for the whole human family,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict also asked God to bless the Obama family and all the people of the United States.

The pope had also sent a personal message of congratulations Nov. 5 on what he called the “historic occasion” of Obama’s election, the first time a black man has been elected president of the United States.

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Calling on a new generation of ‘heroes’

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

“Be a different kind of Hero!” is the theme the Vocation Office will be promoting to help children look up to those who have pursued the religious life: brothers, sisters, priests, and bishops.

We have 300 posters in English and another 300 in Spanish ready, even now, to be sent out to all of our classrooms throughout our diocese.

When you see the poster you will see that it is a strong positive message, even “over the top,” but that’s my intention. Catholic children and teenagers need to see religious men and women as spiritual heroes, fighting the good fight, planting seeds so that they may consider joining a religious community as an adult.

At the same time I am very aware of the internal scandals that have occurred, especially within the priesthood. But I hope everyone will keep a few things in mind.

Men and women of my generation and the next generation are entering the religious life despite knowing about the wretched acts of sexual misconduct with children by some priests (4.3 percent of all priests from 1960 to 2002 according to the John Jay Report) all of whom when reported, thanks be to God, have been removed from priestly ministry.

The U.S. bishops met in Dallas in June of 2002 and established the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People to begin to look at what caused the scandals and to take all the measures necessary to prevent sexual abuse in the Church in the future.

Now we are blessed with two things to help in this endeavor. First, we have a very strict screening process and entrance requirements for anyone entering the seminary or religious life, including psychological exams, criminal background checks, driving records, and credit reports, as well as requiring the stated testimony of a multitude of people to attest to the character of the person in a four-page questionnaire.

Then, once in the seminary, a formation team is prompt to detect signs of character flaws unbecoming a future priest, removing those who seem unfit from seminary.

Secondly, we have had in full force for several years now the Keeping Children And Youth Safe Program that all priests, religious, church employees, and lay volunteers must attend regularly to know what signs to look for in a sexual predator. All children and teenagers, too, go through our annual training for them to do likewise and to learn how to speak out when abuse occurs or to recognize the signs that might identify a predator.

As a young priest of six years, I look up to the older priests of this diocese. They have many battle scars from every decade, going back sometimes to the 1950s. They remained faithful and holy priests in the 1960s as many of their brother priests left active ministry because of the changes of Vatican II. They remained faithful and holy priests when a new church teaching: that sometimes tried to eliminate the necessity for their unique ministry swept our country in the 1970s. They remained faithful and holy priests in the 1980s even as masses of people left the Church, her sacraments, and her teachings, to seek “feel good churches.” They remained holy and faithful priests in the 1990s even as many seminaries closed and hope diminished that anyone would follow them to move forward the cross of Christ.

They remained holy and faithful priests in this decade as well, conscientiously as if between two criminals (like Jesus) every time they went out in public, due to the sexual abuse perpetrated by wolves in priests’ clothing.

These older priests have won their crown of glory and are true imitators of Christ. They have walked in his footsteps and heralded the Good News. They have baptized the masses and have fed them with the Body of Christ. They have absolved the sinner from his sins, healed the sick and the brokenhearted, and they have blessed young couples in holy matrimony. They are my heroes, true pastors of the flock.

The pasturing is beginning to green up. Outstanding men are entering the seminary in increasing numbers. New parishes need to be opened because so many faithful are returning to the Church, her sacraments, and her teachings. Because of all this and much more, they are true heroes in our midst. They have fought the good fight, they have finished the race, and they have kept the faith (cf. 2 Timothy 4:7).

Let us thank the Lord for our many great priests and religious who have inspired us and pointed us toward the cross and our salvation. Let us encourage the next generation to look at the religious life and “Be a different kind of Hero.”

Father Kyle Walterscheid is the director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail to kwalterscheid@fdxloc.org.
Catholic
Schools
Banquet
planned

The 22nd Annual Celebration of Catholic Schools will be held Saturday, Jan. 31 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

This annual event in the diocese celebrates the mission of Catholic schools and honors outstanding individuals for their service to the Catholic school communities of the diocese. The Stephen Brennan Memorial Foundation will receive the Diocesan Leadership Award.

The evening will include a social hour followed by dinner. Sister Carol Gimino, a national consultant for the William H. Sadlier Company, will be guest speaker. Bishop Kevin Vann will also be in attendance.

Reservations are $75 per person. Everyone is invited to the celebration to show their support and commitment to Catholic schools.

For ticket availability please contact the Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-1200, or e-mail fwac@fdioc.org.

Cathedral to host Patriotic Rosary service

St. Patrick Cathedral will host a Patriotic Rosary for the United States as it assumes new leadership during a time of many difficulties and trials. The prayer service will be from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27 at the Cathedral in Fort Worth.

“We must pray for wisdom and courage for our president and govern ment officials; and that they will hold an open house from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Church Initiative distributes the program. Facilitators and helpers in both programs have been through divorce themselves, have been trained in the program, and have attended diocesan safe-environment training sessions. Although this program is a scriptures-based program, it is not a bible study. There is input from professionals in pastoral care, entertainment, psychological, and social services featured in this seminar giving their personal and professional input to help the participant focus on the job of healing.”

Though the program is free, pre-registration is required. For more information, call (817) 738-9925 and a team member will reply.

Men’s Purity Group meets at three locations

The St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly at three locations within the Diocese of Fort Worth. The group meets on Wednesdays at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, 2016 Willis Lane in Keller, Room 211; at the Padre Pio House, 1403 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth; and at Immaculate Conception Parish, 2255 North Bonnie Brae St. in Denton.

Those men interested in attending one of the upcoming sessions are asked to consult the group’s Web site, www.sampg.com, for specific meeting times and locations.

For more information, e-mail to Mark at seamenpurity@yahoo.com or call the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Office at (817) 431-3877.

OLGHS to hold open house

Our Lady of Grace High School will hold an open house from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on January 26 at 1517 Vista Rd. in Roanoke. As the newest Catholic high school in the diocese, administrators encourage students to experience the “difference in Catholic Education.” For more information, contact the school at (817) 955-6455. Visit their Web site at www.OLGHS.com.

St. Paul offers Divorce Care
Series for children and adults

St. Paul Church in Fort Worth will offer a new Divorce Care Series and has added a companion series, Divorce Care for Kids (DC4K) to run with it, from 6:30-8 p.m. beginning January 29 and continuing for 12 weeks. Church Initiative distributes the program.

Facilitators and helpers in both programs have been through divorce themselves, have been trained in the program, and have attended diocesan safe-environment training sessions. Although this program is a scriptures-based program, it is not a bible study. There is input from professionals in pastoral care, entertainment, psychological, and social services featured in this seminar giving their personal and professional input to help the participant focus on the job of healing.”

“...for the help generated through this seminar, has no boundaries,” says Deacon Ron Arim, pastoral assistant from St. Paul. “We have helped persons divorced for over 15 years to get recovered, and in one case the couple reconciled a broken marriage. God’s healing presence is visible by the end of the program. Although this program is a scriptures-based program, it is not a bible study. There is input from professionals in pastoral care, entertainment, psychological, and social services featured in this seminar giving their personal and professional input to help the participant focus on the job of healing.”

Though the program is free, pre-registration is required. For more information, call (817) 738-9925 and a team member will reply.

Tribunal Ministry offers free seminar for volunteers, Feb. 7

Father Hector Medina, pastor of St. Matthew Church in Arlington, will present an introduction to tribunal ministry from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville.

The course is designed for those who are interested in learning about tribunal ministry, and the roles and tasks of parish tribunal volunteers.

Attendance at this seminar at this time or any other day, is a prerequisite to enroll in tribal volunteer training. The training will be offered during the summer.

There is no charge, but pre-registration is required. To register, call Deborah Hawks at Good Shepherd at (817) 421-1387. For more information, contact the Tribunal Office at (817) 560-1200 ext. 200.

Knights of Columbus' Decatur — Members of Knights of Columbus Council 9984 out of Decatur, dedicated a pro-life monument to the unborn at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Decatur on Sunday, Jan. 18 to mark the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade. Pictured is Father Susan George, HGN, pastor of Assumption surrounded by members of Council #9984.

Knights of Peter Claver plan Mardi Gras dance Feb. 21

The Knights of Peter Claver Council #89 of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth will hold their 27th Annual “Mardi Gras & Joker Dance” from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Meadow-Blocous Oasis, 6015 Craig St. in Fort Worth.

Donations are $20 per person and admission includes authentic Louisiana gumbo and red beans and rice.

For more information, call (817) 255-0866, (817) 254-3686, or e-mail Kinross.council@gmail.com. For more information about this event contact the program, phone (817) 294-9016 or mcnatif@fdioc.org.

Deaf Ministry program seeking court reporter for CART services

The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a court reporter who can help with CART (Computer Assisted Real Time Translation) services.

The Deaf Community celebrates a special Deaf Mass on the first Sunday of each month at 1:45 in the chapel of St. Mary of Simonton Church on the south side of Fort Worth.

The ministry would like to provide CART for those who do not sign, so they can read the simultaneous transcriptions and be a part of the special liturgy.

To help with this service, contact Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at (817) 284-3100 (Voice) or (817) 284-3101 (TDD) or e-mail mcinatl@fdioc.org.

Theology professor to speak about Catholic perspective on Rapture

Sister Dorothy Jonatiss, OP, will present “The Left Behind Alternative: A Workshop on Apocalyptic Literature” from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31 at St. Barbara’s Catholic Church at 5061 Altamasa Blvd. in Fort Worth.

St. Jonatiss is the author of “Living with the Apocalypse: A Text to Preaching and Teaching,” and an assistant professor at the University of Dallas. Sister Dorothy will present the Catholic teaching of apocalyptic texts, especially related to the rapture and may be purchased at the workshop.

For more information, call Marco Castellon at (817) 293-5589.

Marriage Encounter weekend to end Feb. 13-15

A Marriage Encounter weekend will be held Feb. 13-15 at the Catholic Renewal Center of North Texas, 215 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

A marriage enrichment is a weekend program for married couples designed to help them deepen their relationship. Marriage Encounter is centered on three principles: building understanding between husband and wife, nurturing the commitment of marriage vows, and strengthening the couple’s faith.

“One year or fifty! No matter how long you’ve been married, a Marriage Encounter Weekend is a great way to breathe new life into your relationship. And it’s just for the two of you (no group sharing),” say program organizers.

Becoming required with a $60 non-refundable deposit, and space is limited. The balance of $175 per couple is due at the program. In case of financial needs, scholarship funds are available. A partial deposit is still required. For more information, visit www.marriageministry.org to make a reservation, call (817) 451-6005 or e-mail mengregeston@ dcbglobal.net.

Calix support group meets Feb. 7 at Holy Family

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholics and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the chapel of Holy Family, 6150 Pershing Ave. in West Fort Worth. The next meeting will be Saturday, Feb. 7.

Calix meetings focus on enhancing spiritual growth through sharing stories, discussion, and fellowship.

For more information, call Deak of Joe Mulligan at (817) 737-6678 ext. 105.
Pure Reality Rally in Arlington to promote chastity

Pure Reality, a youth rally for eighth- through 12th-graders from the Metropolis and presented by the Catholic Pro-Life Committee and Catholics Respect Life, will be held Sunday, Feb. 8, from 4 to 9:30 p.m. at the Metro Center located at 1501 W. Pioneer Pkwy in Arlington.

“Our mission is to present a Pure Reality to today’s youth letting them know that chastity and abstinence are the true paths to freedom,” says Sue Laux of Youth for Life Fort Worth.

Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell will celebrate the opening Mass and guest presenters will include Chris Stefanick from CatholicAnswers and the Archdiocese of Denver, Father Stan Fortuna, CFR, a talented musician rap from the Bronx, and members of the Theater of the Word evangelization troupe. Organizers expect 1,700 Catholic teens from the Metropolis to attend.

While a previous engagement prevents Bishop Kevin Vann from attending, he said he endorses the event and concept and wishes that he could join Bishop Farrell and “the young people to help witness to the virtue of chastity and the Culture of Life.”

Dinner and a T-shirt are included in the $20 price for attendance.

For more information, contact Sue Laux at (817) 939-8595, or visit www.purerealityrally.com.

Courage group affirms Church teaching on homosexuality

Courage was created in 1980 in New York City as the request of the late Cardinal Terence Cooke and now has chapters throughout the United States and in eight other countries.

Courage is not a “change” ministry, that is, it does not focus on any attempt to change one’s orientation.” The focus is helping members, whether single or married, to live lives of interior and exterior chastity, which means living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding sexual love as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Courage in FW

Courage in FW started in 1999 with the approval of Bishop Joseph Delaney of Fort Worth and Bishop Charles Grahnham of Dallas. Its spiritual adviser is Monsignor Mark Setrez of St. Rita Church in Dallas.

The group’s meetings include prayer, discussion of relevant topics, learning how to deepen spiritual lives, sharing struggles and successes, and occasional guest speaker and fellowship.

For more information, contact (972) 938-LIFE ($455) or e-mail courageofw@catholic.org.

Lubbock Knights to host ‘Our Lady in Scripture’ conference

The Lubbock Diocese Knights of Columbus will sponsor the 2009 Biblical Studies Conference, “Our Lady in Scripture,” Feb. 16-17 in the Lubbock Civic Auditorium.

Featured speakers at the event include Catholic theologians and Scripture scholars Fr. John Halley, Fr. Vincent Prieur, and Michael Barber. Spanish translation services are available by advance reservation.

St. Joseph Covenant Keepers of Tarrant County announce Lenten Speaker Series at SEAS in Keller

St. Joseph Covenant Keepers of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church located at 2021 Willis Ln. in Keller will sponsor their annual Lenten Speaker Series this year with guest speakers Steve Kellmeyer and Tim Staples.

Steve Kellmeyer will present six talks during each of the Fridays of the Lenten season (except Good Friday) beginning on Feb. 27. The talks will be at 8 p.m. following the Fish Fry and Stations of the Cross.

Kellmeyer will be discussing Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. Topics will include “The First Family” on Feb. 27, “Breaking Up, Hard To Do” on March 6, “Flesh and Blood” on March 13, “Why Does God Allow Suffering?” on March 20, “Being the Best Spouse, Being the Best Parent” on March 27, and “Celibacy” on April 3.

Steve Kellmeyer is the director of Adult Formation at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine and is a noted author. For more information, contact Frank Lux at (817) 939-8594 or visit the group’s Web site at www.aseskc.org.

Magnificat breakfast to feature Catholic author Feb. 21

Magnificat, a ministry to Catholic women that draws participation from throughout the North Texas region, will sponsor a women’s breakfast with praise and Eucharistic devotion from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Feb. 21 at the DW Wilson Lakes Conference Center and Hotel located at 1800 Highway 26 East in Grapevine.

The opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation and to meet with prayer teams will be available after the keynote presentation. Author Patricia Treece will serve as keynote speaker for the event. Treece is described in press materials as a Catholic convert, author, and authority on modern-day saints.

“The mission of my work is simply to share God’s friends, the saints, with our human family because to know God’s friends, the saints, is to come closer to God,” Treece writes in describing her work as a writer and speaker.

Treece’s first book, A Man for Others, was released in 1982, and chronicles the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe. Treece’s latest publication, Meet John XXIII: Joyful Pope and Father to All, is based on Treece’s interviews with the pope’s private secretary, a retired archbishop who made the pope’s letters and other personal documents available to Treece. Treece’s other works have included biographies of Padre Pio and St. Therese of Lisieux.

For more information or to purchase admission at $18 per ticket to the breakfast, call Nancy Ferr at (817) 498-7980 by Tuesday, Feb. 17, or obtain tickets at local Catholic bookstores, including Keepsakes in Arlington, Little Angels in Coppell, and St. Anthony’s Bookstore in Fort Worth.

TOBET co-founder Monica Ashurto visit St. Rita Feb. 21

Monica Ashurto, a co-founder of the Theology of the Body Evangelization Team (TOBET) will present “A Time Bomb Goes Off” in the 21st Century: The Theology of the Body on Feb. 21 at the St. Rita Parish Center in Fort Worth.

The talk is for those 17 or older. Pizza, salad, and other snacks will be served at 6 p.m., followed by the talk from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Theology of the Body is Pope John Paul II’s “integrated vision of the human person—body, soul, and spirit. The Theology of the Body promotes the Pope’s revolutionary and life-transforming message of hope that counteracts societal trends. It encourages a true reverence for the gift of our sexuality and challenges us to live in a way worthy of our great dignity as human persons.

His theology is not only for young adults and married couples, but for all ages and vocations since it sums up the true meaning of the human person,” says members of the St. Rita Respect Life group.

Ashurto holds a master’s degree from the University of Dallas in theological studies and in humanities. She has traveled throughout the United States, giving talks about the Theology of the Body.

As an author of a curriculum on the Theology of the Body for religious education and Catholic schools, she seeks to spread the Gospel in the light of the Holy Father’s profound understanding of the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God.

Tickets are $6 for adults and $3 for children 10 and under. Free childcare is available. Tickets are an extra dollar at the door. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 451-9395.

ST. JOSEPH, RHINELAND – Pictured above are members of the Junior Youth Group of St. Joseph Church in Rhinelander, which performed its annual Christmas play, “Miracle on Bethlehem Street,” in front of a large crowd Dec. 10 in the Rhinelander Gym. Forty-two of the youth at St. Joseph’s volunteered their time, assisted by parishioners Robert and Janet Dillard. A reception was held after the performance.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Feb. 27

The Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other Sexual Minorities and Their Families regularly meet the fourth Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center at 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth.

For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 529-7737.

Educate the Children gala

Feb. 13

Bishop Kevin Vann will be the guest speaker at the Fifth Anniversary Gala for Friends of Educate the Children 6-30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 13 at the Tarrant County College Northeast Campus at 826 Harwood Rd., in Hurst.

The Gala will include a dinner and a silent auction. Father Robert Thames of Cabellas, Bolivia, will be the honoree.

For more information contact Hilda Flores at (817) 560-3300 ext. 112 or hflores@bvhsc.org.

North Texas Catholic, January 23, 2009  Page 5
Cartoonist to offer tips for stress-relief during Lenten program

National speaker, author, and cartoonist Jason Kotecki has been invited to two churches in the diocese to share key strategies for de-stressing life by renewing and embracing a childlike faith, specifically within the Lenten season.

Kotecki will speak at Holy Family Church at 6150 Pershing Ave. in Fort Worth on Thursday, Feb. 26, and Friday, Feb. 27, and at St. Vincent de Paul Church at 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd. in Arlington on Sunday, March 1.

The Holy Family events are from 7 to 8:30 p.m. both evenings, for ages “5-105,” according to a press release, with a soup supper prior to the event on Friday night. Reservations for babysitting are necessary. “Both evenings will be different, so all are welcome to attend both evenings,” says the release.

The event at St. Vincent De Paul will be from 7-8 p.m. Babysitting is available for those under age five.

Kotecki’s presentation will feature humorous anecdotes, colorful artwork, and a bit of live cartooning, as he encourages participants of all ages to embrace and uncover strategies from childhood to help them grasp a deeper understanding of faith, family, and fellowship.

He will talk about the prevention and treatment of “Adultitis” — an epidemic affecting almost every household in the United States.


Kotecki asserts, “Life wasn’t designed to be this way. It’s time to start living life with less stress and more fun, for we are called to live life abundantly.”

Since its debut in 2000, Kotecki’s comic strip, “Kim & Jason,” has appealed to worldwide readers of all ages with its humorous childlike look at life.

For more information about the events at Holy Family, call (817) 737-6768. For questions about the event at St. Vincent de Paul call (817) 478-8206, ext. 204.

Visit www.KimandJason.com for more about the comic strip and visit www.Adultitis.org for more about the “dangerous condition” of adultitis.
Fort Worth Legatus inducts new officers at cathedral

Father Bill Bellrose, CPM, director of Seminarians for Life, was the guest speaker for the Jan. 8 meeting of the Fort Worth chapter of Legatus at the Fort Worth Club in downtown Fort Worth. The local chapter had earlier inducted their 2009 officers following a Mass celebrated by Father Michael Kmiotek, CFR, in St. Patrick Cathedral. Fr. Kmiotek also presided over the ceremony inducting the new officers.

Seminarians for Life, is an outreach of Human Life International formed as a worldwide pro-life educational apostolate for Catholic seminarians. Fr. Bellrose came to Human Life International from Most Sacred Heart Parish in Eureka, Missouri.

The Fort Worth Chapter of Legatus, one of over 60 chapters around the world, was chartered in May 2007. Each monthly event begins with the sacrament of reconciliation, a rosary and Mass, followed by a dinner and a speaker with topics including apologetics, family, spiritual growth, and ethics. Members must be active Catholics in good standing and must meet certain business requirements. For more details, visit www.legatus.org or contact chapter membership chair Sam Saladin at 817-529-0444.

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MONTserrat Tuesday Evenings
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First Tuesdays of 2009
7:15 to 8:45 P.M.
Offering: $20 per evening or $100 for total series

February 3 Life in Christ
Fr. Joe Tetlow, SJ
March 3 Conversion
Fr. Ron Boudreaux, SJ
April 7 Baptism & forgiveness
Fr. José Fetzer, SJ
May 5 Salvation
Fr. Edmundo Rodriguez, SJ
September 1 The Body of Christ, the Church
Fr. Joe Tetlow, SJ
October 6 Righteousness & Justification
Fr. Ron Boudreaux, SJ
November 3 Resurrection
Fr. Edmundo Rodriguez, SJ

MONTserrat Saturdays
The Catholic Catechism: the spiritual theology for adults

First Saturdays of 2009
9:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.
Lunch included
Offering: $40 per Saturday or $200 for total series

February 7 Fr. José Fetzer, SJ
March 7 Fr. José Fetzer, SJ
April 4 Fr. Ron Boudreaux, SJ
May 2 Fr. Edmundo Rodriguez, SJ
September 5 Fr. Joe Tetlow, SJ
October 3 Fr. José Fetzer, SJ
November 7 Summary by the Jesuit Fathers

Each Montserrat Saturday will cover two chapters in United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The days include instruction, reflection, discussion in small groups, and question & answer sessions. The days are both instructive and prayerful.

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Our Lady of Victory school fundraiser to repair aging building

Our Lady of Victory School (OLV) will host an open house Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the school, located at 3320 Hemphill Ave. in Fort Worth. All are invited to attend.

The school will also sponsor “Mardi Gras Masquerade,” the school community’s sixth annual dinner and fundraising event, on Saturday, Feb. 7 from 6 p.m. to midnight in the Great Hall at St. Bartholomew Church, located at 3601 Altamesa Blvd. in Fort Worth. Tickets are available prior to the event at $35 per ticket; the price of the ticket includes dinner, beverages, dancing, and entertainment for the evening.

Our Lady of Victory School, founded by the Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur in 1910, has a current student enrollment of 200 in pre-kindergarten through eighth grades.

“We are dedicated to continuing the mission of our founders to develop the whole child, academically, spiritually, physically, and socially in a Catholic environment,” wrote OLV faculty member and development director Rachael Garnett in a press release. “OLV was also the first school in Fort Worth to be fully integrated. This continues to be reflected in the faces of our culturally diverse student population... OLV is an inner-city school offering students an intellectually stimulating atmosphere.”

The school has received exemplary accreditation by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department, which is recognized by the Texas Education Agency, said Garnett. All funds raised at the Feb. 7 event will be used for repairs and renovations to the school building, which was built in 1953. For more information about either upcoming event, call Rachael Garnett or OLV principal Trudy Miller at (817) 924-5123.

St. Peter students witness shuttle land from backyard

Students from St. Peter the Apostle School in White Settlement had the opportunity to watch the Space Shuttle Endeavor land at the Naval Air Station/JRB on Dec. 10. “Several of the parents from our school work at Lockheed and alerted us that the shuttle would be landing,” said Erin Vader, school principal.

“We dismissed classes early so that the kids could stand on the playground and watch the shuttle come down, right in front of them. It was a perfect view. Only at St. Peter’s can you get an air show at recess!”

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www.aquinasfunds.com
By Michele Baker
Correspondent
Photos by Donna Rykaert

About 250 people from around the diocese gathered at St. Joseph Church in Arlington on Saturday, Jan. 17 for the 23rd annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Mass. Bishop Kevin Vann presided over the liturgy in honor of the famed civil rights leader.

“I believe that this Mass we have to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminds us of his love and commitment to faith and justice,” said Bishop Vann. “We especially remember his lesson of not returning violence for violence but faith for faith.”

Bishop Vann concelebrated the Mass with six priests from the diocese: Monsignor Joseph Schumacher, and Fathers Carmen Mele, OP, Tom Craig, Phillip Brembah, Paul Kahan, SVD, and Jerome LeDoux, SVD, who gave the homily.

Beginning with the hymn, “God Is Love,” written by Father Clarence Rivers, the first African-American to be ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Fr. LeDoux explained, “Racism is against everything that God stands for.” He went on to say that even as the country prepared to inaugurate its first black president, the dream that Dr. King put forth for the nation has not yet been fully realized if the faithful continue to be apathetic about answering God’s call.

“The components of the dream — freedom, justice, and equality of opportunity — are here, but we have squandered them,” said Fr. LeDoux, who is pastor of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, the diocese’s only historically African-American parish. “We have equal opportunity, but we are sitting on our hands. This is not a dream. This is a nightmare.”

Fr. LeDoux urged the assembly to work toward building the dream by a return to the basics. “We must begin with faith, hope, and love and regain what we have lost,” he said. “Martin Luther King, Jr. saw Christ as his prototype, and just as Martin did, we should make Christ our prototype.”

The African Choir of St. Joseph Church, a ministry of the African Catholic Fellowship of Dallas Fort Worth (www.ACFDFW.org) echoed Fr. LeDoux’s message in their offertory song, “Ngai Nazali,” a song in Linguala, a Congolese language. The text says, “I am a servant of the Lord. I offer myself to him along with the fruits of my labor.”

Throughout the Mass, gospel music, provided by the Our Mother of Mercy Choir, under the direction of Dorothea Menefee with Zenobia Collins at the piano, set the tone for a joy-filled celebration.

Deacon Len Sanchez, director of Pastoral and Community Services for the Diocese of Fort Worth said, “We are proud of our heritage: of all honorable men who do good, especially Martin Luther King, Jr. Through his life many have been touched and guided in the direction of peaceful solutions. He was truly a man of the Gospel.”

The inscription at the top reads “From every mountainside, let freedom ring!”
Diocesan

In face of potential pro-choice legislation, diocese reminds people to

Respect Life

Story and photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

The diocesan Respect Life Mass, held each January to mark the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, concluded this year with an urgent plea. Bishop Kevin Vann, who celebrated the liturgy Jan. 16 in St. Patrick Cathedral, asked the crowd of 500 to “make our voices known and not just sit back.”

Speaking up against violence and death when confronted with evil was a theme the bishop broached earlier in his homily. He challenged the gathering of pro-life ministers and supporters to consider what history will say about modern-day efforts to protect the defenseless.

“Will it be said that we lacked courage, that we were not precise, and afraid to speak up in the face of a seeming majority,” he queried. “Or, will it be said, in those days, they spoke with clarity in the face of confusion about life, God, the Gospel, the most vulnerable, and those not yet born.”

As America approached one more anniversary of legalized abortion, the bishop implored the assembly not to give up.

“With God’s help and grace, be messengers of life in the face of violence, to all people we meet,” he said. “History is being written now. What will be said about us?”

Sponsored by the diocesan Respect Life Office, the Mass included a presentation of candles and the Book of Innocents. During the offertory procession, 49 members of the congregation placed lit, red votive candles on the altar to commemorate the 49 million unborn children killed in U.S. abortions since the practice was legalized 36 years ago. The Book of Innocents contains the names of some of those victims. Respect Life workers were also given a special blessing by Bishop Vann.

Lauren and Matt Warner were among the gathering of pro-life supporters. The St. Maria Goretti parishioners from Arlington are expecting their first baby in March.

“We’re very passionate about the life movement and having our first child has made it all the more real for us,” the expectant mother said. “We do everything we can to pray for an end to abortion.”

Matt Warner, who has attended the National March for Life in Washington, D.C., and participated in the 40 Days for Life program last fall, encourages others to become publicly involved in pro-life activities.

“Standing outside an abortion clinic isn’t easy, but it’s a way of putting your faith out there,” he says.

And the Warners say it’s important to remember the miracle of life in your own family.

“A lot of couples are hesitant to have children because of their busy lifestyle,” Lauren says. “It’s important to support pro-life issues, but remember to be pro-life in your own family and realize the beauty children bring to your marriage.”

How we worship shows what we believe

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Nolan Catholic students spread pro-life message on campus

Story and photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

The purple t-shirt Andrea Ordoñez wore over her Nolan Catholic High School uniform Jan. 16 meant more than just participating in a pro-life activity on campus. The keepsake holds special significance for the senior who is part of the student body’s Lifesavers organization.

The shirt was designed by a national movement dedicated to helping people who struggle with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. Ordoñez wears the T-shirt in memory of a friend who killed himself last year.

“I saw how it affected another friend of mine who knew him well,” she says, explaining how the “To Write Love On Her Arms” campaign started as a way to raise money for a young woman’s treatment and grew into a larger suicide prevention effort. “It definitely made me more aware.”

Teen suicide was one of the issues included during a Jan. 12-16 Respect Life observance at Nolan that also highlighted abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty. The school’s Lifesavers Club sponsored several thought-provoking activities for students with help from the Diocese of Fort Worth Youth for Life group.

“The idea is to inform the kids and get them thinking and involved in the pro-life cause,” explains Sue Laux, Youth for Life director. “This is the second year we’ve done a pro-life week at Nolan.”

Because it coincides with the approaching anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, many activities focused on abortion. One event featured one-third of Nolan’s student population in black T-shirts. The gesture symbolized unborn members of the high school generation lost to abortion. Crosses were also erected in front of the school to illustrate the number of unborn children killed in Fort Worth clinics each week.

Members of the Lifesavers organization also distributed spiritual adoption cards and broadcast a pro-life video in classes. Many students attended a respect life prayer service in the chapel on Friday.

“Students don’t realize the huge numbers we’re dealing with when it comes to abortion,” says Susan Matassa, a Nolan senior and president of Lifesavers. “We want to give them facts and information, so they can have a better understanding of the issue. The topic makes some students uncomfortable, but it’s good for them to be exposed to it.”

Toni Corbett, a Nolan theology teacher and moderator for the Lifesavers organization, wears a T-shirt promoting the pro-life cause.

“Students don’t realize the huge numbers we’re dealing with when it comes to abortion. We want to give them facts and information, so they can have a better understanding of the issue. The topic makes some students uncomfortable, but it’s good for them to be exposed to it.”
— Senior Susan Matassa, president of Lifesavers

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FOCA’s threat against human life challenges us to take a stand

By Lucas Pollice

Do not underestimate the power of prayer. We must pray fervently that this legislation does not pass. Pray for our national leaders that they may see the truth about abortion and uphold the rights and dignity of the unborn. The rosary is an especially efficacious prayer not only for stopping this legislation, but ending abortion all together.

Although the presence of the spiritual soul cannot be observed experimentally, the conclusions of science regarding the human embryo give “a valuable indication for discerning by the use of reason a personal presence at the moment of the first appearance of a human life: how could a human individual not be a human person?”. Indeed, the reality of the human being for the entire span of life, both before and after birth, does not allow us to posit either a change in nature or a gradation in moral value, since it possesses full anthropological and ethical status. The human embryo has, therefore, from the very beginning, the dignity proper to a person. (Dignitatis Personae, 5)

Abortion claims many reasons and arguments. Many young women find themselves in very challenging and frightening, even dangerous situations with shaky home lives, unstable relationships, and limited resources. Many also face great fear in adverse prenatal diagnoses.

Any one of these would seem overwhelming, and yet we know of life’s immeasurable value, and so we are called as Christians to aid those who are burdened, frightened, and overwhelmed. We are called to defend with maximum determination the dignity of each and every human life from conception until natural death while at the same time proclaiming to all the Good News and the promise of eternal life with our Creator and Redeemer.

A NEW THREAT

As we continue as a Church to tirelessly defend and protect life, a new and daunting threat is emerging in the form of federal legislation entitled the Freedom of Choice Act or FOCA. This bill states that every woman has a “fundamental right” to abortion and that no government can “interfere” or “deny” this right. According to a fact sheet provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB):

FOCA states that every woman has a “fundamental right” to have an abortion, and no government (federal, state, or local) may “deny” or “interfere with” this right. Moreover, no government may “discriminate” against the exercise of this right when regulating or providing "benefits, facilities, services, or information" to the public. In other words, abortion may not be treated differently from live birth — if a public program supports motherhood, it must equally support abortion. FOCA endangers a wide range of laws enacted by the people and their elected representatives over 35 years — laws upheld under Roe and cases applying it. These include laws on informed consent, physician licensure, clinic safety, and taxpayer funding. FOCA’s far-reaching rule on abortion is more radical than anything wrought by Roe.

Thus, FOCA would make a woman’s so-called “right” to an abortion permanent and all encompassing. Here are some of the consequences if FOCA is allowed to pass:

1. FOCA will require taxpayers to pay for abortions. The current language in FOCA states that the government cannot discriminate against abortion in publicly funded programs — in other words there cannot be any exemptions for our tax dollars funding abortions.

2. FOCA will require states to allow partial-birth and other late term abortions. The recent federal and state bans on partial-birth abortions will be removed by FOCA, and this hideous form of abortion will be made available at any time for any reason.

3. FOCA will overturn laws allowing the right of conscientious objection to abortion. FOCA will in essence force doctors and hospitals who are opposed to performing abortions to perform them — including Catholic hospitals. The U.S. bishops have already made it clear that they will shut down Catholic hospitals before allowing abortions.

4. FOCA will overturn and nullify parental notification laws. Parents can no longer be notified of a minor’s decision to have an abortion or to be involved in that decision.

These are only a few of the consequences of this dangerous anti-life legislation. In addition, there is increased support for passing FOCA in the newly seated Congress, and President Obama has promised to sign FOCA if passed by Congress.

HOW TO ACT

Therefore we must act now and act quickly, if FOCA is to be stopped. Here are three effective things we can do:

1. Pray: Do not underestimate the power of prayer. We must pray fervently that this legislation does not pass. Pray for our national leaders that they may see the truth about abortion and uphold the rights and dignity of the unborn. The rosary is an especially efficacious prayer not only for stopping this legislation, but ending abortion altogether.

2. Write or contact your representatives in Congress and your senators: The United States Catholic Bishops have called for a nationwide postcard campaign in all of the parishes the weekend of Jan. 24 and 25. Bishop Vann is asking all of our parishes in the diocese to participate. Postcards are being made available to sign and send to our representatives and senators urging them to vote against FOCA.

3. Educate: Take the time to inform family, friends, and coworkers about FOCA. Many are ignorant of this legislation and do not know of the terrible consequences if it passes. We as a Church need to make others aware of these issues, as these are not just Catholic issues, but issues that involve and affect everyone in our country.

Now is the time to act, and we must act with a united voice to stop this legislation and to be the voice for those who do not yet have a voice.

For more information on FOCA, please go to our diocesan Web site www.fwdioc.org and click on “Respect Life” or contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore in the Diocesan Respect Life Office at (817) 560-3300 Ext. 257 or at cruthkillgore@fwdioc.org. You can also go to the USCCB Web site for additional information, downloads, fliers, and more at www.usccb.org and click on “Prolife/issues/FOCA/index.shtml

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Protecting the Earth

a matter of morality

By Fr. John S. Rausch

In 1988 James Hansen, a NASA scientist, testified before Congress that burning fossil fuels — coal, gas, and oil — was warming the earth.

At first the statement was met with skepticism, and public relations people from industry began actively sowing doubts about it. Yet, warm year followed warm year, until 2007 marked a watershed moment.

That year the earth experienced a dramatic surge in methane, a heat-trapping gas, from the melting permafrost that was accelerating further thawing. That same year the Northwest Passage stayed open all September for the first time in history.

Scientists now believe the earth has reached its “tipping point” for Arctic ice, which means the physical world on its own is taking command of the process that humans began. Some scientists predicted all Arctic summer ice would be gone by 2070, but now other scientists have revised the schedule for possibly 2012!

Further, the science community recognizes that the earth verges on crossing similar thresholds governing the reliability of monsoons, the acidification of the oceans, the availability of water from alpine glaciers, and the actual level of the sea.

For the past one thousand years the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere hovered around 275 ppm (parts per million), but with the Industrial Revolution and the accelerated burning of fossil fuels, that number started to rise. Twenty years after testifying before Congress, James Hansen with several coauthors published their latest findings saying to preserve a planet capable of sustaining civilization, the amount of carbon dioxide must be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm. Standing at 385 ppm, the level of carbon dioxide is growing by more than 2 ppm annually!

John Paul II reminded us in early 1990: “Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone...I wish to repeat that the ecological crisis is a moral issue.”

Even with the weighty evidence from the scientific community clearly demonstrating the reality of global warming and its dire consequences, politicians and ordinary people hesitate to face the urgency of the situation. Some cling to denial, but others trust in science and technology to find a “silver bullet” to alleviate humanity’s rightful concern. Yet disasters happen because sometimes science can neither prevent a threat nor detect it early enough.

When the great tsunami hit Southeast Asia on December 26, 2004, a quarter of a million people died. In its aftermath, survivors were amazed at how few dead animals lay among the debris. Stories surfaced that hours before the deadly “Harbor Wave” struck, animals were fleeing to higher ground, even some elephants breaking their chains to escape. While animals apparently sense the natural signs developed over thousands of years to help them survive, humans seem distracted by material things that keep them disconnected from the messages of nature.

“An education in ecological responsibility is urgent,” writes John Paul II, “responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth...a true education in responsibility entails a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behavior.”

Our economic system based on growth from burning fossil fuels is ruining our physical lives by destabilizing the climate and altering the sea level. We are burning not only the furniture, but the studs in the walls to fuel the furnace.

For the good of future generations and the survival of many poor today, we must somehow change our life styles and public policies and reduce the carbon dioxide levels to below the threshold number of 350 ppm.

— Pope John Paul II 1990 World Day of Peace Message

The other day I met a gentleman standing in a repair shop line. He was a kind man with gentle eyes, and before we parted, he said something that had to do with paths.

The end of his sentence rhymed with “ide” or “ahd,” depending on the degree of your Texas accent. But I didn’t hear the whole thing. So, to avoid saying “Par-don?” too many times, I smiled and agreed.

But what did he say, exactly? If it was, “Some of our paths have collided,” that could be either prophetic or historical, since I have collided with many things in my life: posts, poles, columns, curbs, signs, fences, garage doors, my front porch, and once a grocery cart. That one wasn’t my fault, because I was the collidee, while the errant metal monster, controlled by a careless shopper gone wild, was the collider.

None of those events had anything to do with this man. He wasn’t the recipient of any of my smashes. I hadn’t bumped the back of his pickup truck or even stepped on his toe while walking into the shop.

Maybe he’d said, “Sometimes our path’s disregarded,” which would be true. I didn’t know about him, but my own life had been a conical series of wrong turns and poorly-estimated moves. How would he have known that?

Driving home with my daughter Julie, I laughed, trying to figure out what the man had said.

“Maybe what he said was ‘Sometimes our lamps are lopsided,’” I said, “because that’s exactly why we went to the repair shop!”

It was my mother’s lamp. She gave it to me when I was 18 years old and my father had died. Mother’s goal was to replace her bedroom furniture, but she did it the lopsided way mothers frequently do, purchasing new furniture for me instead, while taking mine for herself.

She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon and a beautiful canopy bed — all for me. Her lamps were nothing! She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon and a beautiful canopy bed — all for me. She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon — all for me instead, while taking mine for herself.

She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon — all for me instead, while taking mine for herself. She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon and a beautiful canopy bed — all for me. She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon and a beautiful canopy bed — all for me. She bought a chest, a dressing table with mirror, a futon and a beautiful canopy bed — all for me.

“Maybe what he said was ‘Sometimes our path’s disregarded,’” I said, “because that’s exactly why we went to the repair shop!”

Well, their paths collided
Why Catholic? 

laughs those who 

The Why Catholic? 

Why Catholic? 

Why Catholic? 

Why Catholic? 

Why Catholic?

Working in NTPD’s 

Preparing a 

The Whys of Catholicism 

Fr. Mele urges parishioners to take final steps for Why Catholic? 

By Father Carmen Mele, OP 

Why Catholic? 

Why Catholic?
Cardinal George urges Obama to protect conscience rights

FROM PAGE 1

Cardinal George said he hoped the new president would “consider these comments in the spirit in which they are intended, as an invitation to set aside political pressures and ideologies and focus on the priorities and challenges that will unite us as a nation.”

“Again I want to express our hopes for your administration, and our offer to cooperate in advancing the common good and protecting the poor and vulnerable in these challenging times,” he added.

The cardinal noted that during his campaign Obama “spoke often about a need to reduce abortions” and had said he had no definite answer when asked at what point a baby has human rights.

“I think your remarks provide a basis for common ground,” Cardinal George said. “Uncertainty as to when human rights begin provides no basis for compelling others to violate their conviction that these rights exist from the beginning. After all, those people may be right.”

And if “the goal is to reduce abortions, that will not be achieved by involving the government in expanding and promoting abortions,” he added.

Commenting specifically on the HHHS conscience guaranty, Cardinal George said the regulation was “a long-overdue measure for implementing three statutes enacted by Congress over the last 35 years.”

“An administration committed to faithfully implementing and enforcing the laws of the United States will want to retain this common-sense regulation, which explicitly protects the rights of health professionals who choose not to perform abortion to serve the basic health needs of their communities,” he said.

“Suggestions that government involvement in health care will be aimed at denying conscience, or excluding Catholic and other health care providers from participation in serving the public good, could threaten much-needed health care reform at the outset,” the cardinal added.

He said the Mexico City policy, first implemented in 1984, “has wrongly been attacked as a restriction on foreign aid for family planning” but instead ensures that family planning funds “are not diverted to organizations dedicated to performing and promoting abortions instead of reducing them.”

“Once the clear line between family planning and abortion is erased, the idea of using family planning to reduce abortions becomes meaningless, and abortion tends to replace contraception as the means for reducing family size,” said the cardinal’s letter to Obama.

On embryonic stem-cell research, Cardinal George said “recent startling advances in reprogramming adult cells, along with progress in research using adult and cord-blood stem cells, make any change in current policy “especially pointless.”

“To divert scarce funds away from these promising avenues of research and treatment toward the avenue that is most morally controversial as well as most medically speculative would be a sad victory of politics over science,” he said.

Washington (CNS)—Declaring that every life is “a gift from our Creator that is sacred, unique, and worthy of protection,” President George W. Bush proclaimed Jan. 18, the Sunday before the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, as National Sanctity of Human Life Day.

On this day “our country recognizes that each person, including every person waiting to be born, has a special place and purpose in this world. We also underscore our dedication to heeding this message of conscience by speaking up for the weak and voiceless among us,” he said in the proclamation issued Jan. 15.

Bush urged Americans “to recognize this day with appropriate ceremonies and to underscore our commitment to respecting and protecting the life and dignity of every human being.”

On Jan. 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion, and the Doe v. Bolton decision, which lifted state restrictions on abortion.

In his proclamation, the president noted that his administration had been “committed to building a culture of life by vigorously promoting adoption and parental notification laws, opposing federal funding for abortions overseas, encouraging teen abstinence, and funding crisis pregnancy programs.”

Bush also noted the pro-life legislation he signed into law during his presidency, such as the federal law to protect infants born alive after an attempted abortion or other procedure, the federal ban on partial-birth abortion and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

“We aspire to build a society in which every child is welcome in life and protected in law,” he said in the proclamation. “We also encourage more of our fellow Americans to join our just and noble cause. History tells us that with a cause rooted in our deepest principles and appealing to the best instincts of our citizens, we will prevail.”

Bleach given to sterilize water, fight cholera in Zimbabwe

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (CNS) — A South African Catholic charity is raising money to buy household bleach to sterilize drinking water in neighboring Zimbabwe, where a cholera epidemic has killed more than 1,600 people.

About $16,000 has been raised since the Cape Town-based Catholic Welfare and Development’s Jik for Zim campaign was launched in mid-December, Sally Timmel, coordinator of the campaign, told Catholic News Service Jan. 5. Jik is a brand of bleach.

Zimbabwe’s Catholic Development Commission and other local nongovernmental organizations will distribute the bleach, with instructions on how to use it, to more than 1,000 towns and villages affected by the highly infectious bacterial disease contracted by ingesting contaminated food or water, Timmel said.

Cholera, which causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, has spread to all of Zimbabwe’s 10 provinces. The World Health Organization said Dec. 31 that Zimbabwe had more than 30,000 reported cases of cholera and the infection rate shows no signs of slowing.

“One teaspoon of Jik will purify 25 liters of drinking water overnight,” said the campaign’s press release.

The WHO said related cases of cholera also have been reported in neighboring South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique as infected Zimbabweans cross borders in search of help. The epidemic has heightened the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe, which has chronic food and fuel shortages and where prices double every 24 hours.

Aid agencies say that more than 5 million Zimbabweans face starvation.

“When we have enough Jik we will use whatever money is left to buy food for Zimbabweans,” Timmel said.
Pope Benedict XVI says Christians need to promote life, traditional families

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Today more than ever, Christian families need to pay witness to and promote the irreplaceable value of life and the family based on marriage between a man and a woman, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“The best service that we Christians can offer today’s society,” he said, “is being ‘people who are free and rich with human and Gospel values and who are on a journey toward holiness.’

The traditional family is “an indispensable foundation of society and peoples as well as an irreplaceable good for children who deserve to come into the world as a fruit of love and the total and generous giving of the parents,” he said, at the end of the Sixth World Meeting of Families which took place Jan. 14-18 in Mexico City.

The pope made his comments via satellite from the Vatican Jan. 18 after a closing Mass at the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Mass was celebrated by the pope’s envoy, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone.

“The best service that we Christians can offer today’s society,” he said, “is being ‘people who are free and rich with human and Gospel values and who are on a journey toward holiness.’

Every Christian must help promote ‘legislative and administrative measures’ that support the traditional family and their ‘inalienable rights,” he said.

The pope said the family, “founded on indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman, is the expression of this relational, filial, and communal aspect of life. It is the setting where men and women are enabled to be born with dignity, and to grow and develop in an integral manner.”

But families’ efforts to be a true school of humanity and perennial values are being hindered by “a deceptive concept of freedom,” the pope said.

This false sense of freedom, he said, glorifies whims and individual impulses “to the point of leaving everyone locked up in the prison of his or her own ‘I.’”

“True human freedom comes from having been created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, should be exercised with responsibility, always opting for the true good, so that it becomes love, the gift of self,” the pope said.

Real love and closeness among family members are needed more than ideals or theories, he added.

“It is through one’s concrete experience in the home “that one learns to truly live and value life and health, freedom and peace, justice and truth, work, harmony, and respect,” he said.

Pope Benedict also said his prayers were with families who are facing the trials of poverty, illness, isolation, and separation because of migration, as well as those families being persecuted for their Christian faith.

He encouraged large families who are oftentimes criticized or not understood by others yet are giving “an example of generosity and faith in God.”

He urged families to pray together, especially the rosary, and to build their faith on listening to the word of God and working to incorporate Gospel values concretely in their lives.
**National Newsbriefs**

No time to waste: SCHIP vote just one step on long road to health reform

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As the reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program zooms through Congress at nearly unprecedented speed, health reform advocates aren’t taking the time to put themselves on the back. “There’s a tremendous amount to be enthusiastic about in the SCHIP reauthorization,” said Alan Weil, executive director of the National Academy for State Health Policy and former executive director of the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, at a Jan. 15 forum in Washington on “Health Care Reform and Children: The Prognosis for Change in 2009.” “But SCHIP is not a comprehensive health agenda and was not meant to be,” Weil added. “Much work remains to be done.” The reauthorization bill that passed the House by a 289-139 vote Jan. 14 would expand the joint federal-state program to include about 4 million more children, including some 240,000 children of legal immigrants. It would be funded by increasing the federal tax on cigarettes by 61 cents to a dollar per pack. The Senate Finance Committee approved a similar version of the legislation late Jan. 15, and President Barack Obama has said he hopes to sign the reauthorization bill as one of his first acts as president.

Bishop John Wester says ACLU suit over USCCB trafficking grants without merit

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services over human trafficking grants allocated to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is without merit, according to the chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration. Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City said in a Jan. 15 statement that he hoped the U.S. Justice Department would “mount a vigorous defense” against the lawsuit, which charges that HHS is violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment “by permitting USCCB to impose a religiously based restriction on the use of taxpayer funds.” The “religiously based restriction” it cited was that the USCCB requires its subcontractors providing the direct services to trafficking victims to not use the funds for contraceptives or abortion or contraception referrals. Bishop Wester said the lawsuit threatened both “the weakest in our society” and religious liberty. The suit, ACLU of Massachusetts vs. Leavitt, was filed Jan. 12 in the U.S. District Court for Massachusetts, based in Boston. It asks for a permanent injunction requiring HHS to ensure that funds under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act are disbursed “without the imposition of religiously based restrictions.”

Father Neuhaus recalled as spiritual patriarch who influenced faith of many

NEW YORK (CNS) — Father Richard John Neuhaus was a spiritual patriarch whose “priestly and fatherly soul generated sons to the order of grace and begat many who labor even now to make his beloved America a morally great nation,” according to Father Raymond J. de Souza. He made the comments in his homily at the Jan. 10 funeral Mass for Father Neuhaus Jan. 13 at Immaculate Conception Church in New York. Father Neuhaus, a former Lutheran minister who became a Catholic priest and ardent defender of church teaching on life issues, died Jan. 8 after the recurrence of cancer he was diagnosed with at age 72 and was a pro-life activist. The Canadian-born Neuhaus was an author, lecturer, and the founder of First Things, a journal published by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. According to its mission statement, the magazine is “an ecumenical journal whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.” Father de Souza, a priest of the Archdiocese of Kingston, Ontario, said Father Neuhaus “never ceased to call upon the Lord of life for those most vulnerable.”

Vatican report: Most U.S. seminaries are generally healthy

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An apostolic visitation team concluded that U.S. Catholic seminaries and houses of priestly formation are generally healthy, but recommended a stronger focus on moral theology, increased oversight of seminarians, and greater involvement of diocesan bishops in the formation process.

“This visitation has demonstrated that, since the 1990s, a greater sense of stability now pervades in the U.S. seminaries,” the report said. “The appointment, over time, of rectors who are wise and faithful to the church has meant a gradual improvement, at least in the diocesan seminaries.”

The report, sparked by the sexual abuse crisis that hit the U.S. church, concluded that seminaries appeared to have made improvements in the area of seminarian morality, most notably with regards to homosexual behavior.

“Of course, here and there some case or other of immorality — again, usually homosexual behavior — continues to show up,” the report said. “However, in the main, the superiors now deal with these issues promptly and appropriately.”

The report was dated Dec. 15 and signed by Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, head of the Congregation for Catholic Education, which deals with seminaries. It was published on the Web site of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to coincide with National Vocation Awareness Week, which began Jan. 12.

The report said some seminarians need to examine how educators can ensure the good behavior of their students when they are off-campus as well as their access to emerging technology.

“Seminaries face extra challenges today, as compared to recent years,” the report said. “Among these is how to monitor the students’ use of the Internet.” It recommended that seminaries and religious houses of priestly formation use Internet-filtering programs and restrict Internet use to public rooms within the seminary.

Bishops sometimes delegate too much responsibility for the acceptance of diocesan candidates to their vocation directors and other subordinates, the report said.

“This is unfortunate, as it is the bishop who will ultimately have to call, or not call, the candidate to orders,” it said, recommending a more collaborative approach to the formation process.

Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, said in a letter to U.S. bishops that it was “gratifying to read in the report that our seminaries are generally in a healthy condition that strongly promotes the formation of men for the sacred ministry in this country.”

“The general conclusions of the visitation are positive,” Cardinal O’Malley added. “I am sure that all bishops and religious superiors will take seriously the observations and recommendations of the congregation that will further strengthen our seminaries and houses of formation.”

The plan to hold apostolic visitations to assess the quality of formation in seminaries arose in Rome at an April 2002 special meeting of the U.S. cardinals and U.S. bishops’ officials with top Vatican officials.

Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien, now head of the Baltimore Archdiocese, was chosen to coordinate the visitation team, which included 117 bishops and seminary personnel. Archbishop O’Brien was rector of the Pontifical North American College, the U.S. seminary in Rome, from 1990 to 1994.

For five years before that and two years after, he headed the New York archdiocesan seminary, St. Joseph’s in Yonkers, New York.

Working in teams of three for smaller programs or four for the larger ones, the panels visited more than 200 U.S. seminaries and formation houses in 2005 and 2006. The visitations paid special attention to areas such as the quality of the seminarians’ human and spiritual formation for living chastely and of their intellectual formation for faithfulness to church teachings, especially in the area of moral theology.

Cardinal O’Malley noted that although the report generally praised the academic standards of most institutions for both philosophy and theology, it reported gaps in some programs, particularly in the areas of the theological study of Mary and the study of early Christian writers, as well as some lack of commitment to sentire cum ecclesia (to think with the church) in the area of moral theology.

Editor’s Note: The apostolic visitation report is available on its entirety online at www.usccb.org/cclv/final_report.pdf.
Pope expresses hope for Gaza truce, resumption of dialogue

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI said he hoped a fragile cease-fire in the Gaza Strip would be the first step toward serious negotiations for a lasting peace in the Holy Land.

The pope made the remarks at his noon blessing at the Vatican Jan. 18. The same day, the Palestinian militant organization Hamas said it would stop rocket attacks so that Israel could withdraw its troops from Gaza after a deadly three-week offensive.

The pope offered prayers for “the hundreds of children, elderly, and women, the innocent victims of unheard-of violence, the wounded, those mourning the loved ones, and who have lost their possessions.”

At least 1,300 Palestinians were killed in the offensive, many of them civilians, according to Palestinian sources. Israel reported the deaths of 13 people, including three civililians, who were “being tragically scourged by death, human pain, material damage, and tears that cry out for peace.”

At the United Nations Jan. 16, a Vatican representative expressed the church’s closeness to civilian victims in Gaza and urged continuing U.N. action to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need.

“In the past few days we have witnessed a practical failure from all sides to respect the distinction of civilians from military targets,” said Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the apostolic nuncio and permanent observer to the United Nations.

He addressed a special session of the U.N. General Assembly on the topic “Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

The pope asked leaders on both sides to “help their people rise up from the ruins and from terror and courageously resume the path of dialogue in justice and truth.”

The Vatican announced Jan. 17 that the pope was sending a cash gift to aid relief efforts carried out by the small Catholic community in Gaza, including Blessed Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity.

A Vatican statement said church personnel in Gaza were serving the most vulnerable people in the Holy Land, who were “being tragically scourged by death, human pain, material damage, and tears that cry out for peace.”

A girl is helped at the scene of a rocket attack in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, Israel, Jan. 12. An Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip, which began Dec. 27, was aimed at ending Hamas rocket strikes on Israel. (CNS photo/Baz Ratner, Reuters)

“I am confident that you understand the importance of continuing…. indeed, expanding the eminent tradition of Catholic education in your parishes…. Catholic education serves the future of all Americans by teaching and communicating the very riches on which American democracy rests.”

- Pope John Paul II
to a gathering in Baltimore

JohnSons Press supports the efforts to educate the children of our diocese.

INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Once controversial, U.S.-Vatican relations mark silver anniversary

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican and the United States quietly celebrated a silver anniversary in mid-January, marking 25 years of formal diplomatic relations. The U.S. Embassy to the Holy See observed the event with a symposium and a dinner, where about 50 guests raised their glasses in a toast to a milestone that today seems inevitable, but once seemed unthinkable. The U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Mary Ann Glendon, who was to leave her post six days later to return to a teaching job at Harvard, drew appreciative laughter at the dinner when she read from an 1865 letter that described Rome as the perfect listening post. At that time, the secretary of the U.S. legation to the Papal States wrote to his superiors in Washington and asked for a bigger budget, so he could give “small but frequent entertainments” to other diplomats and the monsignors heading Vatican departments. “European diplomacy is carried on by dinners and parties — you gather information this way to be obtained in no other manner,” he wrote. A glance around the embassy’s banquet tables found clerical and diplomatic guests nodding in assent.

Pope encourages Iran’s Catholics to persevere patiently

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI encouraged Iran’s tiny Catholic communities to be patient and persistent as they try to improve relations with the government and ensure a continued Christian presence in the Islamic republic. He also called on the “fast and beautiful country” to contribute to “the common good and peace among nations,” particularly in the Middle East. Iran’s four Armenian, Chaldean, and Latine-rite Catholic bishops met the pope Jan. 16 at the end of their “ad limina” visits to report on the status of their dioceses. Pope Benedict said that in order to overcome some of the concrete difficulties Iranian Catholics face, including providing enough priests to minister to the country’s scattered Catholic communities, “the establishment of a bilateral commission with your government is being considered.” Such a commission, he said, also could be a channel “to develop relations and mutual understanding between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Catholic Church.”

Holy Land patriarch says violence never a solution to problems

JERUSALEM (CNS) — Violence may seem like an easy solution to complex problems, but it is not the answer, said Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal of Jerusalem. “Violence no matter where it comes from and whatever form it takes must be condemned,” the patriarch told several hundred Catholic Palestinian children participating in the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation’s fifth annual Journey to Bethlehem, in the West Bank, Jan. 11. Accompanied by bishops and church leaders of the Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in Support of the Church of the Holy Land, Patriarch Twal called on religious and political leaders to show “compassion, wisdom, and mercy.” Addressing the crowd, Archbishop Patrick Kelly of Liverpool, England, vice president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, said the religious leaders had come not only to show solidarity with the local church but also to “pray for a greater and safer future for…. the many children that live in the Holy Land.”
M y mom and dad, like many other parents, tried during my childhood to teach me the wisdom of doing certain things: eating my vegetables, putting money aside in savings, getting enough sleep, caring for my belongings, etc. The repetition of their instructions usually had limited effect, for even as I paid lip service to them most of the time, I obeyed because they held a position of authority, not because I recognized the truth in their admonitions. As I became more mature and less stubborn, I received those same nuggets of parental advice more enthusiastically — but mostly from the mouths of other people with whom I didn’t share the parent-child relationship. This Sunday’s passage from Deuteronomy follows several chapters’ worth of seemingly endless statutes and commandments covering a variety of situations: a collection of Yahweh’s “parental advice” to his people. While each of these directives conveys a truth helpful for living faithfully in community, it’s easy to see how this same people, generations removed from a relational encounter with the living God at Mount Horeb, might have “hardened their hearts” as well as their ears, rendering them unmoved by God’s message. When Jesus taught in the synagogue, he repeated many of the words that his ancestors had heard, but something about the way he communicated them — “a new teaching with authority” — not only drove out unclean spirits but jarred his hearers from their complacency and opened them anew to the healing, yet challenging presence of the living God in their midst. In Jesus, God not only raised up the promised prophet “from among your own kin” and brought a fresh voice to the ancient truths, he himself became living Word among us. For many Christians today, the Scriptures are widely accessible through the printed page and repeated liturgical proclamation — a privilege so familiar and taken for granted that we become impervious to their transforming power. By inviting Jesus, the living Word of God, into our hearing and reading of Scripture, we not only open ourselves to receive God’s words anew in all their richness, but we move beyond lip service to the loving relationship that God longs to have with each of us.

QUESTIONS:
How have your ears become deaf or your heart unresponsive to the words of Scripture? How can an encounter with Jesus, the living Word, restore freshness to your hearing and reading of Scripture?
The quality of drivenness is obvious in the attitudes of Paul and Jesus in this weekend’s readings. Paul’s great desire was to preach the Good News to others so they could enter into the love of God made possible by Jesus’ presence among us. Jesus was moved to carry out the Father’s will by going about announcing the love of God and showing His Father’s greatness, power, and compassion through healing and teaching. They showed the highest of motivations: the desire to help others in the name of God, and a self-forgetfulness in pursuing that goal.

Job, by contrast, pulls himself along, suffering the passing of time, purposeless, depressed, and defeated. He has no great drive; he has all but given up under the great weight of his trials. We can identify with both ways of facing the world. We learn in other passages that, to Job’s credit, he clings to the shard of his broken faith in the face of his supposed friends who search for ways to find him at fault for his run of incredibly hard times. Even his wife asks why he doesn’t simply curse God and die.

But faith, no matter how small, is substantial, and without knowing why God is allowing all of this to happen, Job perseveres in the belief that God remains God, no matter what.

At this moment, my wife, who had major cancer surgery only three weeks ago, is spending her second uncomfortable night in the hospital with her elderly, frail mother who injured her hip. Tomorrow, unable to walk, her mother will have to go to the hospital to some other form of assisted care to help her with the simplest things of life. She remains the same delightful, happy woman I have known for 45 years despite an aphasia that robs her of her power to effectively use spoken words to communicate.

Sometimes life is hard. But my wife, like Job, continues on. Like Paul and Jesus, she has a sense of purpose, a drive to do what she can to make sure her mother is cared for with love and respect.

And with the psalmist we can still say: “Praise the Lord, for he is good … Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

QUESTIONS:

Have you had to endure hard times in pursuit of your goal of serving God, others, or your family? What did you learn from persevering in faith? How has it made you stronger?

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¿Por qué ser católico?
A dónde pertenecen estos talleres dentro del plan general?

El padre Mele anima a las parroquias a terminar de fundar el programa ¿Por qué ser católico?

Preguntas frecuentes sobre… ¿Por qué ser católico?

1. ¿Qué beneficios ofrecerá a mi parroquia el programa ¿Por qué ser católico?
Mientras los feligreses profundizan las experiencias y el conocimiento de su fe, su confianza crece de tal manera que pueden compartir su religión con familia y amigos. Con más conocimiento, las liturgias llegan a ser más reveladoras. Siendo parte de una comunidad pequeña fortalece el sentido de pertenencia en todos los feligreses.

2. ¿Cómo está estructurado el programa ¿Por qué ser católico? refleja los cuatro fundamentos del Catecismo de la iglesia católica. Cada fundamento está cubierto en un libro para compartir la fe en las comunidades pequeñas, apoyado con talleres para la formación de la fe y experiencias de retiros. Si se termina cada libro en dos sesiones de seis semanas cada uno, la serie enteramente se podría completar en cuatro años. Los feligreses se podrían beneficiar con su participación en este programa en cualquier momento del proceso.

3. ¿Ofrecerá una doctrina relevante el programa ¿Por qué ser católico? Las materias del programa ¿Por qué ser católico? incluyen citas y referencias directas del Catecismo. Han recibido el Imprimatur y el Nihil Obstat, y también han sido evaluadas por el comité ad hoc de los obispos de los Estados Unidos para evaluar el uso del Catecismo.
El cardenal George promete trabajar con Obama en varios asuntos de política

WASHINGTON (CNS) — El presidente de la Conferencia estadounidense de bispos católicos ha prometido que él y sus compañeros prelados trabajaran con la administración entrante de Barack Obama y con el 111° Congreso para “avanzar el bien común y defender la vida y la dignidad de todos, especialmente del vulnerable y pobre”.

En una carta del 13 de enero al presidente electo, el cardenal Francis E. George, de Chicago, ofreció un amplio esbozo de prioridades de política que preocupan a los obispos estadounidenses, extendiéndose desde la recuperación económica que cubre todos los segmentos de la sociedad hasta proteger las vidas “de los miembros de la familia humana más vulnerables que no tienen voz”, especialmente los niños que están por nacer.

Una carta correspondiente fue enviada al vicepresidente electo Joseph Biden y a cada miembro del Congreso.

El cardenal George le recordó a Obama que los obispos enfocan la política pública como pastores y maestros, y que los principios morales que los dirigen han sido desarrollados mediante su experiencia, cuidando de la gente que está en necesidad.

La carta del cardenal trató particularmente la crisis económica, los servicios médicos, los asuntos internacionales y la inmigración, el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer, el empoderamiento de los grupos basados en la fe, como socios para superar la pobreza, y las amenazas contra la dignidad humana y la importancia de proteger al vulnerable y al que no tiene voz, especialmente el que está por nacer.

El cardenal George volvió a declarar la oposición de mucho tiempo de la iglesia contra los esfuerzos de ampliar o financiar el aborto con dólares provenientes de impuestos.

En el frente económico, aconsejó a Obama hacer de las familias pobres y los trabajadores vulnerables una “prioridad clara”, sugiriendo que las medidas de recuperación incluyan nuevas inversiones y maneras de fortalecer la maya de seguridad pública.

El cardenal George pidió a Obama “asegurar una cobertura de servicios médicos verdaderamente universal” que proteja toda la vida, incluyendo los niños que están por nacer, y provea acceso a los servicios médicos para todos, especialmente para la gente pobre.

La carta trató varias preocupaciones internacionales, incluyendo una transición responsable en Irak, de modo que el país esté libre de persecución religiosa, y un fin a los conflictos violentos en Tierra Santa.

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El Papa dice que el futuro del mundo depende de las soluciones éticas para desterrar la pobreza y la guerra

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Diciendo que el futuro del mundo estaba en juego, el Papa Benedicto XVI hizo un llamado para que se realicen nuevos esfuerzos a fin de reducir la pobreza mundial, terminar los conflictos regionales y restaurar la ética en los sistemas financieros mundiales.

En su discurso anual ante el cuerpo diplomático del Vaticano, el 8 de enero, el Papa también abogó a favor de las minorías cristianas en lugares como Iraq y la India, exhortando a los gobiernos a responder con firmeza contra los actos de violencia y discriminación anticientistas que recientemente han aumentado.

Después de su discurso, que se llevó a cabo en la decorada sala Regia, el Pontífice, de 81 años de edad, saludó a cada uno de los diplomáticos y posó para fotografía de grupo. Entonces, los representantes, se encontraba la embajadora de los Estados Unidos ante el Vaticano, Mary Ann Glendon, que se suponía dejaría su cargo el 19 de enero.

En su discurso, a veces conoció como “estadito del mundo”, el Papa revisó la situación actual de varios continentes, desde la crisis de refugiados en África central hasta la reciente ofensiva militar en la franja territorial de Gaza. El Papa censuró los ataques terroristas que “han sembrado la muerte y destrucción” en países como Filipinas, Algeria; pero también encontró despidas de vanes de las partes más pobres del planeta en el acceso a alimentos y agua. “¿Cómo no podemos pensar en tantos países que viven en algunas de las partes más pobres del planeta en su acceso a alimentos y agua?” dijo.

El papa dijo que el mundo se ve amenazado no solamente por la pobreza y por la pobreza moral, sino también por la pobreza, como se ha visto en los actos de violencia y violencia en contra de miles de cristianos durante el año pasado.

Y aprovechando el tema de su reciente mensaje del Día mundial de la paz, les dijo a los diplomáticos que “para edificar la paz debemos darles nuestra esperanza a los pobres”. En la actual “fase delicada de la historia de la humanidad”, dijo, los principios morales y éticos son cruciales para el mejoramiento de las condiciones de millones de personas que viven en situación precaria.

“¿Cómo no podemos pensar en tantas personas y en familias oprimidas por las dificultades e inseguridades que la actual crisis financiera y económica ha provocado a escala mundial?” dijo.

“¿Cómo no podemos mencionar la crisis de alimentos y el calentamiento global, que hacen aún la situación más difícil para los que viven en algunas de las partes más pobres del planeta en su acceso a alimentos y agua?” dijo.

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

Si usted o alguien que conozca es víctima de conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de cualquier persona que trabaja para la iglesia, sea voluntario, empleado, o miembro del clero, puede reportarlo de todas las maneras siguientes:

• Llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de asistencia para víctimas, al número (817) 560-3306, Ext. 201, o, mandarle correo electrónico a jlocke@fwdioc.org.
• Llamar al número de emergencia para el abuso sexual: (817) 560-2452, Ext. 900.
• O llamar al Centro Católico al número: (817) 560-2452, Ext. 102 y preguntar por el canciller/moderador de la curia, el padre James Hart.

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

Llamar al Ministerio de familias de Texas, Servicios de protección (Servicios de protección de niños) al número (800) 252-5400.

Centro Diocesano de Cursillos

Estás cordialmente invitado a pasar un fin de semana de retiro —pláticas, reflexión, orientación, encuentro con el Señor y con otros buscadores de la verdad — en el

Centro de Cursillos de Fort Worth

Matrimonios

Todas clases de parejas, enero 30, 31 y febrero 1, comenzando a las 7 p.m. Para información o reservación, llame a Sergio o Dulce Morataya: (817) 733-3143

Mujeres

Entre los 16 y 30 años, febrero 27, 28 y marzo 1, comenzando a las 7 p.m. Para información o reservación, llame a María Quereza: (817) 624-4911

Muchachos

Entre los 16 y 30 años, marzo 6, 7 y 8, comenzando a las 7 p.m. Para información o reservación, llame a María Quereza: (817) 624-4911

Adultos

Hombres y mujeres, un día de retiro de cuarenta, domingo, marzo 15, desde las 8 a.m. a las 5 p.m. Para información o reservación, llame a Martha Galvan: (817) 770-6522

Todos estos retiros son en español

También se puede llamar para toda clase de información al Centro de Cursillos (817) 624-9411 o mandar correo electrónico a cursillos@aol.com.

Estamos para ayudarle en nombre del Señor y de nuestra diócesis.
Bishop Farrell and pro-life leaders stir crowd’s enthusiasm for life

The Dallas event frequently is poignant because of its place in history — the city where the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion was filed.

Marques Dunham, 20, a student at Christ the Nations Institute in Oak Cliff, was at the cathedral plaza with dozens of friends and was carrying a sign that read “Adoption, the loving option.”

“I’m here to support life,” he said. “I’m just totally against the fact that women don’t seem to think they have a decision but to kill their babies.”

He was one of several hundred youth and young adults who participated in the rally and the march, among other programs surrounding the annual event.

In his homily, the cathedral’s chaplain, the Knights of Columbus led a procession of two dozen priests who had joined Bishop Farrell and 36 people representing the years 1973-2009. They would later place a rose at the foot of the altar, representing each year since the Supreme Court decision.

After the bilingual Mass, hundreds of people spilled into the plaza for a rally that called for the faithful to write to their legislators to oppose the pending Freedom of Choice Act and other legislation that would make abortions easier.

“Last year, I said I wanted to see double the crowd,” Bishop Farrell said at the rally. “I hate to tell you the bad news. I want to see double the crowd next year.”

“This is a wonderful testimony to life — the greatest gift and the most precious gift that God has given to anybody,” he said.

He also told the crowd to be steadfast in its resolve for life.

“It is important that we not become discouraged,” he said. “It is important that we continue the struggle and that we not give up. We must never, never, never be discouraged because we must continue to stand up for life.”

He was joined by Dr. Robert Jeffress, pastor of the First Baptist Church, who preached about the biblical teachings against abortion and asked the crowd several times to pray with him.

“As a people of God, and despite the travesty of abortion, I believe it is time for people like you and me today to affirm a few truths about abortion that the Bible speaks without stuttering,” he said.

“We need to stand up and say without hesitation that the word of God says that life begins at conception; that life begins in the womb,” he said.

Angela Walters, director of Catholics Respect Life of Fort Worth, said that since the rally last year, approximately 1.3 million children have been aborted across the country.

“We need our hands, our legs, our minds, and our hearts to fight against the culture of death,” she said. “Write your legislators regularly and tell them that we don’t want legislation called the Freedom of Choice Act to be passed and that we don’t want our government to pay for abortions or force physicians to perform abortions.”

State Rep. Dan Patrick, R-Houston, said that his faith and that of his family is affirmed daily. He is Baptist and his wife is Catholic.

He urged the crowd to join him in getting involved in government, especially because of leadership changes in Washington and at the Speaker of the House level in Austin.

“They say that in business if you are not involved in politics, you are not involved in business,” he said. “If you believe in pro-life, and you are not involved in politics, you are not doing all that you can for the pro-life movement.

“No one can get me to stand down when Jesus wants me to stand up for his work, and abortion is nothing more than an attack on God,” he said.

Marchers making their way from the cathedral to the federal courthouse, included people of all ages and from different parts of the area. Men and women alike pushed strollers. Others, including members of youth groups, carried signs proclaiming their schools or parishes; others carried placards that encouraged adoption and still others had the word “life” on their arms and faces.

At the Earle Cabell Federal Building the marchers stopped for more words of encouragement and prayers before returning to First Baptist Church for a reception and another informational rally.

“Don’t wait until next year’s March for Life to stand up for life,” said Karen Garnett, executive director of the Dallas Catholic Pro-Life Committee. “Babies die in Dallas six days a week and they need you to stand up for them and defend their lives.”

Milwaukee social worker to chair bishops’ National Review Board

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The former director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee has been appointed to chair the bishops’ National Review Board by Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Diane Knight, a social worker from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and a member of St. John’s Church in Oak Creek, was appointed to chair the board by George, who praised her as a “woman of great faith and wisdom.”

“I congratulate the cardinal on his appointment,” said George. “I am confident that Diane will bring the necessary depth and breadth to this important role.”

The National Review Board is the United States Catholic bishops’ national review board that issues guidelines for their response to the abuse allegations and misconduct in the church. The board was established in 1992 after the founding of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The board’s responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of the charter of the Catholic Church in the United States to strengthen and renew its efforts for the protection of youth and people and healing for victims.

“The last several years have witnessed great strides in the efforts of the Catholic Church in the United States to strengthen and renew its efforts for the protection of young people and healing for victims,” said Diane Knight, a member of the National Review Board.

Knight, a member of the National Review Board since 2007, spent the first 20 years of her career in social work directly involved in child protection and related services for Milwaukee County.

She currently serves on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee’s Community Advisory Board, which, along with the Archdiocesan Review Board, advises the Milwaukee archbishop on child and youth protection and victim outreach. She also serves on the Milwaukee Area Review Board, which advises orders of Catholic religious priests and brothers on child and youth protection.

Knight received her master’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, also served on the Code of Ethics Task Force of Catholic Charities USA.

Her appointment to the National Review Board reflects the continuation of the dedicated efforts undertaken by the bishops to create a safe environment within the church for children and youths, and to care for and protect the victims of sexual abuse and their families, Cardinal George said.

“We bishops are dedicated to the continued implementation of the charter and the application of the guidelines for our response to the grave sin and crime of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy,” he said. “The collaboration and support of the NRB has been a critical source of advice and assistance in that undertaking.”

The National Review Board flourished under the direction of Merz, Cardinal George said, adding that he expects that trend will continue when Knight takes the helm.

“Diane Knight has been a trusted and valued member of the board, and we are confident that the board will continue to flourish under her leadership,” said George.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Vatican official said the denial of humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip demonstrates the urgent need for greater protection of civilians during conflicts.


“The day after he spoke, the United Nations was forced to suspend its humanitarian operations in the city of Gaza when Israel shelled the U.N. headquarters there, injuring three workers and setting a blaze that destroyed relief aerials,” he said.

Other international aid agencies have found it difficult or impossible to deliver humanitarian assistance since the Israeli offensive began Dec. 27. More than 1,000 Palestinians, including several hundred civilians, have died in the conflict, as of Jan. 15, 131 Israelis had died, three of them civilians killed by Hamas rockets.

Archbishop Migliore said that “overwhelming mistreatment of civilians” occurs in too many parts of the world. He said civilians are being deliberately targeted as a means for achieving political or military gains.

“In the past few days we have witnessed a practical failure, from every side, to respect the distinction of civilians from military targets,” he said.

“It is sadly clear that political and military designs supersede basic respect for the dignity and rights of persons and communities. Civilians in armed conflicts are used without taking all reasonable measures to avoid civilians; when women and children are used as a shield for combatants; when humanitarian access is denied; when the Gaza Strip, when people are displaced and villages destroyed in Darfur (Sudan); and when we see sexual violence devastated the lives of women and children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” he said.

The archbishop said humanitarian access, the special protection of children and women, and disarmament were the “three vital pillars” for providing better protection to civilians. In order to enforce that existing mechanisms designed to safeguard noncombatants, he said, the United Nations needs to hold member states accountable for their actions.

More generally, he said, the human rights of civilians comes from massive production of increasingly sophisticated weapons. The higher quality and availability of light weapons and anti-personnel weapons “tragi- cally make the killing of human beings that much easier and more efficient,” he said.
Stephen's legacy of generosity lives on through others

FROM PAGE 28

Spirit Games in 2007 and 2008, exemplify the underlying force that takes off. President-elect Barack Obama met with Mexican President Felipe Calderon, prompting advice and recommendations about how the two leaders' governments should be handling immigration, among other issues.

Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. Catholic bishops' migration committee, encouraged the two men to end abuses against migrants and put more effort into economic development to stem the flow from leaving their homelands.

“The issue of illegal immigration transcends borders and must be addressed on a regional, if not hemispheric level,” Bishop Wester said in a statement released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington Jan. 12, the day Obama and Calderon met.

The bishop said the long-term solution to illegal immigration “is not militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, but economic development in poor regions. At a minimum, U.S. trade and international economic policies should not contribute to this forced migration.”

A meeting with the president of Mexico before or soon after the inauguration of the U.S. president has become something of a tradition for the neighboring leaders.

Obama and Calderon held a private lunch at the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington and met briefly with the press, describing their discussion only in general terms. They said they talked about organized crime, immigration reform, the financial crisis, energy, and other hemisphere issues.

Calderon met with President George W. Bush the next day. Obama was elected by a wide margin among Hispanic and immigrant voters, and expectations are high for new approaches in dealing with immigration and policies that affect Latin American countries.

Bishop Wester’s statement reminded the two leaders that “migrants risk their well-being and lives to migrate in order to find work and support their families — it is a decision made out of necessity, not choice.”

He encouraged Obama and Calderon to “build bridges of cooperation, not walls of separation.”

The bishop also referenced a 2003 statement by U.S. and Mexican bishops in which they said Mexico also must reform its immigration laws and policies, “so that migrants from Central and South America are not subject to exploitation.”

Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs said the two men also talked about the North American Free Trade Agreement, with Obama saying he supports updating the agreement to strengthen labor and environmental provisions.

“President-elect Obama underscored his commitment to working with Congress to fix the broken U.S. immigration system and fostering safe, legal, and orderly migration,” he said.

“He expressed his strongly held view that immigrants should be treated with dignity and that the immigration debate should not be a vehicle for vilifying any group, and that our two countries need to work more effectively to stop the flow of illegal immigration into the United States,” Gibbs said.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — More than a week before he was to take office, President-elect Barack Obama and Mexican President Felipe Calderon, meeting briefly at the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington and met briefly with the press, describing their discussion only in general terms. They said they talked about organized crime, immigration reform, the financial crisis, energy, and other hemisphere issues.

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CELEBRATE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
The 22nd Annual Celebration of Catholic Schools will be held on Saturday, Jan. 31 at the Fort Worth Convention Center. The Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation will receive the Distinguished Achievement Award. Breakfast and lunch will include a social hour followed by dinner. Sister Carol Ciminio, a national consultant for the Diocese of Fort Worth, will be the guest speaker. Bishop Kevin Vann will also be in attendance. Reservations are $75 per person. For more information or to secure your reservation please contact Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-3300, or email rsvp@diocesefortworth.org.

SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES
Sign Language classes will be offered this winter at St. John the Apostle Church in North Richland Hills from Jan. 27 through March 10 and sponsored by the Deaf Ministry Program. There will be a beginning class offered at 7 p.m. and an Advanced Beginning class offered at 8 p.m. Class fee is $100 per person, which includes the cost of the book. There will be no pre-registration. Those interested are asked to come to the first night of class a few times early to see if this class will be suitable. For more information, contact Mary Cniall, director of Deaf Ministry at (817) 284-3019 or mcniall@diocw.org.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE
Sister Dorothy Janalis, OP, will present “The Left Behind Alternative: A Workshop on Apocalyptic Literature” from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31 at St. Bartholomew’s Church at 3601 Altavista Ave. in Fort Worth. St. Jonalis is the author of Untamable Apocalypse: The Word of the Gospel, Preaching and Teaching, and an assistant professor at the University of Dallas School of Apologetics. She will present the Catholic teaching of apocalyptic texts, especially related to the Rapture and imagery of the Book of Revelation. St. Jonalis is a frequent presenter who will answer questions about the topic and be available for book signing, which may be purchased at the workshop. For more information, call Marco Castellon at (817) 293-5406.

LAY CARMELITES
The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of a deeper relationship with Christ to join them on the second and fourth Sundays of the month for a time of prayer and fellowship. Those interested in participating are asked to gather at 2 p.m. Feb. 27 in the chapel of The College of St. Thomas More, 3017 Lobstick Blvd. in Fort Worth. Call (817) 857-3300 for more information. Prayer and fellowship will immediately follow the Liturgy of the Hours; see the website at www.laycarmelites.org.

DIVORCE CARE
St. Paul Church in Fort Worth will offer a new Divorce Care Series and the addition of a companion series, Divorce Care for Kids (DC4K) to run with it, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. beginning Jan. 29 and continuing for 12 weeks. Church initiative distributes the program. Facilitators and helpers in both series will be available to anyone who has been through a divorce, and have attended “Keeping Children Safe.” Each session is age-appropriate. DC4K is geared towards children between ages 5 and 12, and the adult series is for those 13 and older. The purpose of the process and the outcome is the realization that it is possible to recover from separation and divorce, if the adult series is free, pre-registration is preferred. For more information, call St. Paul at (817) 936-9925.

RACHEL MINISTRIES
Rachel Ministries, a program that offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment for women and children who are separating or divorced, will meet at 7 p.m. the third Thursday of each month. For information or to schedule an intake appointment, please call (817) 923-4757 or by e-mail to forgive@rchnel.org.

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP
The St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with lustful thoughts, is always seeking new members who can commit to attending quarterly retreats. For more information, please see the Cathedral website, www.sampg.com, or e-mail to Mark at mark.hofling@stphilipcc.org.

APPLICANT PROFILE
Fri. Call us at
(817) 913-5579
Visit us online at

SPECIAL SALES
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To Report Misconduct
If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, you may
• Call Judy Locke, victim assistant, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at joelie@diocw.org
• Or call The Diocese of Fort Worth’s Safe Environment Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
• Or call The Cathedral Center at (817) 329-7370, ext. 276
• Or call the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 329-7370, ext. 105

To Report Abuse
Call the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (800) 962-5955, report to the chancellor/moderator of the diocese, Father James Hart

COURAGE GROUP
COURAGE is a social support group for those who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m., in the chapel of Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave. in West Fort Worth. The next meeting will be held on Saturday, Feb. 7. For more information, call Deacon Joe Millian at (817) 737-6678 ext. 105.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER
A Marriage Encounter weekend will be held Feb. 20-22 in the Diocese of Fort Worth. The marriage encounter is an opportunity for couples to discuss how married life is practiced by married couples designed to help couples deepen their relationship. Reservations are required since space, deposit, and space is limited. The balance of $175 per couple is due at the program. Financial aid scholarships are available. For more information, contact www.marrriageencounter.com. For reservations, call (817) 451-6005 or e-mail meregistration@stphilipcc.org.

Divine Comedy — a Guide to Preaching
284-3019 or mcinatl@fwdioc.org.

ADVANCE BEGINNING
Our Lady of Mercy Church in Fort Worth will hold their 19th Annual “Mardi Gras & Zydeco Dance” from 8 p.m. to midnight Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Meadowbrook Lions Club, 6013 Craig St. in Fort Worth. A $20 per person admission includes authentic Louisiana gumbo and red beans and rice. Call (817) 253-0806, (817) 737-7652, or see any Knight of St. John of Our Mercy Church at 1007 East Terrell Ave. for more information about this event. Proceeds will be going towards funding the many charitable programs sponsored throughout the year.

Gnomes of the Apocalypse — a Spiritual Companion
The Know-It-All Book of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth will hold their 18th Annual “Mardi Gras & Zydeco Dance” from 8 p.m. to midnight Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Meadowbrook Lions Club, 6013 Craig St. in Fort Worth. A $20 per person admission includes authentic Louisiana gumbo and red beans and rice. Call (817) 253-0806, (817) 737-7652, or see any Knight of St. John of Our Mercy Church at 1007 East Terrell Ave. for more information about this event. Proceeds will be going towards funding the many charitable programs sponsored throughout the year.

LITURGY COORDINATOR
Large Vatican II parish with five weekend Masses is looking for an energetic, engaging person to coordinate liturgical celebrations with style and reverence. Responsibilities will include training and scheduling ministers, planning weddings, funerals and major parish celebrations throughout the year. Preference will be given to candidates with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send a resume to Holy Family Church, 4400 Brookhollow Lane, Fort Worth 76107 or e-mail to dkain@holyfamilyw.com. For more information, call (817) 737-6678 ext. 104.

Liturgy Coordinator
Large Catholic parish with five weekend Masses is looking for an energetic, engaging person to coordinate liturgical celebrations with style and reverence. Responsibilities will include training and scheduling ministers, planning weddings, funerals and major parish celebrations throughout the year. Preference will be given to candidates with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send a resume to Holy Family Church, 4400 Brookhollow Lane, Fort Worth 76107 or e-mail to dkain@holyfamilyw.com. For more information, call (817) 737-6678 ext. 104.

PASTORAL ASSISTANT
Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Fort Worth seeks a full-time Pastoral Assistant to assist the Pastor in meeting the temporal and pastoral needs of this active 1,300-family parish. Principal duties will include administrative and facilities management, serving as staff liaison to all parish ministries and committees. Qualifications include a Master’s degree in Theology or other related field, or its equivalent in education and experience; previous pastoral or administrative experience preferred. For a full job description and application procedure, please view www.sacredheartfortworth.org. Applications are accepted immediately.

PASTORAL MUSIC DIRECTOR
A North Dallas Suburban Parish in Plano is seeking a full-time liturgical musician to lead and manage the assembly in worship and song as a member of our pastoral team. A collaborative person is needed to initiate and grow a vibrant and vibrant liturgical music ministry; to guide parish liturgical ministries, plan and accompany weekend liturgy; and to participate in special liturgical celebrations, direct and rehearse choir and cantors and integrate new music, such as Sacred Ministry. Requires close collaboration with staff and parishioners. Needs strong piano skills and a knowledge of liturgical and sacred music; strong conducting skills; strong music direction skills. Salary and benefits are commensurate with education and experience. Email a resume and references to the Parish Music Director at info@placid.org. For more information, call the Parish Office at (972) 563-3743.

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Families who suffer the loss of a child often channel their grief in a way that helps others. Few people, however, have done it with the determination, grace, and success of Jim and Kathy Breen.

As he battled his way through the last stages of a rare bone cancer, their son, Stephen, made two requests. The Nolan Catholic High School sophomore asked his parents not to forget him and to do something to help Catholic school students and kids with cancer.

Responding to the selfless plea, the grieving couple began laying the groundwork for the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation just one month after the 14-year-old’s death on Oct. 4, 2004. Four years later, the organization has helped provide a faith-based education for hundreds of youngsters and inspired countless others.

Thanks to tireless fundraising and the efforts of hundreds of dedicated volunteers, the foundation has contributed more than $208,000 to a tuition assistance program that gives 368 children from 224 families the funds to provide their children with a Catholic education. Students from every school in the diocese have received scholarships.

For its support of Catholic schools, the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation will receive the Diocesan Leadership Award at the 2009 Celebration of Catholic Schools Banquet set for Saturday, Jan. 31 in the Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom. The keynote speaker will be Sister Carol Cimino, SSJ, a national consultant for the William H. Sadlier Company.

The Diocesan Leadership Award is an unexpected honor the Breens are pleased to accept on behalf of the foundation. But the husband/wife team, who have three other children, say personal satisfaction comes from reading thank you notes sent by grateful parents.

“One of the most poignant came from a single mother who called what we were able to do ‘her miracle.’ She had no idea how she was going to pay her kid’s tuition,” Jim Breen recalls. “And we’ve had similar letters from other people who could not have made it without help.”

Proceeds from several fundraising events fuel the foundation’s outreach to Catholic school families and cancer patients at Cook Children’s Medical Center. Each year, the Breens and a committee of volunteers organize a golf tournament and a dinner that features a nationally known motivational speaker. Money also comes from matching grants and the Wildcat Challenge Basketball Tournament sponsored by Stephen’s alma mater, St. Andrew’s School.

Although the foundation has fallen short of its ambitious goal to raise one million dollars in five years, the organization has increased its philanthropic giving annually. In 2005, the organization contributed $29,000 to students needing tuition assistance. Last year, that figure grew to $84,000.

The Breens say the foundation continues to succeed because it’s become more than just their son’s legacy.

“Stephen’s death was the catalyst that jumpstarted the foundation, but Kathy and I said from day one, if this thing is going to have legs and sustain itself, it had to move beyond that,” Jim Breen explains. “Mission and objective is what drives any foundation or organization, so people had to believe in what we were doing, who we were helping, and what we’ve been able to accomplish.”

The Spirit Games are one of those notable accomplishments. Started in 2007 by the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation in conjunction with the Diocese of Fort Worth, the event uses athletic competitions, an outdoor festival, music, and liturgy to bring Catholic youngsters together in fellowship and faith. This year’s program is set for Sunday, April 26 and will feature a motivational speech by former NFL Giants player Keith Davis. The annual diocese-wide project doesn’t earn the foundation a dime.

“It’s about touching people’s lives,” Kathy Breen points out. “It’s about community and spirit and evangelizing the Catholic faith to the youth of the diocese.”

Jim and Jennifer Batson, who served as chairs for the Catholic faith to the youth of the diocese.

Jim and Kathy Breen pose with daughter, Cortni, a senior at Nolan Catholic High School, who is holding her nephew, Alec, in front of a portrait of their deceased son, Stephen, for whom a foundation for Catholic students was named.

Story and photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Nolan students observed a week of prolife activities in mid-January relating to a range of issues from abortion to the death penalty to make themselves more aware of the value of God’s gift of life. Why Catholic? workshops are laying a foundation for the diocese-wide catechetical program to begin forming us. There’s a death penalty so people have time to find out how they can help build it.