March for Life participants make their way up past the Supreme Court building in Washington Jan. 22. The annual anti-abortion demonstration marks the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion across the nation. (CNS photo/Peter Locketty)

Youths taking an active role in pro-life movement

By Laura Wright and Richard Szczepanowski
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Droves of pro-life youths from across the country lined up outside the Verizon Center to get inside the annual Youth Rally and Mass for Life sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington Jan. 22, forming a crowd of 17,400 people.

This year the event at the Washington sports arena was more in demand than ever — about 10,000 tickets to the event were snapped up in just 45 minutes when they were made available through online ticketing in mid-November, said Christa Lopiccolo, executive director of the archdiocesan Department of Life Issues. “The youth are on fire for pro-life,” she said at the time.

Fifteen alternate gathering sites near the Verizon Center were set up to accommodate 8,000 more pilgrims, she said. Youths brought banners and signs, but most of all their faith and enthusiasm to the Verizon Center. Hundreds of seminarians and religious also joined the throng.

Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl

By Juan Guajardo
Editorial Assistant

Capital campaign helping parishes upgrade facilities

By Juan Guajardo
Editorial Assistant

Tucked into a corner of Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville is the Eucharistic Chapel, an intimate space where parishioners can meditate and pray in front of the Eucharist. It’s a beautiful room, but there’s one problem: It’s too small.

“Our parish is growing very fast,” said Father Richard Eldredge, TOR, pastor of Good Shepherd. “We’ve gained about 500 families in two-and-a-half years.”

That growth prompted Fr. Eldredge and the staff at Good Shepherd to form a committee to address the space issues at the church. What resulted was a plan to build a daily chapel that would seat 130 people and ease overcrowding for the 2,658 families attending the parish. Construction of the chapel is expected to cost between $500,000 and $700,000, Fr. Eldredge said.

But just coming off of paying a large parish debt, parishioners wanted to avoid getting into debt again. That’s where the diocesan campaign, All Things Possible, came into play.

The All Things Possible campaign was initiated in 2009 with the goal of raising $40 million for diocesan needs. The money from the 4-year campaign will support everything from local parish needs to the priest pension fund, Catholic school scholarships, and various other ministries and services. In addition, parishes are finding that going over their pledges significantly benefits them thanks to the 75/25 split — until a parish reaches its goal, it receives 25 cents of every dollar raised and the diocese receives 75 cents. After a parish reaches its goal, 75 cents of every dollar goes to the parish for its own projects and uses, and the diocese gets the remaining 25 percent of parishioner’s donations to the campaign.

“It’s a real advantage to us, we want to give to the diocese, because the diocese has many, many needs, so we’re very happy to try and help the diocese,” Fr. Eldredge said. “In the meantime, they’re also very good about trying to help us.”

By Laura Wright and Richard Szczepanowski
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Bishop Edmund Carmody of the Diocese of Fort Worth. The appointment was announced in Washington Jan. 18 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop Carmody, a 76-year-old native of Ireland, has been a bishop since 1988 and head of the Corpus Christi Diocese since 2000. Bishop designate Mulvey, 60, has administered the Austin Diocese since Bishop Gregory M. Aymond left in August to become archbishop of New Orleans.

Bishop-designate Mulvey will be ordained to the episcopacy and installed as bishop of Corpus Christi March 25 at Corpus Christi Cathedral. At a Jan. 18 press conference in Corpus Christi, Bishop-designate Mulvey spoke in Spanish and English, with special greetings for the priests, deacons, seminarians, and young people of the diocese.

“No person can work in isolation and much less a bishop,” he told the priests. “Your collaboration will be essential to me in announcing God’s love and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The bishop-designate told young people that they are “essential to the vitality of the See Mulvey, p. 2

Bishop Carmody retires; Austin administrator to succeed him

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Bishop Edmund Carmody of Corpus Christi, and named Monsignor W. Michael Mulvey, administrator of the Diocese of Austin, to succeed him.

The changes were announced in Washington Jan. 18 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

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Bishop-designate Mulvey

Pope names Galveston-Houston auxiliary to head Austin Diocese

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Auxiliary Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Galveston-Houston, 52, to be bishop of Austin, succeeding Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, who was named archbishop of New Orleans last June.

The appointment was announced in Washington Jan. 26 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop Vasquez has been an auxiliary for Galveston-Houston since 2002.

His installation is set for March 18 at St. William Church in Round Rock, which is just north of Austin.

The eldest of six children, Joe S. Vasquez was born in Stamford, Texas, July 9, 1957. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas, in 1984, and in 2001, he was named auxiliary bishop of Galveston-Houston and ordained early the following year. He was the first Hispanic bishop in the United States.

He chose as his episcopal motto “Sigue me,” Spanish for “Follow me,” in reference to Jesus’ words to Peter in the Gospel of St. John.

In 2005 he tended to the pastoral needs of Gulf Coast residents who fled to the Houston area after Hurricane Katrina.

Since 2006 Bishop Vasquez has been archdiocesan vicar general and See Vasquez, p. 2
As the All Things Possible campaign prepares to enter its second major block of receptions, (160 of them, currently scheduled for 51 parishes), it goes forward with great momentum.

With only a third of the parishes of the diocese having had the chance to participate in the $40 million campaign, contributions and pledges are already edging toward the halfway point of $20 million, and eight of the first 25 parishes to take part in the campaign have gone over their goals for the campaign. The remaining parishes are still receiving gifts toward their goals.

Money raised by the campaign is already allowing parishes to begin projects that will be made possible in part by using their share of All Things Possible funds (See adjacent article).

Cassata High School recently received a $500,000 grant which will be combined with $500,000 from the All Things Possible fund to allow extensive renovation of the school’s historic building. The renovations will bring it into the 21st century, with complete wiring for computer use, adding an elevator, so that the building will be handicap accessible, and other improvements that will add both functionality and years of service to the former Laneri High School building.

For the second phase of the campaign, Bishop Kevin Vann has assem- bled a campaign cabinet which he will chair along with All Things Possible co-chairs Don and Debbie Phifer. This campaign leadership team will include pastors who have been successful in meeting and exceeding campaign goals in their own parishes. They will also be the people who have played a role in those successes. Also included on the team will be some employees of the Catholic Center, the Catholic schools, and some retired priests.

This group will help with leadership gifts for the campaign and in speaking to and enlisting the support of many of the various apostles who serve the church, including among others, the Knights of Columbus, Serra Clubs, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre.

In a phone interview Thursday evening, Campaign Co-chair Don Phifer said he has been pleased with the very positive response more than he expected. Phifer said, “I’ve been delighted to find how encouraged they are,” by the campaign, “how excited they are; excited about doing things for technology, the seminarians, priest retirement, the Catholic schools.” The campaign doesn’t just address one area of need, but addresses needs across the board, Phifer said.

By putting a 1,500 person-attendance limit on the initial 75/25 split until parishes reach their goals, then moving to the 25 percent for the diocese and 75 percent for the parish after they hit goal. “That’s the beauty of this whole campaign,” he said. “People want to do something for the diocese, but also, they’re happy to see benefit coming to their own parishes.”

The daily chapel will feature stained glass windows and a bell tower. It will also connect to the Eucharistic chapel and the main church, and will be directly accessible from the outside. As a result, there will no longer be a need to heat or cool the 1,500 person-capacity main church during the week, Fr. Eldredge explained.

Furthermore, the chapel will help the spiritual life of parishioners.

“Right now, we have more people who want to be part of adoration on a daily basis, but our chapel is too small, our Eucharistic chapel, so that will help that,” Fr. Eldredge said. The daily chapel will be used for daily Mass, Rosaries, adoration, Stations of the Cross, and quiet prayer, he added.

The All Things Possible campaign is benefitting other parishes as well. Sacred Heart parish in Wichita Falls went over its campaign goal too, and the returns will be used for a number of improvements to the parish, said Father Hoa Nguyen, pastor of Sacred Heart.

“The economy is in a bad state right now,” Fr. Nguyen said. “Being able to meet the goal is very hard.”

He said it was impressive for the parish to pass the pledge of $576,000, by putting a 1,500 person-attendance limit on the initial 75/25 split until parishes reach their goals, then moving to the 25 percent for the diocese and 75 percent for the parish after they hit goal. “That’s the beauty of this whole campaign,” he said. “People want to do something for the diocese, but also, they’re happy to see benefit coming to their own parishes.”

The receptions emphasize the personal nature of giving. Each person attending will receive campaign information, hear more about the case itself, and then be given an opportunity to ask questions. Every registered family in the Diocese of Fort Worth has been or will be sent an invitation to attend one of these gatherings held at their parish.

Anyone who finds they have misplaced their invitation or have not yet received one, are invited to check their parish bulletins or contact their parish office to find out when their parish will be hosting its receptions for All Things Possible.

A list of all scheduled receptions is also available on the diocesan Web site at fwdioc.org.

The first reception in the second group of parishes is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Feb. 1 at 634 S. Elm, Fort Worth. Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls and parish receptions will run through the middle of April.

Over Goal:

Good Shepherd Parish, Fort Worth
Holy Family Parish, Fort Worth
Holy Rosary Parish, Cisco
Holy Trinity Mission Parish, Aransas
Sacred Heart Parish, Wichita Falls
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Eastland
St. John Parish, Strawn
St. Rita Parish, Ranger

Mulvey...

From page 1 the Church” and said he looked forward “to sitting down with you and your pastors to reinforce our commitment to you and your faith.

Born Aug. 23, 1949, in Houston, William Michael Mulvey is the second of six children; he has 12 nieces and nephews.

One of 359 priests ordained by Pope Paul VI in 1975 in St. Peter’s Square, he was ordained for the Diocese of Austin.

Bishop-designate Mulvey chose as his episcopal motto, “Your attitude must be that of Christ,” from Philippians 2:5. He said it has been a philosophy he has strived to live by throughout his life and priest hood.

“It reflects service,” he said. “To serve you must be empty of self.”

Bishop Cardinal, the second of 13 children, was born in Moyvane, County Kerry, Ireland, and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of San Antonio in 1988. Pope John Paul II appointed him auxiliary bishop of San Antonio in 1988. Bishop Cardmody led the Diocese of Tyler from 1992-2000, before becoming bishop of Corpus Christi.

Since coming to Corpus Christi, Bishop Cardmody has been con cerned with three major issues of the city — school dropouts, diabetes, and the homeless.

This tells me that Rome is mindful of the growing Hispanic population in this state,” he said. “I am very proud of my Hispanic heritage, and I hope to encourage other men, especially young Mexican-American men, to consider a vocation to the priesthood.”

The Austin Diocese currently serves a total of 459,000 Catholics across 400 parishes and missions. It has a total population of 2.6 million people; Catholic number about 459,000, or 18 percent of the population.

Contributing to this story was Shelley Metcalf in Austin.

Vasquez...

From page 1 chancellor. He also has served as episcopal vicar for Hispanics and archdiocesan liaison for youths during his years in Galveston-Houston.

Bishop Vasquez is the first Mexican-American to lead the Austin Diocese, which he said is a heartwarming sign from Rome.

“This tells me that Rome is...
Eighth president of University of Dallas to assume office March 1

IRVING (CNS) — Thomas W. Keefe, vice president of advancements at the University of Dallas since 2005, has been named the eighth president of the University of Dallas. He is scheduled to assume the presidency March 1.

O.D. Crum, chairman of the university’s board of trustees, said Keefe was chosen because of his “background and his enthusiastic endorsement of our Catholic identity, our values, vision, and mission.” The Catholic, coeducational, liberal arts university has more than 3,000 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs.

“I am honored to have been selected as president of the University of Dallas,” said Keefe. “The University has long been recognized as one of the best Catholic universities in the nation, known for its high academic standards and unique programs. I am looking forward to working with the Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni in achieving the University’s goals and strategic initiatives as we build on the strong relationships and reputation we have as foster new relationships in the Dallas-Fort Worth community and across the nation.”

Keefe, who holds a law degree from the University of Kansas College of Law and a bachelor’s degree from Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, is a nationally recognized expert and speaker in the field of donor cultivation, having had a direct involvement or leadership role in generating more than $500 million in gifts and grants for the institutions he has served.

St. Louis University is a Jesuit institution with more than 13,000 students.

OLV alumni invited to 100th anniversary events Feb. 6

OLV is calling out to Our Lady of Victory School alumni to help them celebrate the school’s 100th anniversary. “We’re celebrating 100 Years,” says Rachael Garnett, OL alumni development director, as she extends the school’s invitation to join other former students of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur’s historic school for its First Alumni Mass and Dinner, Feb. 6. The gathering begins with 4:30 p.m. Mass at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia on Fort Worth’s near South Side, followed at 6 p.m. with dinner at OLV.

Contact Rachael Garnett, OL alumni development director, for more information by e-mail at rgarnett@ovfw.org or by phone at (817) 924-5123.

For those from our diocese discerning the possibility of religious life, it is vital for them to be well-connected to their parish and the Vocations Office, as well as prepared spiritually for the journey toward God that lies ahead of them.

Any official step toward the religious life requires the young person discerning to speak with a priest, brother, sister, deacon, or lay person who has some official capacity in the church, such as pastor, pastoral administrator, youth minister, director of religious education, or campus minister. Why? Because, a spiritual journey toward Christ and his Church requires spiritual leaders to get to know you and for you to get to know them. We are all part of the universal Church, and while it is a lifetime of learning, we need to learn about the Church both from the catachetical standpoint, as well as a relational one.

We all need the help of one another and, most especially, we need the help of those who have already made that journey of faith ahead of us. When one confides in a leader of the church to say they sense a calling from God to the religious life, it usually takes one to three years for that same person to be prepared to take the next step, to be ready to enter a religious community.

Why so long? For one reason, a calling is not tangible; it is not something touched with one’s hand, but rather sensed as a calling in one’s spirit and soul. Secondly, an authentic calling has a sense of persistence in which it just doesn’t seem to go away. It is not uncommon for single men and women older than 40 to say that they have had a sense of this calling since childhood or their teenage years.

One example of a false calling, which often occurs, happens when single people convert or revert to the Catholic Church, feeling joyful upon entering the Church, they are open to active service in their community and often want to enter the religious life. But more times than not, this is a calling attached to their conversion, which is separate from a calling to religious life. For that reason, among others, the Catholic Church in the U.S. requires a convert to be Catholic for a minimum of two years before being accepted in a religious community.

Now, eventually, and sooner better than later, someone considering the religious life needs to contact his or her local diocesan Vocations Director...
Marriage Encounter weekend to be held Feb. 12-14

A Marriage Encounter weekend will be held Feb. 12-14 at the Catholic Renewal Center of North Texas, 4405 Bridge Street in East St. Worth.

A marriage encounter is a weekend program for married couples designed to help couples deepen their relationship. Marriage Encounter is one of the two basic principles building communion between husband and wife, nurturing the commitment of marriage vows, and strengthening the couple’s faith.

“Marriage is a journey. You continue to grow together and make new discoveries along the way,” say event organizers. “A Marriage Encounter weekend is a unique way for married couples to deepen their relationship.

Requirements are required with a $60 non-refundable deposit and space is limited. The balance of $175 per couple is due at the time of registration. In case of financial needs, scholarship funds are available. A partial deposit is still required. For more information, visit www.ntexasme.org or email meregistration@sbcglobal.net.

Register by Feb. 4 or call (817) 294-2749 or e-mail meregistration@shsglobal.net.

Suicide Survivors program begins in Feb.

Suicide Survivors is a grief recovery program for family members and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide. A new group will begin in February.

Groups of eight to 10 meet for two hours for eight weeks. Group therapy is facilitated by mental health professional and a trained survivor. There is no charge for this service.

For more information, call (817) 668-9955 or e-mail suicide-survivors@myfumc.org.

Holy Spirit sisters invite women to vocations weekend Feb. 26-28

The Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate ask, “Have you ever wondered what life in a convent is like and how the sisters live, work, and spread the Gospel?”

In an effort to increase vocations to the religious life and to the community, the sisters will host a “Come and See” weekend Feb. 26-28 at their Motherhouse, 9800 Viesca St., Fort Worth.

The sisters live and work among the people to whom they have ministered since their founding in 1893. These ministries are in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Mexico, and Zambia, Africa.

Women, ages 18-45 will have the opportunity to experience life in a convent setting. During the weekend participants will participate in community prayer, small-group sharing, discernment themes, personal reflections, Eucharistic Walk, recreation, and other activities with the sisters.

Registration for the weekend is available on-line at www.sbhsp.org, under “What’s New?” or by contacting Sister Gabriel Hession, 300 Yucca St., San Antonio.

Pledge Run for Haiti — The Holy Family School eighth grade cross country team spearheaded a pledge run to raise money for the devastated victims of the earthquake in Haiti. Students were encouraged to run for a period of time and record their results. Run minutes will be compensated by donors who agreed to sponsor them. Students who participated ran on-walked during school recess, running, or club run at their own home. The monies donated to this cause will be sent to Catholic Relief Services, an agency already at work in Haiti.

NTC publication deadlines

The North Texas Catholic is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly.

The deadline to submit information is Noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published.

Submit items to jnchavez@fudioc.org. Items for the Feb. 12 issue must be received by noon on Feb. 3. Items for the Feb. 26 issue must be received by noon on Feb. 17.

Prayer and Sidewalk Counseling training session to be offered Feb. 6

A Prayer and Sidewalk Counseling training session will be offered Saturday, Feb. 6 at St. Peter the Apostle Church, 1201 South Chantry Lane in White Settlement. Mass will be celebrated at 8 a.m. by Father E. James Hart, chancellor and moderator of the archdiocese for the Diocese of Fort Worth. Following the Mass Father Michael Kiomeke, CFR will present “Angels and Demons at the Abortion Center: Approaching the Abortionist.” Chuck Pelliteri will present “Why Sidewalk Counseling? How do you do it?” The commissioning of Sidewalk Counselors and closing prayer will end the program.

Reservations are required by Feb. 3 to Father John Kilkenny at cnh-kilkenny@fudioc.org. For more information, call (817) 560-3300 ext. 257.

Natural Family Planning classes to begin in February

The Couple to Couple League offers classes in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning for married couples. The course consists of three classes at monthly intervals, engaged couples are encouraged to register for a course beginning at least four months before their wedding.

The course starting Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart School Library, 155 E. Sixth Street, Menard, contact Scott and Vickie Trahan at (817) 544-0448 or email cttc@att.net for a course starting Feb. 12 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 1406 West Keller, contact Scott and Amy Rustrand at (817) 581-6626. Visit www.catholicnfp.org for more class dates and information.

Leon Suprenant to speak on the media and the New Evangelization Feb. 10

Nationally known Catholic author and lecturer Leon Suprenant will offer a presentation titled “New Media for the New Evangelization” Wednesday, Feb. 10 at p.m. at St. Maria Goretti Church, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington. Suprenant will first discuss the New Evangelization as seen by John Paul II and how lay Catholics are called to advance this evangelization of Christ through holiness and love of the Church. The focus of discussion will then shift to how the new media can be used to advance a call to evangelization and how to best reach the modern culture through these means of communica-

d and information.

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Cathedral will break ground for new parish center this spring

St. Patrick Cathedral Parish dedicates new Religious Education Center

“Celebrating Our Past, Building Our Future” — was a campaign phrase with special meaning to several hundred members of downtown Fort Worth’s St. Patrick Cathedral as they gathered on the afternoon of Jan. 10. Cathedral parishioners, led by St. Patrick’s rector, Father Richard Flores, were enthusiastic participants in the ribbon cutting and blessing of the cathedral’s spacious new Religious Education Center, located across the street from the cathedral at 1308 Throckmorton St.

The theme of the cathedral’s campaign to renovate existing facilities, while building an innovative new parish center, alludes to the historic legacy of the cathedral, whose cornerstone was laid on Oct. 14, 1888. “And yet this is also such an exciting time for the cathedral community, as we look ahead and see so many wonderful things happening,” said Patty Bransford, director of children’s religious education for St. Patrick.

“St. Ignatius Academy first opened its doors in 1884, and after the school closed (in 1956) the building was used for religious education classes,” explained parishioner Carla Gonzales, the cathedral’s coordinator of adult religious formation. “The St. Ignatius building is over 100 years old, and a lot of repairs are needed for safety reasons. We held our last classes there in December. There are so many memories tied up in St. Ignatius, but now there are new memories to be formed, as well.”

These new memories will be shared by the 1,300 families currently registered as members of the cathedral, with more than 400 children, ages 6 to 18, attending religious education classes on Sunday morning. The new site was previously occupied by an engineering firm, but now boasts 12 classrooms and two temporary offices for cathedral staff members.

“We hold weekly Sunday morning classes from 9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for all ages, and classes for children in grades kindergarten through sixth from 10:45 a.m. to noon,” explained Bransford, noting that additional Confirmation classes are held once each month for high school students.

“This spring, we will be breaking ground on our new parish center, which will include a kitchen and a second floor for all of the permanent parish staff offices,” she added. The parish center, which will be located at the southwest corner of 12th and Throckmorton streets, will have the capacity to seat 450 people at tables or 750 in chairs. Plans are also being made by parish leaders for the eventual renovation and use of the now-vacant St. Ignatius Academy building.

“There’s such enthusiasm here in the cathedral community, as we plan for new programs and we see the growth that is coming,” said Bransford. “We have great leadership, and we are so thankful to Father Flores for working to make it all happen. The new [religious education] center is wonderful. The opening was a great way to start the new year.”

Contributing to this article was Carla Gonzales.

St. Joseph Covenant Keepers Lenten speaker series to feature Aubert and Killmeyer

Sr. Joseph Covenant Keepers will once again offer a Lenten speaker series on the Friday evenings of Lent, except for Good Friday. The series of talks, featuring apologists Chris Aubert, and author Steve Killmeyer, is scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. each Friday beginning Feb. 12 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller. The talks will begin after the parish fish fry and Stations of the Cross. There is no charge for the presentations, however a freewill offering will be taken.

Weeks one, two, and three will be presented by Chris Aubert, nationally known Catholic evangelist and apologist who focuses on pro-life issues. His topics will include Feb. 12, “Church Teaching and the Pro-Life Movement” and Feb. 19, “Apologetics 101—How to Evangelize our Friends” and Feb. 26, “The Eucharist — Almighty God or a Cracker.”

Steve Killmeyer, noted author and frequent speaker on Catholic radio, will present weeks four, five, and six. Killmeyer’s topics are March 12, “The Passion of Jesus Christ” and March 19, “The Crucifixion and Death of Christ” and March 27, “The Resurrection and Ascension.”

For more information on his books, please visit www.bridgewoodpress.com. “This is a great opportunity to learn more about Catholic Church history, Catholic Church teachings on love and marriage, and to grow in your love for Christ and His Church,” write event organizers in their promotional materials.

For more information, contact Frank Laux at (817) 939-8594 or visit the St. Joseph Covenant Keepers Web site at www.sjcktc.org.

Catholic musician John Michael Talbot to minister at St. Francis, Grapevine, Feb. 20

World-renowned Catholic Christian singer John Michael Talbot will be performing at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine Saturday, Feb. 20, 7-9 p.m. Talbot is the founder and author of the 10-week series of talks on love and marriage, and the Pro-Life Movement, “To Love As Jesus Loved” – a call to Evangelize our Friends.”

For more information contact the St. Francis office at (817) 481-2808.

WANTED: Career Life Agents

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Public collection of relics to be exhibited Feb. 27-28

Dallas archivist Steve Landregan, to give presentation 10 a.m. Feb. 27

By Nicki Prevou
Correspondent
Photos courtesy of Carl McGowan

Carl McGowan has always yearned for the stories, the traditions, and the cherished mementos that are passed down through most extended families. An only child, the Dallas-area artist and sculptor notes that at this point in his life, his mother is his only living relative. “Having come from a very small family, the concept of the communion of saints is extremely meaningful to me,” he says. “The stories of the saints, of the holy men and women who have come before us, who are truly our spiritual ancestors, sparked my interest in holy relics. I began collecting about seven years ago, and I now have over 250 items that I’m eager to share with others who want to learn about this very beautiful aspect of our Catholic faith.”

McGowan, a member of Holy Trinity Church, will display his private collection of relics from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 27 and Sunday, Feb. 28 at the church, located at 3626 Gilbert Ave. in Dallas. The exhibit will include an educational presentation on saints, the canonization process, and the various classifications of relics, led by Steve Landregan, historian and archivist for the Diocese of Dallas. The presentation will begin on Feb. 27 at 10 a.m. in Holy Trinity’s parish center.

Most of the relics in McGowan’s collection, obtained mainly from the Holy Land, and Europe, are considered first- or second-class relics, says McGowan, meaning the items are directly associated with events of Christ’s life, are the physical remains of a saint, or were items frequently used by a saint. First-class relics in his collection include pieces of the true cross, a thorn from Jesus’ crown at his crucifixion, and a piece of wood from the manger in which he lay at birth. Church law strictly forbids the sale of sacred relics, a restriction with which McGowan wholeheartedly agrees. “I like most things, this concept has to be taken with a certain amount of faith,” he adds. “The relics are symbolic of the things they represent. They are not magical, but they do point back to Christ. There are many references in Scripture and within the Catechism that tell us about the importance of keeping our loved ones’ stories alive by keeping something with us that was a part of them. Through these treasures, the Church has yet another creative way of keeping our spiritual ancestors close to us.”

For more information about the display and presentation the weekend of Feb. 27-28, contact Holy Trinity Church at (214) 526-8555.

Tony Abadie joins diocese’s Family Life staff as coordinator of Natural Family Planning

By Michele Baker
Correspondent

Although his office hours at the Catholic Center are limited to one day a week, Tony Abadie spends a great deal of his time outside of the office teaching Natural Family Planning to couples throughout the diocese.

“My wife, Marianne, and I have taught about 100 couples since we became instructors two and a half years ago,” said Abadie. “It’s something I’m very passionate about.”

Yet Abadie is the first to admit that his ministry to couples in this very intimate part of their lives was something he had to arrive at on his journey of faith.

“When we first got married, Marianne and I used regular contraception,” Abadie explains. “Because nobody had told us any better when we went through our marriage preparation.”

About a year after the couple married, while visiting a friend, Marianne learned that using the pill for birth control was against Church teaching. Marianne went home and told Abadie that she would no longer use it. Abadie reluctantly agreed. The couple began using other natural methods of contraception and seeking methods in line with Church teaching.

Several years passed before they eventually learned about and started using the Billings method of Natural Family Planning.

“We have two children,” said Abadie. “Guerin, who is five years old and his little brother, Sebastian, who is four. Ironically, it wasn’t until after the birth of our second son that Marianne and I learned about NFP.”

“I did not exactly have it together as a Catholic back then,” said Abadie. “But NFP totally changed my life. It gave me chastity — which is something everybody needs no matter their vocation. And when I saw that, I got excited about it. So we became teachers. I call this my penance because when we teach I basically just tell everybody my sins,” Abadie laughs.

While Tony and Marianne live on the border between the Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses and actually attend Mass at St. Ann Church in Coppell, Abadie is pleased that Fort Worth has the diocesan infrastructure to provide instruction and resources for NFP. He is also quick to point out that within the Diocese of Fort Worth, any gaps in the instruction of engaged couples about the Church’s teaching on contraception have been filled.

“All of the programs that we have now are good,” Abadie said.

When not teaching classes or working in the diocesan offices, Tony Abadie works as the general manager of a restaurant, but he truly believes that the NFP program that changed his life and faith walk is his special calling.

“I never knew what my spiritual gifts were,” said Abadie. “Honestly, I’m still unsure about that, but it seems that God gave me this. I’ve never been able to reach people except in this type of ministry.”
Catholic Charities USA gives first ‘Keep the Dream Alive’ awards

Catholic Charities USA, joined by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, celebrated the 2010 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday by sponsoring the first national “Keep the Dream Alive” award. Awards were given to four prominent Catholic leaders during a Mass held Monday, Jan. 18 at St. Aloysius Church in Washington, D.C.

Ralph McCloud, director of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and a longtime member of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, received the award from Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA.

Edward Orziekowski, president of the Mexican American Catholic College and Ph.D, president of the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) in San Antonio, and Allison Boisvert, Black Catholic Administrators, a member of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, also received the award.

Describing himself as “overwhelmed and honored” to receive the prestigious national award, McCloud noted, “In so many ways, Catholic Charities USA keeps the dream alive for many, day in and day out. CCUSA allows the often elusive dreams of food, clothing, shelter and self-sufficiency to become a reality daily throughout the United States. To receive an award that is connected to the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is of course an awe-inspiring experience.”

Prior to his leadership at MACC, Arturo Chavez served in ministry to incarcerated youth and developed pastoral care and community after-care programs. As a community organizer and activist, he founded a nonprofit organization for youth and families called JOVEN in San Antonio and has co-authored a curriculum for Latino youth leadership formation called Respeto.

“As we celebrate [Catholic Charities USA’s] centennial year by renewing our commitment to reduce poverty in America, we join the nation in honoring the Rev. Dr. King as a great champion of the struggle to reduce poverty,” said Fr. Snyder. “We will present this award annually to national figures who inspire the nation to keep the dream alive by their life work of reducing poverty in America.”

For more information about the awards and the award winners, visit the Catholic Charities USA Web site at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/keepthedreamalive.
Bishop asks pro-life supporters to continue their work

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

Temperatures hovered near freezing and the Dallas Cowboys were battling the Philadelphia Eagles in a playoff game, but that didn’t keep Gimarie and Abelino Menchaca from bringing their children to the Respect Life Mass, celebrated Jan. 9 in St. Patrick Cathedral. Attending the annual liturgy, which commemorates the innocent lives lost to abortion, has become a ritual for the young family.

“We want to teach them abortion is wrong,” the young mother said, as her youngsters Abelino Jr., 7, Ariana, 6, Diego, 4, Natalia, 2, and Mario, 5 months, took in the cathedral’s surroundings. “Going to this Mass and participating in the ceremony is one way they can learn to appreciate life.”

Gimarie Menchaca, a Gabriel Project coordinator at St. Ann Church in Burleson who counsels Spanish-speaking women, was joined by more than 200 other pro-life volunteers and supporters at the Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann and several other priests in the diocese. During the Mass, the bishops blessed pro-life workers with holy water and asked them to be mindful of God’s glory and grace, “which strengthens us to live and pro-claim the Gospel of Life.”

To offer a visual representation of the number of abortions performed in the country since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized the procedure in 1973, pro-life workers and their families carried lit, red votive candles up the center aisle of the cathedral and placed them in front of the altar. Rachel Ministries Coordinator Betsy Kopor presented the Book of Innocents, which lists the names of babies lost to abortion in the diocese. Mothers suffering from unresolved grief, memorize the names of their children written in the book during Rachel’s Vineyard retreats. The registry, started in 2002, contains hundreds of names.

“It’s a comforting thing for our mothers who have come to the retreat,” Kopors says, referring to the weekends designed to promote healing after abortion. “They see the book going up to the altar, and they know the diocese is publicly recognizing their babies.”

The Mass coincided with the feast of the baptism of the Lord—one of several “Epiphany” feast days on the Church calendar that teach and offer pro-life workers insight into their ministry. Bishop Vann said in his homily. Other revelations of God are shown at the wedding feast at Cana and the Magi’s visit to Bethlehem. The Wise Men’s journey to see the newborn Christ sheds light on the importance of pre-born life, the bishop said, adding, “We’re created in the image and likeness of God, so the glory of God is shown and sanctified. We have to commit ourselves to that again and again. We must safeguard and protect that.”

And like those Christmas travelers who followed a star in darkness, the faithful must keep their eyes fixed on Christ.

“Certainly, to all of us involved in respect life work, we can seem to be surrounded by darkness at times,” he added. “But like the Magi, we keep going. Like the Magi, we must keep our eyes on Christ and let his light show us the way, so we can see the glory of God in an unborn child.”

Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan underscores the importance of our own baptism and the role faith plays in our commitment to respect life, the bishop said. “So it’s not just another job or task that we can become discouraged with, but find inspiration in the life of the Church and the celebration of the sacraments.”

The Wedding Feast of Cana is significant to pro-life work in two ways, the bishop said. It gives us the image of Mary—Jesus’ first disciple—and it shows that the glory of God can be found in the most mundane things in life.

“The Wedding Feast at Cana was a celebration of family. How do we in our pro-life work and ministry show and give the glory of God by strengthening our families?” he asked. “And how do we, by our own life’s commitment, encourage sacramental life in families, so they have the grace of God?”

Each of the epiphanies teaches pro-life workers not to walk in darkness, discouragement, or fear.

“But always walk in the light of Christ which is always stronger than any of them,” he added.

Mass organizers were pleased with the turnout and the increasing number of parishioners willing to become actively involved in pro-life work.

“I’m thrilled that so many people came out on a cold, Saturday evening to pray for an end to abortion,” said Chancery Ruth Killigore, director of the diocesan Catholics Respect Life Office. “It was particularly wonderful to see so many young people.”

MLK and Haiti remind us of importance of faith, prayer

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

Every Jan. 15, people gather to look back on the legacy of the late civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during a Mass sponsored by the diocesan Office of Peace and Justice Ministries. But what participants will remember most about this year’s event is one woman’s impassioned plea for prayer.

When St. Matthew parishioner Kathy Ezeh agreed to lead the congregation in the Prayer of the Faithful, she had no idea that days later a devastating earthquake in Haiti would shake the lives of her extended family. Standing behind the lectern inside St. Patrick Cathedral, the liturgical minister asked worshippers to pray for the end to injustice, discrimination, and violence, before adding a personal personal intention. In a voice breathless with emotion, Ezeh implored her listeners to say one Hail Mary for each person killed in an estimated 200,000 and destroyed most of the capital city’s infrastructure.

“Please, when you go home tonight, say one Hail Mary for my family members and the people in Haiti,” Bishop Kevin Vann, who con-celebrated the Mass with several other priests, immediately asked the crowd of 200 to recite the Marian prayer together.

“I didn’t mean to get so emotional, but my family needs prayer,” Ezeh said the next day from her home in Arlington.

“From what we can tell, the situation in Haiti is not good and getting worse. All we can do is wait by the phone and watch the news footage on TV.”

Father Chester Smith, SVD, from the Diocese of Indianapolis, also referred to the Haitian earthquake in his homily. Invited to speak at the 24th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Mass, Smith opened his homily by recalling the present circumstances and believe that God has more in store for us.”

“Let us all have the grace of God in an unborn child.”

The Dream of Dr. King, you have to look beyond the present circumstances and believe that God has more in store for us.”

“Let us all have the grace of God in an unborn child.”

“If you want your dream to come true like Martin Luther King, you have to look beyond the present circumstances and believe that God has more in store for you,” Fr. Smith continued. “Don’t let adversity keep you from moving forward toward godliness and holiness. Don’t allow your dream to be taken from you.”

When Dr. King started his ministry, he didn’t have the power to save the world or the country, Fr. Smith continued. But he had the faith to dream a nation that embraced civil rights.

“Martin Luther King didn’t want to create a Christian nation,” the speaker explained. “He used his Christian beliefs to create a just nation.”

Eastlyn White and her grandmother Louise Porter, members of Our Mother of Mercy Church and the Knights and Ladies Auxiliary of Peter Claver Council and Court 89. “We, like Dr. King, have a covenant with Jesus, and that covenant doesn’t depend on your ability, skin color, or what language you speak. All we have to do is believe and receive Him.”

Don’t let life’s problems intimidate or defeat you, he advised.

“If you want your dream to come true like Martin Luther King, you have to look beyond the present circumstances and believe that God has more in store for you,” Fr. Smith continued. “Don’t let adversity keep you from moving forward toward godliness and holiness. Don’t allow your dream to be taken from you.”

“Let us all have the grace of God in an unborn child.”

During his homily, Father Chester Smith, SVD, told participants to rely on faith during hard times. Fr. Smith con-celebrated the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Mass with Bishop Vann and several other priests.

“We’ve come this far by faith, but sometimes, faith is all we have,” Porter reasoned. “It gets us through the rough times, and times are certainly rough right now.”
St. Mary parishioners grateful for donated altar, renovations

Story and Photos by
Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

On Jan. 10, parishioners of St. Mary Church in Henrietta, a pioneer church founded by German immigrants in 1874, began a new chapter by celebrating renovations to their sanctuary that now includes a restored altar with a heritage of its own. It is the altar that once adorned the Bethania Hospital Chapel in nearby Wichita Falls.

Bishop Kevin Vann celebrated Mass that Sunday along with Father Steve Berg, vicar general of the Diocese of Fort Worth and former pastor of St. Mary; Father Richard Collins, current pastor of St. Mary; and Father John Robert Skeldon, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls.

During his homily, Bishop Vann used the analogy that in this celebration, not only did they have to turn a page in the Gospel to read about Jesus’ baptism, but they were also turning a page in the lives of everyone in the Church including St. Mary parishioners with their newly renovated church.

“As a page turns into a new Church season (Ordinary Time), Christ goes with us, and we go forth strengthened and renewed,” he said.

Bishop Vann also compared this time to turning a page in an appointment book, and their appointment that evening in the Mass was with Jesus Christ.

The bishop said the parishioners were meeting with Jesus in a number of ways that night — in his word through the Gospel, in the Eucharist, and as they dedicated their new back altar.

“It’s not just a table — it signifies Jesus Christ himself,” he said.

Bishop Vann said the altar also shows a tradition of faith through the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the many other people who prayed before it when it was in the Bethania Hospital Chapel.

“As a family in the parish here and in the diocese, our strength comes from being together,” he said.

Fr. Berg, who was pastor of St. Mary’s in Henrietta from 2002 until 2008, said that about the time parishioners were putting together a list of what they wanted to renovate, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth made an announcement that they would be leaving what was formerly known as Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls. Fr. Berg said the sisters wanted their statues to go to Catholic churches, and some of the parishioners asked the sisters for some of the statues.

“We were very close with Fr. Berg and the Henrietta parish,” said Sister Irene Asztemborska, CSFN. “It’s a beautiful altar, and we were grateful to give it to them,” she said. Sr. Irene was at Bethania a total of 13 years and is now at the sisters’ convent in Tyler.

Fr. Berg said he couldn’t believe the transformation when he walked into St. Mary Church for the Mass.

“It just filled me with such emotion — these people have waited so long for basic things — a roof and a bathroom,” Fr. Berg said.

Hank Bullinger, whose family heritage goes back more than 100 years at St. Mary, and is a member of the church’s finance committee, said a large part of the renovations to the church were deferred maintenance, including putting on a new roof and fixing drainage problems. In addition, a new handicap-accessible bathroom, central heat and air conditioning, and new carpet were installed, and the interior of the church was re-painted.

Glen and Starlett Borgman, who also have deep roots at St. Mary, said that parishioners had dinners, garage sales, bake sales, and raffles to help pay for renovations to the church, and they had to do the renovations in stages.

“We love our parish. We’ve always worked together very well. We’ve worked very hard to make this parish what it is,” Starlett Borgman said.

At the end of Mass, Fr. Collins thanked the parishioners for their help in making the renovations possible, and said he was also grateful to the Diocese of Fort Worth and Bishop Vann’s leadership and guidance in planning the financing of it.

“Over a year and a half ago, we were half a million dollars short in doing this. Thank you, Bishop Vann and God, for finding the means to do this in phases, so we could move forward,” he said.

Cayce Wendeborn, who was the general contractor on the project along with her husband Kurt, said her favorite part of the project was restoring the altar. She worked on it 12 hours a day for a week. The biggest part of the restoration was putting several broken pieces back together with plastic, including a tip of an angel wing, the upper cornice, the upper corner of the alcove, and putting together the two main pieces that had been cut in two when the altar was moved years before.

“There were 10 of us who brought in the altar that day,” said Fr. Collins, “and we were praying that it wouldn’t break — especially after we put Jesus, Mary, and Joseph up there. We were all standing here praying. It looks really beautiful.”

Fr. Berg said the altar is also special because of the thousands of people who prayed before it while it was at the hospital.

“You just can’t imagine how many prayers have been answered or how many tears have been shed in front of that altar,” he said.

St. Mary’s Parish, at 105 S. Barrett St., Henrietta, will now celebrate its regular weekly Mass at 9 a.m. every Sunday in front of that same altar.
Spiking the myth of the tolerant pagans

By David Mills

In the ancient Roman world, you could follow any god you wanted, as long as that god kept his head down and didn’t pretend to be much of a god.

The core value of paganism was religious tolerance — a man or woman in ancient Rome was at liberty to offer worship to whatever god or goddess seemed most likely to grant a prayerful request.”

The pagan world was like a giant buffet, at which each person could find exactly what he wanted, and so everyone was happy and got along with everyone else. Vegans with their tofu-chattered merrily to meat-eaters with their ribeyes, the people who ate only free-range eggs traded recipes with the people who ate eggs from factory farms.

When Christianity took over, the world it created was like a school cafeteria run by a fanatical bully who makes everyone eat only what he likes. The vegetarians have to eat hamburgers, the diabetics have to eat ice cream, the lactose-intolerant have to drink their milk, and everyone has to eat the inedible mystery meat. And they have to pretend to like it, or else.

In this case, who wouldn’t want paganism? But life in the pagan world wasn’t really so tolerant. This sophisticated argument depends on a rosy vision of the good old pagan days, which is even less accurate than grandmother’s memories of the good old days when children always did what they were told.

The world of the pagan gods was a constant and often bitter contest for power and supremacy (scholars call it an agon). The Greeks and Trojans suffered the 10 brutal bloody years of the Trojan War because three vain goddesses argued over who was better looking, and forced some poor sap from Troy to decide between them. The two he didn’t choose let his people have it, and dragged in the poor Greeks to do it.

Only the most powerful gods could keep order, and they couldn’t do it very well. Homer’s Iliad, which tells the story of the Trojan War, Zeus keeps trying to satisfy all the contradictory demands of the different gods (some were pro-Greek, some pro-Trojan). He did, mostly, but only by causing yet more suffering for the Greeks and Trojans.

If this is the way the gods are, people naturally reasoned, this is the way the world is. The world is essentially chaotic and always just inches from breakdown. Only force applied by the strongest — brutality, without mercy — can keep it in order.

So, actually, the pagan world was like a giant buffet ... in North Korea. You could eat what you want, but the armed guards stationed around the room have been ordered to drag you out and torture you, or just shoot you, if you even look like you might start trouble. You only have a choice because the choice doesn’t matter.

In the ancient Roman world, you could follow any god you wanted, as long as that god kept his head down and didn’t pretend to be much of a god. And you had to live under a brutal government that might do almost anything to you if it thought it needed to, because it believed in gods who couldn’t get along. That world wasn’t really a peaceful world of religious tolerance. As the early Christians found, when they brought to that world the good news of a God who was love, and the state saw how this undermined its claims to control. That’s the reason it sent Christians to the lions.

Editor’s note: We’re introducing a new columnist this issue, David Mills. David writes from just outside Pittsburgh where he lives with his wife of 26 years and two of their four children. He writes in a gracious, intelligent style, with just a touch of humor, somewhat reminiscent of C.S. Lewis, and K.K. Chesterton, two among the writers, he says he is well acquainted with. David, a former Episcopalian, and his family became Catholic in 2001 while he was teaching at an Episcopal seminary. Among his books are KNOWING THE REAL JESUS (Servant, 2001), DISCOVERING MARY (Servant, 2009), and he is currently finishing DISCOVERING THE CHURCH (Servant). He was editor of the award-winning ecumenical magazine TOUCHSTONE from 2003 to 2008, and has been published in COLUMBIA, THIS ROCK, NEW OXFORD REVIEW, OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, and NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER.

Sometimes we have to get out of our own way

By Mary Morrell

It is indisputable that, within the Christian people, every ministry and charism be directed to full communion; and it is the duty of the Bishop and priests to promote this communion in harmony with every other Church vocation and service.

—Pope Benedict XVI

During the past 15 years I have written about dozens of topics on things my father taught me when I was growing up, and continues to teach me now that I am an adult. Recently, remembering the advice of a good friend who said many people appreciate bulleted lists for easy reading, I decided to create a list of two-word phrases capturing the essence of the many lessons I learned from my dad. Since many publishers are interested in an author’s ideas for marketing, I considered that such short phrases would serve as great bumper stickers.

Heading the list was the phrase “Do Good.” I went to a great Internet site that I have used before, where a customer can design their own bumper stickers, and within a few weeks I had a small supply of magnetic bumper stickers.

A more challenging result is that I now also have a constant reminder on the back of my car to “Do Good,” a print version of my conscience following me like a shadow.

So, with those two words prominent in my mind for the last month or so, our pastor’s homily this past Sunday resonated strongly with me, reminding me of the many ways we either do good, or do harm, to the life of our parish. High at the top of that list is our willingness, or refusal, to build community.

Community is essential to a people who profess belief in the Trinity; who profess belief in a Savior born within the common love of that family. As individuals, and as a people, we were born to be in community; our baptism makes us members of one Body of Christ, and every member of the community has a responsibility for the health of the Body.

Community is nourished by something as ancient and ordinary as hospitality — a smile, a welcome, a pleasant voice on the phone, clean and orderly gathering places, personal presence during times of need, fellowship, and simple respect for people. But even the best attempt at hospitality is not enough to nurture healthy community if we are not truly walking the talk of our faith, especially those of us who are leaders in the Church, whether we lead in a parish, school, diocese, service organization, or simply in our families.

Too often, when we accept the role of leader, our human inclination toward pride takes over and humility flies out the window. And there is nothing more damaging to community than arrogance, because it pigeonholes people into a hierarchy of importance, with “me” on top, and everyone else somewhere on the ladder going down.

If we forget the “servant” part of servant leadership, putting what we want before all else, we erect obstacles to forming community, and have, ourselves, become obstacles to the sacramentality of the Church.

In his book, THE APOTLES, Pope Benedict XVI writes about Peter, who serves as an example for all leaders, saying that Peter had strong expectations of what he wanted in terms of a powerful Messiah, and when Jesus presented himself as a servant of God who would dash Peter’s expectations to the ground, Peter responded with great arrogance. Pope Benedict writes, “Peter, oppressive as he was, did not hesitate to take Jesus aside and rebuke him. Jesus’ answer demolished all his false expectations, calling him to conversion and to follow Jesus. Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men.” It is not for you to show me the way; I take my own way and you should follow me. Peter thus learned what following Jesus truly means.”

“Follow me.” There is no advice more difficult, or more effective, for Christian leadership.
Nothing Like it since Roe v. Wade

By Tom Grenchik

HEALTH CARE REFORM IS ABOUT SAVING LIVES, NOT DESTROYING THEM.

Abortion is not health care because it ends a human life. For over 30 years, the Hyde Amendment and other long-standing and widely supported laws have prevented federal funding for abortion.

The health care reform bills advancing in Congress violate this policy. Americans must be free to choose whether to support abortions through their taxes and health insurance premiums.

We need genuine health care reform — policies that help save lives, not destroy them.

Tell Congress: “Remove Abortion Funding and Mandates from Needed Health Care Reform!”

Visit www.usccb.org/action to send your e-mail today.

Tom Grenchik is executive director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Go to www.usccb.org/profile to learn more about the bishops’ pro-life activities.

224-3121, or call your members’ local offices. Contact info can be found on members’ Web sites at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

The message to Congress is simple: “I urge you to work to uphold essential provisions against abortion funding, to include full conscience protection, and to assure that health care is accessible and affordable for all. Until and unless these criteria are met, I urge you to oppose the final bill.”

Abortion is not health care. True health care reform should be about saving lives, not destroying them.

To learn more about the bishops’ advocacy for authentic health care reform, visit www.usccb.org/healthcare.

When it’s the latest news on the latest happenings or commentary on the day’s events you’re seeking, sometimes only the Informer will do!

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Today I had a visit from The Informer, and afterward I felt enriched, happier, wiser. And ready. Ready for anything.

The Informer is three years old.

It was in my house this morning where my granddaughter Emma Grace planted her pink-boots a foot apart and went immediately into a shotgun delivery of the day’s news. She informed me her dance leotard had valentines on it, that it came from under the Christmas tree, along with a movie titled, “Monsters Berus’ Aliens,” (her brother Sam received one called, “Dawn of the Dinosaurs,” and Natalie’s was “Up.”) As she ran through her information, Emma swayed like a parent does in Mass when quieting a fussy baby, but she had a bounce in her sway, as though she were a recording artist keeping time with hip-hop rhythm, or a cheerleader doing a line-dance. She used her arms like a politician on the stump, bobbed her head and rolled her eyes like a 13-year-old, but without the attitude.

The Informer said, “Mommy is taking me to dance class, and then we’ll have a little rest, and in the afternoon,” she concluded happily, “we’ll vacuum.” “Mommy and I have a Vacuuming Club,” Emma Grace said.

Emma’s broadcast news always makes me feel good, because she is happy while delivering it, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, letin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, because she is happy while delivering it, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands, even when the bulletin points are just so-so. “The repair man came to our house today,” she draws her shoulders up, holds out both hands.

In the marketplace, Emma informs the grocery clerk, “Mommy and I have a Vacuuming Club,” Emma Grace

I don’t know if Emma states facts to make them come true,
Pro-lifers march in Dallas where Roe v. Wade began

Story and Photos by
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

It was a near-perfect juxtaposition of events Jan. 16 at the annual Dallas March for Life, when Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell compared Haiti’s catastrophic Jan. 12 earthquake with the decision the United States Supreme Court made 37 years earlier, legalizing abortion.

“For four days we have all watched the catastrophic scenes of devastation and the horrific scenes of human suffering, and death as a result of the earthquake in Haiti,” he said. “And as these scenes cross our television screens, it can’t but move our hearts and compel us to do whatever we can to alleviate this human tragedy.”

“What compels us to reach out and help in these situations,” the bishop said, during his homily at the Memorial Mass for Victims of Abortion, “is our belief in the precious gift of human life. The tragedy in Haiti is also a pro-life tragedy.”

The 2010 memorial Mass took place at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Dallas, and was consecrated by Bishop Farrell, Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann, Father Edward Robinson, OP, and priests of the Dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas. It was part of an annual commemoration marking the Roe v. Wade case, originally filed in Dallas in 1970, resulting in the 1973 Supreme Court decision which overturned all state laws restricting or outlawing abortion in the United States.

Some 3,000 people participated in the 10 a.m. liturgy, with overflow into the parish’s Grand Salon, and the plaza outside. After Mass, 7,000 people walked on the sidewalks through downtown, sometimes stopping traffic, praying all the way to the Earle Cabell Federal Courthouse, where Roe v. Wade was originally filed.

At 7:30 that morning 500 people had begun the day riding shuttles from the cathedral to Dallas’s South Street abortion center. There, they prayed the Rosary and made a Jericho Walk, circling the abortion center seven times, said Karen Garnett, executive director of the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Pro-Life Committee, and organizer of the day’s events.

“Speaking with people before the Mass, I learned four mothers chose life at that abortion center,” Garnett said, “that same day!”

Representatives from the Diocese of Fort Worth also participated in the March for Life, which was co-sponsored by Dallas’s Respect Life Ministry and Pro-Life Committee. Father Michael Kmietek, CFR, and Father Louis Marie Leonelli, CFR, both from Sacred Heart of Jesus Friary near downtown Fort Worth, rented a bus to take a small group to Dallas for the events of the day, said Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, director of Adult Catechesis Lucas Pollice, “They, my dear friends, are the future. Much certainly has been accomplished, but the march goes on. We cannot become discouraged. We cannot give up until every child in the womb has the legally protected right to be born.”

During the Memorial Mass there was a traditional procession of roses, where a rose was presented from a person who was born each year since the Roe v. Wade decision. John McAnally, also from St. Maria Goretti in Arlington, brought up a rose. He is a co-founder of the Web site Conceptionislife.com.

“Our commitment to this struggle is an essential part of who we are,” Bishop Farrell said, “not as Catholics, but as human beings. We continue to struggle to rectify this injustice, not because it is a Christian thing to do, but because it is a human thing to do.”

“We really wanted to go to the march,” Pollice said, “and show our support for the culture of life. And it was good for the kids to see it is our duty as citizens to stand up for what we believe.”

Concluding his homily, Bishop Farrell had reminded the assembly, that Jesus changed the world with 12 apostles. “How many of us are here today, how many of us march across this nation during this week, how many people are pro-life? How many people live a culture of life? We will succeed because Jesus, my dear friends, is in our hearts.”

Across the country
37th annual
Dallas March for Life

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, presided at the vigil Mass at the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception the night before the March for Life.

He was joined by Cardinals Francis E. George of Chicago, Sean P. O’Malley of Boston, Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, William H. Keeler, retired archbishop of Baltimore, and William W. Baum and Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishops of Washington.

In his homily, Cardinal DiNardo welcomed the thousands of Catholics from across the country who made the trip to Washington for the annual vigil and march marking the 37th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion.

The cardinal said he was particularly grateful for the presence of thousands of young people, whom he called “a sure mark of infectious joy, the sign of life.”

He recalled the martyrdom of a youthful St. Agnes — Jan. 21 is the feast day of the Roman saint — saying her witness to faith as a child can be an inspiration for all Catholics in the continuing campaign to protect life.

“St. Agnes was so small that the chains intended to bind her hands and wrists slid off,” he said. “Unfortunately, in our culture we have grown into the chains that bind us and hold us fast in a grip of deadly attitudes about human life, about the human person, especially in the moments of his or her beautiful but fragile beginnings and in those vulnerable times of old age and illness.”

The cardinal offered his views on the current health care reform legislation before Congress. He said the House and Senate versions of reform fail to uphold the dignity of people and freedom of conscience.

He said that while the House version of the bill reaffirmed the longstanding
March for Life

Youth...

FROM PAGE 1

of Washington was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Concelebrants included Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States; and more than 30 bishops and more than 250 priests.

Prior to the Mass, Archbishop Sambi read a message to the participants from Pope Benedict XVI, who said their “generosity, idealism, and concern inspire youth to raise their voices in defense of the unborn.” He urged them to embrace “a culture of life grounded in the unchanging truth of who we are as God’s children” and to “rise to this urgent moral challenge and witness to the sacredness of God’s gift of life.”

Welcoming the youths, Archbishop Wuerl said, “We gather together to pray God’s blessing on our efforts to promote the value and dignity of all human life.” He also prayed that God would “fill the hearts of all with the fire of your love ... (and) secure justice and equality for every human being.”

Archbishop Wuerl praised “the huge number of young people who recognize the dignity of all life” and assured them that “your bishop’s encourage you in living the Gospel of life.”

Father Lawrence Swink, a young priest who is associate pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Bowie, Maryland, delivered the homily. He shaped his remarks around what he called the “three P’s” — protect life, remain pure, and pray.

Fr. Swink added that it is “stinking thinking” to believe “the myths that contraception and safe sex are the solution to abortion.”

Father Swink said his dad frowned and replied, “If I didn’t have you and your brothers and sisters, I wouldn’t be driving that car ... but you know, I wouldn’t trade any of you for a Mercedes or a BMW.”

Looking at the packed-to-the-rafters Verizon Center, the priest lamented that since 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe decision legalized abortion, “there would be 2,500 such stadiums filled with babies who have been aborted.”

“Have faith in God, because God has a plan for all life. All life is precious. All life is worth living,” he said.

He called it “stinking thinking” to believe “the myths that contraception and safe sex are the solution to abortion.”

Father Swink added that it is “not enough” to be pro-life and to just have the “goofy bumper stickers.”

“We are called to live it, we are called to be saints,” he said. “We are going to pray, we are going to march and we are going to win.”

Madeline Guay, a graduate of the Academy of the Holy Cross in Kensington, Maryland, who has Down syndrome, was featured in a video shown on a giant screen at the rally. Guay said she has a “girl just like you,” and that she enjoys hanging out with friends, connecting with people on Facebook and playing the piano. Ninety percent of pregnant women whose children are diagnosed with Down syndrome decide not to carry their pregnancy to term, the film noted.

The Little Sisters of the Poor in Washington — whose apostolate is to take care of the elderly poor — came to the rally to show their support for life, said Sister Camille Hampton.

“We uphold the dignity of life, especially at the end, and we care about the treatment of the elderly. Our congregation is devoted to the witness to life,” she told the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese.

For Stephen Smith, an eighth-grade student at St. Andrew Apostle School in Silver Spring, Maryland, attending the rally and Mass “is what Catholicism is all about.”

“We’re here to practice our religion and to show we support our faith when it teaches that abortion is wrong,” Smith said. “We’re putting our faith into action, and that is what Catholicism is all about.”

Nelly Argueta and Xiomara Gonzalez, teenage parishioners from Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Takoma Park, Maryland, were among the 45 members of their parish youth group to attend the rally and Mass.

“I’m here to support life,” Argueta said, explaining why she was at the Verizon Center more than three hours before the start of the Mass.

Gonzalez said the presence of so many young people “will show people that we support life, and we are living what we believe.”

Youth...
**Bishops to Congress: Set aside partisanship for genuine health reform**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Three leading U.S. bishops called on members of Congress Jan. 26 to “set aside partisan divisions and special-interest pressures” to achieve genuine health reform. “The health care debate, with all its political and ideological components, is about the moral focus and policy priority, which is to ensure that affordable, quality, life-giving care is available to all,” said a letter signed by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and Bishops William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, New York, and John C. Wester of Salt Lake City. The three are chair the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ committees on Pro-Life Activities, on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and on Migration, respectively.

Although the letter did not refer specifically to the Jan. 19 election of Republican Scott Brown of Massachusetts to the U.S. Senate, the bishops said, “Although political contexts have changed, the moral and policy failure that leaves tens of millions of our sisters and brothers without access to health care still remains.”

**New York’s Archbishop Dolan hosts rabbis on day of pope’s synod voyage visit**

NEW YORK (CNS) — As Pope Benedict XVI visited Rome’s main synod on Jan. 17, Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York hosted a kosher buffet luncheon for 14 Jewish leaders at his residence. Archbishop Dolan said, “You can never exaggerate the importance of hospitality,” describing the invitation to Catholic News Service, he said. “Hospitality is a high virtue for my Jewish brothers and sisters. Hospitality is a big virtue for Christians…. Jewish Scripture tells us that Abraham entertained God without knowing it because he was so gracious to guests,” he continued. “It is not just a sign of hospitality,”

He said “Hospitality is a high virtue for my Jewish brothers and sisters. Hospitality is a big virtue for Christians…. Jewish Scripture tells us that Abraham entertained God without knowing it because he was so gracious to guests,” he continued. “It is not just a sign of hospitality,”

Archbishop Dolan said, “You can never exaggerate the importance of hospitality,” describing the invitation to Cardinal Dolan, who has been a vocal advocate for Jewish-Catholic relations. “We have to keep the door open for dialogue,” he said.

**At funeral Mass Bishop Pelotte credited for making ‘mark in history’**

GALLUP, N.M. (CNS) — Hundreds of priests, religious and laity gathered Jan. 14 at Sacred Heart Cathedral for the funeral Mass of retired Bishop Donald E. Pelotte of Gallup, who died Jan. 7 at age 64. When he was named a bishop in 1986, the appointment was remarkable for his youth — he was 40 years old — and for the fact he was the first American Indian to be named a Catholic bishop in the United States. He was a member of the Abenaki tribe from Maine. “History was being made,” said homilist Msgr. Leo Gomez. The priest noted the challenges inherited by Bishop Pelotte and said he met them with both verve and vision. Bishop Pelotte, who was coadjutor of Gallup for four years and became head of the diocese in 1990, “was well prepared through the Second Vatican Council to accept the responsibility and leadership of our missionary diocese,” said Msgr. Gomez, a retired Gallup diocesan priest.

“His presence was a model of what we are called to be,” Msgr. Gomez said.

**U.S. military chaplains study post-traumatic syndrome**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, head of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, brought 40 U.S. Catholic chaplains, who are on active military duty, to the Vatican Jan. 19-21 to discuss what’s going on in the archdiocese, learn more about responding to post-traumatic stress disorder, and discuss preparations for using the new Mass translations.

Archbishop Broglio said the sessions of the annual archdiocesan priests’ convocation are always scheduled in five different cities around the world; this year, one was held at the Vatican. Unless he is deployed with troops on a military mission, each chaplain is expected to attend one of the sessions, the archbishop said.

Archbishop Broglio said that even though the entire 2008 convocation was dedicated to post-traumatic stress disorder, it is such a “major problem for men and women in the military, and for our own chaplains, who are deployed multiple times,” that he decided an entire day should be dedicated to the topic again.

The key speaker at the Rome meeting was Jesuit Father Richard Curry, founder and artistic director of the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped and founder of the Writers’ Program for Wounded Warriors. The program helps veterans write dramatic monologues in order to tell their stories and help begin the healing process.

**Catholic students from Brownsville get a taste of homelessness**

By Rose Ybarra

The Valley Catholic

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (CNS) — It’s been said that a good way to know someone is to walk a mile in his shoes. With that in mind, several students from the Catholic campus ministry program of the University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College spent a day much like a homeless person might by escaping the elements in cardboard boxes and asking strangers for money.

The students camped out on campus grounds and approached passers-by for donations. They received mixed reactions from the people walking by but said the overall responses were negative.

“People just passed by and ignored us, some people were rude but most people just walked by and said, ‘Not today,’” said 20-year-old student Maria Capistran. “We felt rejected.”

When it began to rain heavily, the students refused to leave their cardboard-box camp, pointing out that the homeless often have to endure adverse weather conditions.

“My feet are soaked,” said 24-year-old student Misael Martinez. “It’s not a very pleasant feeling, and the homeless feel this way every time it rains.”

The students intended to spend a full 24 hours camping out but were unable to get clearance to do so from campus officials.

Although the day was full of glitches, there were many positives. Some passers-by were impressed and asked a lot of questions. Some people showed compassion and donated money. The students raised a total of $190.98.

A proposal was sent to the student government requesting it match the funds raised. The Knights of Columbus donated another $100 to the cause.

The money was used to purchase food for the homeless of Brownsville. “Bags of hope” containing food, letters of encouragement, and prayer cards were handed out at a local park where many homeless people sleep at night.

The student exercise, held in late December, was part of an ongoing social justice project. Throughout the semester the students have been conducting research on homelessness and poverty.

Hilda Escandon, who leads the campus ministry program at University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, said the homeless experience as “humble.”

“Most of the people that walked by wouldn’t even make eye contact with us,” she told The Valley Catholic, newspaper of the Brownsville Diocese.

For Escandon, the goal of the project was to raise awareness among students and the community about the issues that affect people every day.

Even though the students endured poor weather conditions, they said feeling homeless was even harder to take.

“As time passed, we felt our spirits sinking,” Martinez said.

We put ourselves in their shoes and we got a little taste of what their lives are like,” Capistran said. “I can’t imagine feeling like that every day.”
Amid cathedral rubble, Haitians celebrate church leaders’ funerals

By Catholic News Service

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (CNS) — Amid the rubble of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption, Haitians celebrated the lives of the archbishop and vicar general of Port-au-Prince, both of whom were killed in the country’s earthquake.

Church officials — including some from the United States — joined Haitians Jan. 23 for the funerals of Archbishop Joseph Serge Miot, who died when the impact of the Jan. 12 quake hurled him from a balcony, and Monsignor Charles Benoit, the vicar general whose body was pulled from the cathedral debris.

They were among more than 150,000 Haitians killed in the magnitude 7 quake; U.N. officials have said the final death toll might never be known.

Archbishop Louis Kebreau of Cap-Haitien, president of the Haitian bishops’ conference, celebrated the funeral Mass, and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Lafontant of Port-au-Prince delivered the homily.

Haiti President Rene Preval was among those in attendance.


Cardinal George’s message to the Haitians was contained in a letter that was addressed to Archbishop Kebreau.

“The Church in the United States stands with you,” he said.

“In our prayer, we recall that Jesus, too, wept before the tomb of one whom he loved,” said the cardinal’s message. “With you, we recall in trust that he is the resurrection and the life, offering himself to us and calling us to himself, even in our darkest hour.”

“In the United States, our televisions, computers and newspapers have been filled with images of your unspeakable pain, suffering and loss,” he told them. “Each hour we see the faces of the widows and orphans and all of those who have lost family and friends and all of their life’s possessions.”

He said the U.S. church was committed to “doing everything we can so that you may rebuild and renew and begin again your lives of faith and family and service to Haiti.”

Archbishop Dolan, who also serves as chairman of the board of Catholic Relief Services, was accompanied by Msgr. David Malloy, general secretary of the U.S. bishops’ conference.

Back in New York Jan. 25, Archbishop Dolan described the funeral to Catholic News Service as “a therapeutic and holy occasion to grieve.”

“There was a longing for the community to express sorrow,” he said.

Archbishop Dolan said that while standing in front of the devastated cathedral he noticed the crucifix that stood at the front of the building appeared to be untouched.

“It brought me to tears, this crucifix, rising tall in this darkness ... rising from this cosmic ‘why’ groaning from the Haitian people. It was a very powerful symbol,” he said.

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Florida, and Oblate Father Andrew Small, director of the U.S. bishops’ Church in Latin America office, also attended.

Bishop Wenski told Catholic News Service Jan. 25 that Bishop Lafontant, in his homily, told the hundreds gathered that the funeral was not only for the deceased clergy, but that it represented funerals for the thousands of other people who died in the disaster and had not had a proper funeral.

“He said this was not the wrath of God, but it does call us to responsibility to build a new Haiti in which people will have hope and prosperity,” Bishop Wenski said.

Archbishop Miot’s body was one of the first recovered after the earthquake. Archbishop Bernardito Auzu, papal nuncio to Haiti, asked that it be taken to the coastal city of St. Marc because there was no electricity in Port-au-Prince.

Local clergy asked that the archbishop’s funeral be at the cathedral.

A statement from Caritas, the church’s network of charitable aid agencies, said when Msgr. Benoit’s body was found, his hands were around a reliquary with a host inside.

The archbishop and the vicar general were buried in Lisalvo’s Cemetery in the Haitian capital.
Scripture Readings

February 7, Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle C. Readings:
Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8
Psalm 138:1-5, 7-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11

By Sharon K. Perkins

I’ve never been in the presence of royalty, but I recall watching the television coverage some years ago of the marriage of Prince Charles of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer. The royal entourage alone was impressive, as was the sight of thousands of subjects lining the parade route for hours, waiting to catch a glimpse of the bridal party. By the time the carriage appeared, excitement was at a fever pitch. Although the parade came and went relatively quickly, no doubt the spectators each felt the experience to their family and friends for months afterward, as if their very presence at the parade imbued them with some share of the royal couple’s celebrity.

The prophet Isaiah in today’s reading recounts a similar but far more extraordinary experience. In an ecstatic vision, he finds himself in the presence of the Lord of hosts, surrounded by a heavenly entourage of seraphim crying out in praise. Isaiah is so awed by the sight that he immediately feels overcome by his own sinful inadequacy. But with one angelic touch of an ember to his lips, he is not only purged of his sin but empowered to offer himself as a divine messenger — a mission that has had tremendous and lasting importance for God’s people to this day.

In today’s Gospel, Peter’s lack of faith and his experience of Jesus’ authority to overcome that failing are equally overwhelming — so much so that he, with his partners James and John, leaves everything to follow Jesus. St. Paul, the former persecutor, recognizes himself as undeserving of forgiveness, but “by the effective grace of God” he leaves behind his old life to preach the saving word of the Gospel of Christ to everyone within earshot. We, the disciples of Jesus today, are the beneficiaries of their Spirit-filled response.

It’s one thing to stand around the office water cooler and recount one’s brush with celebrity. It is quite another to share one’s faith in Christ with courage and enthusiasm. (Pope John Paul II called this impulse in our age the “new evangelization.”) Yet we — touched by the embers of his holiness and empowered by the Holy Spirit — are given numerous opportunities to do so in the course of each day, whether to strangers whose names we will never know or to members of our own families. It is the legacy of the prophets and the apostles — and it is our sacred calling.

QUESTIONS:
What keeps you from being a courageous and enthusiastic evangelizer? How can you seek the divine ember of God’s touch to overcome this obstacle?

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Christians must pray for unity as they tackle new problems, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY — The search for Christian unity “is not a linear process,” because as churches resolve their past differences, differing approaches to new questions create new difficulties, Pope Benedict XVI said.

During his weekly general audience Jan. 20 — in the middle of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity — the pope said the unity that Jesus wants for his disciples will require human effort and conversion, but ultimately it will be a gift of God for which people must pray.

Discussing the ecumenical landscape, the pope said, “we must be aware, on the one hand, of how much real progress has been made in Christian collaboration and fraternity over the past 50 years, but at the same time, we know that ecumenical work is not a linear process. Old problems, born in the context of another age, lose their weight, while in our own context new problems and difficulties are born.”

Pope Benedict did not list the new problems, but in the past he has noted how the approach of different Christian communities to modern moral and social sensibilities has created new divisions, for instance when they have led some churches to ordain women or to recognize homosexual unions.

The new divisions, he said, call on all Christians “to be always ready for a process of purification, through which the Lord will make us ready to be united.”

Christians will never be able to give a united witness to the world until each of them is united to Christ, he said.

Ecumenism does require intellectual effort and theological dialogue, but even more it requires Christians who know and experience the love of God through Jesus and are prepared to share the Gospel with the world, he said.

The commitment to dialogue, despite new problems and tensions, is a sign of Christians’ intense desire for unity, he said, and it is not enough.

A new, united church constructed with human hands and minds, the pope said, “would be something human, while we want the church of God, made by God. God will create unity when he wills, when we are prepared.”

Pope Benedict asked God to listen to all Christians, who plead especially intensely for unity during the Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer.

Participating in the audience were members of the Continuation Committee of Ecumenism in the 21st Century, a body convoked by the World Council of Churches and made up of representatives of 15 Christian communities, including the Catholic Church. The committee is working to help the ecumenical movement evaluate its past achievements and identify paths forward in the search for unity.
M y wife Susan and I wandered away from our church affiliations during our college years. We began reconnecting with God and the church after serving for a year with Volunteers in Service to America. Through the grace of God and the witness of our rural neighbors we were reintroduced to the value of faith.

On our return, we started attending church, irregularly at first, then committing to regular attendance at Mass. Next came attending charismatic prayer meetings and involvement in the Catholic charismatic renewal. The combination brought us to a lively and active faith.

At the same time, my wife was entering into her career teaching poor children. In those first years she taught reading to mostly poor black children who lived in housing projects near downtown Fort Worth. For the last 20-plus years, she has taught English as a Second Language to high school students from every corner of the world while also providing a classroom home for them as they adjust to a new culture.

In working with disadvantaged and immigrant students, she became, like the Scripture in Jeremiah describes, one who trusted in the Lord and found her hope in the Lord, and we always found God faithful to his promise — the promise, as Jeremiah put it in today’s readings, that those who do trust in him will not become distressed in the year of drought, but still will be able to bear fruit.

When Susan had cancer surgery in December of 2008, a woman who had taught with her decades earlier “happened to be” tutoring in her classroom. The woman was a master teacher, so when my wife was unable to stand for very long at a time, much less take full charge of teaching her classes, her “tutor” rose to the occasion. She was, quite literally, a “Godsend,” fruit of my wife’s diligence in following God in her vocation to serve and love the poor.

This outworking of God’s economy, in which we give to others in one form and it comes back to us in another, shows us that when Jesus says in the beatitudes, “Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh,” he doesn’t mean only after reaching heaven. God’s principles begin to work in the here and now as well.

Have you seen God blessing the giving that others have done with goodness in their own lives? How might God be calling you to invest your love in the lives of others?

By Jeff Hensley

This Lent, make a plan to make God smile with joy

Y ou may have heard it said that if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. Of course this is meant to say that whatever plans we have probably are not what God has in mind for us at that point in time. While this is very likely true a lot of the time, I know a way that you can make plans that will make God smile.

Every year the season of Lent sneaks up on us. We are finally recovered from the holidays, and the Super Bowl is over, and we are settling into a few weeks with not too much big happening, except waiting for the Girl Scout cookies to arrive. Next thing you know, it’s Ash Wednesday and you have no idea what you are giving up for Lent.

Well, this year you don’t have that excuse. Ash Wednesday is Feb. 17, so that gives us all a good couple of weeks to figure out what we will do for this important season in the Church calendar.

I have a two-part suggestion. Every year somewhere between 800 and 1,000 people join the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Fort Worth through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). That means that right now there are a whole lot of people who have been taking classes since September to become Catholic, and receive baptism, the Eucharist, and confirmation.

They need our support. It is not an easy thing to convert to Catholicism. It not only takes a lot of time and effort, there is a lot of stuff to learn. Sacraments, Scripture, history, prayers, Mass, creed, Trinity, and many other such subjects are taught along with the catechisms of when to sit, stand, and kneel at Mass.

So the first part of my suggestion is simply to pray for these people. This could take the form of a daily prayer for all people in RCIA this year. Or, if you want to take it an extra step, get a list of people preparing for the sacrament at your parish and pray for them by name every day. A fringe benefit of these prayers is that when you attend the Easter Vigil, you will see the people you have been praying for be welcomed into the Church.

The second part of the suggestion is a little more involved. When was the last time you went to a class to learn more about your faith? For some Catholics the last time they studied the Eucharist was when they were preparing for their first Communion at age seven.

RCIA classes in most parishes are open to anyone who wants to attend. You do not have to be seeking initiation into the Church. The only thing you need is an open mind and a willingness to learn. So my suggestion is to find out when your parish offers RCIA classes and attend each week during Lent. If you want to go all in on this suggestion, see if one of the people preparing to come into the Church at the Easter Vigil needs a sponsor. You can make a real difference in the life of a soon-to-be Catholic by offering your support in this way.

The RCIA programs around our diocese are very often gems yet to be discovered by people who attend Mass each week. But that is not the only reason to be involved. When a person becomes a Catholic, they are not only received into the Church through ancient and beautiful rituals, they are also joining a faith community that, while being 2,000 years old, is still vibrant and vital today.

Being involved with the RCIA program helps these Catechumens and Candidates meet the people they will be worshipping God alongside for years to come. We are, after all, the Catholic Church, not the Catholic individuals. Community is at the core of how we encounter God.

Lent is still weeks away, so you have some time to decide what you will do to observe the season. Please consider becoming a part of the RCIA program in your parish. I can just about guarantee that if God laughs at this plan, it will be with joy.

Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal organizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at jeff@stbartsfw.org.
The Passion, death and resurrection of Christ make Him the answer to sin and the source of eternal life

By Lucas Pollice

O ur next Why Catholic? topic is the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ is known as the Paschal mystery through which Jesus frees us from the slavery of sin and destroys the power of sin and death forever.

A deeper look at the Paschal Mystery of Christ reveals his great love for us and the eternal glory for which each of us are destined through the grace of Christ.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

The Passion of Christ begins immediately following the celebration of the Last Supper when Jesus enters into his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is the paradigm event in his life and mission. The agony in the garden defines everything that He is and came to do. Jesus faces accepting the will of the Father, knowing that it will result in His torture and cruel death on the cross, a fate which awaits Him only hours away. The sin of all of humanity, past, present, and future, stares Jesus in the face. He falls to the ground in such agony that He begins to sweat blood. Here we see the real love of Jesus. He says yes to the Father and yes to us. For us He says yes to the cruel beatings He will receive after He is arrested. For us He says yes to the unimaginable scourging at the pillar. For us He says yes to being nailed to the cross. For us He says yes to having his heart pierced with a spear. To all of this He says yes out of merciful love for us. Jesus’ yes in the Garden of Gethsemane is why the cross becomes the instrument of salvation.

First, Christ’s descent to the dead means that Jesus suffers death in the same way we all suffer death. Jesus died a truly human death so that He may destroy death forever. Had He not died, He would not have been able to redeem death. He suffered physical death that is the destruction of his body and the separation of his body and soul. Christ also in an even more profound way suffered spiritual death in a very human way, that is, the separation from the Father, which is the eternal and ultimate consequence of sin. This spiritual suffering can be seen on the cross when Christ exclaims, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46) Out of love for us, Christ totally experienced death so that death may be redeemed and destroyed forever.

Second, Christ’s descent into hell is also the first-fruits of the redemption in Christ. He descends to the place of the dead, where the just souls of those who died before the redemption are awaiting the coming of Christ, and frees them from death and takes them into Paradise. Jesus’ descent to the dead is the culmination of his messianic ministry and shows the immediate power of the redemption for all humanity, past, present, and future. No one can escape the mercy and love of Christ!

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The Resurrection of Christ is the very cornerstone of our faith. For as St. Paul says, “If Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching: empty too your faith: … and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:14; 18). The Resurrection fulfills and confirms Christ’s entire mission, words, and actions; for He came to free us from sin and death and forever establish the Kingdom of God.

The Resurrection is not just simply Christ being resuscitated from the dead. It goes far beyond that. Jesus' resurrection is a new creation, a new way of being. The resurrected Christ truly had a human body, for He ate and drank in front of the disciples, and Thomas placed his fingers in the nail marks in his hands. But it is a human body and a human nature filled with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, and not bound by space and time. The resurrected Christ is the full fruit of a humanity freed from the power of sin and death and transformed by the grace of the Father. Through the Resurrection of Christ we truly become glorified sons and daughters of the Father, living forever in his life and love.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

The Ascension of Christ is the completion of the earthly mission of Jesus and his entrance into heavenly glory. It brings an end to the saving mission of Jesus and completes the Paschal mystery. The Ascension is a profound manifestation of Christ as the King of Kings and the eternal High Priest of heaven. Jesus forever sits at the right hand of God as our glorious mediator and way to the Father. Christ who was sent by the Father returns to Him with the fruits of his redemption and becomes the instrument of grace and life flowing from the Father.

Christ also becomes for us the way into the life of the Trinity. It is through Christ that we have access to the Father in and with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Ascension proclaims forever that the human race will never again be separated from the Father. We now joyfully await the second coming of Christ, when all things will be brought under his feet and the Kingdom of Christ will be complete, and with all the angels and saints in heaven we can joyfully proclaim, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:12).

Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master’s degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. He is an adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth. Lucas and his wife, Mary, have five children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, Christian, and Julia.
América

Grupos eclesiásticos luchan para distribuir ayuda; hospitales dominicanos se desbordan

Por David Agren
Catholic News Service
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO (CNS) — Una monja mexicana que opera un centro médico en Puerto Príncipe dijo que bastante ayuda está llegando a la capital haitiana, pero no se está llegando a muchos de los que fueron heridos y dejados desamparados por el terremoto del 12 de enero.

Mientras tanto las autoridades eclesiásticas de la República Dominicana dijeron que los haitianos estaban huyendo, cruzando la frontera para tratamiento médico.

La hermana mexicana Bertha López, madre superiora y fundadora de las Misioneras de Cristo Resucitado, con base en Guadalajara, dijo, en un informe del 17 de enero, distribuido por Caritas: “El aeropuerto está lleno de tiendas (y provisiones) procedente de todos los países, pero la ayuda no ha llegado”.

El 18 de enero ella dijo a Caritas en México que poco había cambiado desde que escribió su informe.

“Con mucha frecuencia hemos sido acusados, en discusiones sobre asuntos de la vida, de imponer nuestras creencias sobre otros o de tratar de promover la vida”, sostuvo López.

Por Juan Guajardo
Asistente Editorial
El Comité de inmigración celebra su primera reunión introductoria el sábado, 6 de febrero, en la Iglesia de St. Bartholomew en Fort Worth.

La reunión, titulada Un Viaje de Esperanza — acogiendo al inmigrante, se incluirá la conferencia de una presentación sobre los aspectos más extremos, la realización de ampliaciones en las soles de la reforma migratoria.

El dúo de la parroquia, la parroquia del obispo, dijo que todas las parroquias serán bienvenidas. La experiencia del Diácono Len con el Comité de reforma y control de inmigración de 1986, convenció de que las parroquias deben prepararse para asistir a inmigrantes en el caso de otra reforma.

Después de la promulgación del proyecto de ley de 1986, el Diácono Len notó una tendencia preocupante. Aprendió que los inmigrantes tenían especial dificultad en la preparación de los documentos requeridos, debido a su limitada capacidad de leer y escribir en inglés. También aprendió que el público se preocupaba de manera excesiva.

A una de las promesas que el partido democrático hizo fue que (Obama) iba a intentar de aprobar una reforma migratoria. El Diácono Len dijo que las parroquias no pueden convertirse en ametapados y terminar muriendo”, ella dijo.

Sobre todo, la clausura central de la parroquia en Ciudad de México fue una expansión de los programas que fueron entregados a la clínica improvisada.

La hermana López emitió un llamado urgente para agua, alimentos y provisiones médicas, tales como jeringas, sartas y antibióticos.

JORNADA FAMILIAR
Un retiro para toda clase de parejas, en el Centro de Cursos de Fort Worth, 2221 NW 26th St., Fort Worth, Texas, 76164.

Feb. 5, viernes, desde las 7 p.m. a Feb. 7, domingo, 6 p.m.

Un fin de semana de retiro para crecer en el amor en su pareja y en su familia. Formamos el equipo un sacerdote y parejas preparadas. Candidatos traen sabanas, cobija y funda de almohada, toalla y artículos para uso personal. Depósito, con la inscripción, es $40.00. No es reembolsable. Para más información: Leo y María Miramontes 817-637-6762; Ramiro y Silvia Lozano 817-921-3412; O al Centro 817-624-9411. Le esperamos.

Introducción a la Reforma Migratoria:
Feligresía invitada a una reunión sobre servicios para inmigrantes

Por Guadalupe Yáñez
Asistente Editorial
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Semana de migración trae impulso legislativo, oraciones, caminata a Washington

Por Patricia Zapata
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Mientras la iglesia católica observaba la Semana nacional de la migración, del 3 al 9 de enero, el apoyo a esfuerzos legislativos tomó la vanguardia, entre otras medidas, para atraer atención a las preocupaciones de los migrantes y refugiados.

En teleconferencia el 6 de enero, el obispo John C. Wester de Salt Lake City, director de los obispos del Comité sobre migración, describió la medida que se están tomando, incluyendo un nueva sitio web, una alerta nacional y una campaña de tarjetas postales previamente anunciada para animar a los miembros del Congreso a apoyar una reforma abarcadora.

“El público estadounidense, incluyendo a los católicos y otras comunidades de fe, quiere entender la situación humana y abracadora a los problemas que acusan nuestro sistema de inmigración y ellos quieren que el Congreso se dirija a este asunto”, dijo el obispo Wester.

El obispo Howard J. Hubbard de Albany, Nueva York, director del Comité sobre política internacional, dijo que los obispos también quieren que la legislación considere las causas radicales de la inmigración y ayude a facilitar que las personas tengan una vida decente en sus propios países.

“La primera proposición de los obispos estadounidenses con respecto a la inmigración es que los migrantes tienen el derecho a no emigrar, es decir, poder encontrar trabajo en sus propios países de origen, de modo que puedan sustentar sus familias dignamente”, dijo. “La migración debe ser impulsada por la elección, no por la necesidad”.

También en la teleconferencia, la hermana Rita Mary Harwood, de Notre Dame, que dirige la Oficina de vida parroquial y desarrollo en la diócesis de Cleveland, dijo que la iglesia de Ohio distribuirá casi 300,000 postales que serán enviadas al Congreso.

“Dijo que ve en Ohio muchos paralelos entre el trabajo de los migrantes extranjeros y los que nos ves todos los días y los de hoy día, y tiene la esperanza de que los que recordarle al público esas semejanzas abrira corazones, de modo que la gente apoye la reforma de inmigración.

La hermana Mary Beth Hamm, coordinadora de justicia social de las Hermanas de San Jose en Philadelphia, dijo que concienciar que el público escuche las historias de inmigrantes individuales es la clave de lo que su orden está haciendo para apoyar la reforma de inmigración.

“Uno no puede odiar a la persona cuya historia conoce”, explicó.

En otras partes en todo el país, pequeños y grandes grupos católicos, interreligiosos y no religiosos realizaron eventos relacionados con la inmigración. Estos fueron desde conferencias de prensa, simples servicios de oración y eventos educativos hasta una caminata desde Miami hasta Washington, realizada por cuatro estudiantes, que tienen la esperanza de atraer atención a las situaciones que ellos y otros enfrentan.

Los cuatro actuales o ex estudiantes de la universidad comunitaria Miami-Dade planeaban caminar hasta Washington para atraer atención al problema de estudiantes que están en los Estados Unidos ilegalmente, pero no por falta propia, traídos al país cuando eran jóvenes por sus padres.

Sin estado legal, en muchos estados se les prohíbe pagar tarifas de matrícula más bajas —establecidas solamente para residentes de estado — haciendo imposible que muchos inmigrantes asistan a la universidad. La legislación que abriría un camino hacia la legalización y la ciudadanía estadounidense para una gran multitud de tales estudiantes ha tenido durante mucho tiempo mucho apoyo público y del Congreso, pero esfuerzos para aprobar dicho proyecto de ley han sido repetidamente engavetados.

El padre Don Nevins, parroco de la Iglesia Santa Inés de la Bohemia (Saint Agnes of Bohemia), en Chicago, hace de todas las tarjetas de inmigración que serán distribuidas en Chicago, muestra “el acto de testimonio”.

“Uno no puede odiar a la persona cuya historia conoce”, explicó.

“La migración debe ser impulsada por la elección, no por la necesidad”.

La izquierda radical y el catolicismo, bajo la conducción de la Conferencia de obispos de los Estados Unidos, ha insistido en la aprobación de una reforma migratoria para este año. El 6 de enero la Conferencia católica de obispos puso en marcha una campaña de correspondencia a cambio de medidas que faciliten el camino hacia la ciudadanía, y que cada parroquia envíe a dos o más estudiantes interesados en el camino hacia la legalización y la ciudadanía estadounidense.

Comité...

DE LA PÁGINA 19

como la Sagrada Familia fue una condición humana y el futuro. Los jóvenes de hoy buscan mucho con la tarea urgente de respetar a las mujeres, ser hijos y entender lo que estudian, que la vida es un camino viejo, pero que la fe es lo que hace el camino viejo nuevo.”

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Por Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service
CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Los jóvenes necesitan ayuda para que eviten un estilo de vida en donde las relaciones y la sexualidad se vean trivializadas, dijo el papa Benedicto XVI.

“La iglesia pide la colaboración de todos, y en particular de los que trabajan en escuelas, para que transmitan un sentido elevado del amor y la sexualidad humana”, dijo el papa, el 14 de enero, en un discurso dirigido a funcionarios de la ciudad y provincia de Roma y la región del Lacio en Italia.

Los jóvenes de hoy buscan respuestas que explican la condición humana y el futuro de la humanidad, como también “respuestas que desmuestren cómo fundamentar su vida sobre valores atemporales”, dijo. El cristianismo ofrece “una visión más elevada de la humanidad” y la iglesia puede contribuir mucho con la tarea urgente de enseñarles a los jóvenes los temas de las relaciones y la sexualidad, dijo.

“Es necesario evitar que los adolescentes y jóvenes se expongan a formas de vida que pro pongan evitar la sexualidad como una forma de vida, que no está encerrado en un punto de vista narcisista por parte de la pareja”, dijo.

La iglesia “está convencida de que solamente estas decisiones pueden contribuir a un estilo de vida que proponga un futuro, un horizonte, una vida que sea un bien compartido”, dijo.

Un sentido sano del amor, la familia fundamentada en el matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer, y el respeto por la vida, desde su concepción hasta su fin natural, son parte de la promoción de la iglesia de una forma autén tica de verdad que conduce a una verdadera libertad y crecimiento humano, dijo.
Mujer rescatada de escombros de catedral siete días después de terremoto haitiano

Por David Agren
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DE MÉXICO (CNS) — Los equipos de búsqueda y rescate de Caritas milagrosamente encontraron y sacaron a una mujer de 69 años de edad de los escombros dentro de la Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, donde ella había estado atrapada a la vida durante siete días.

Anna Zizi fue sacada por equipos de rescate de México y Sudáfrica que trabajaron durante dos horas para extraerla. Funcionarios de Caritas dijeron que sufrió lesiones a sus caderas y posiblemente una pierna quebrada, pero que “no estaba criticamente herida”.

Zizi dijo a sus rescatadores “les amo”, después de ser sacada de los escombros el 19 de enero.

El rescatador mexicano Gabriel Romero Vega dijo que perros entrenados “señalaron que alguien estaba vivo en el edificio derrumbado”, y que Zizi había estado cantando para atraer la atención de otros.


“La alegría era abrumadora, más que lo que uno pueda imaginar”, añadió.

Otros entre las 40 personas que trabajaron para sacar a Zizi de los escombros hicieron eco de ese sentir.

“Fue como testigo de un pequeño milagro”, dijo la traductora de Caritas Ruth Schöffl, de Austria. “Después de una semana de búsqueda escuchamos esta voz. Yo no puedo hablar, traduciendo para el equipo de rescate.”

A h.m el D.Ham, líderesadafí- ricanos del equipo de socorro, llamó el rescate “lo mejor que hemos experimentado en el equipo”.

Monseñor Charles Benoît, vicario general arquidiocesano, no estaba entre los encuentros vivos. Su cuerpo fue encontrado “con sus manos alrededor de un relicario con una hostia dentro”, dijo Caritas en una declaración.

Alejandro de Hoyos, de Caritas en el estado mexicano de Quintana Roo, que patrocinó los rescatados mexicanos, dijo que Zizi era la quinta persona en ser rescatada del lugar de la catedral durante los siete días siguientes al terremoto.

El milagro de encontrar a Zizi viva marcó uno de los pocos momentos brillantes desde que un terremoto de magnitud 7 aplastó gran parte de Puerto Príncipe el 12 de enero. Los esfuerzos de socorro habían sido obstaculizados por daños a la infraestructura, problemas de seguridad y escasez de provisiones, así como por una réplica sísmica de magnitud 6.1 el 20 de enero, de la cual los informes de los medios dicen que causó aún más pánico en la población haitiana.

Romero y su equipo mexicano, conocidos localmente como Los tacos, estuvieron entre la primera ola de rescatados extranjeros en llegar a Puerto Príncipe el 14 de enero.

Los esfuerzos por una reforma del sistema de salud deben continuar, dice presidente de obispos

Por Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Con el destino de los proyectos de ley de reforma sobre el sistema de salud ahora en duda, el siguiente obstáculo es el siguiente obstáculo. El rescate “lo mejor que hemos visto”.

El arzobispo Broglio hizo notar que “los primeros cristianos empezaron a hacer lo que hoy llamamos obras de caridad, acercando una escuela en Haití y finalmente a conocer al Señor, que cambió la vida de cada uno. Ésta es nuestra misión propia: el llamado de arrebatarle a nadie la vida que no podían conseguir información sobre sus seres queridos en su patria.

“De la página 19

Mérida...
Hike... FROM PAGE 24
The hike helped to not only raise awareness about the pro-life movement and present a stand against abortion in a town of almost 26,000, but to also raise more than $6,700 for a local crisis pregnancy center.

“I think it is significant because [the youth] have reflected on it, and they realize that life is special and not to be taken for granted,” Father John Casey, SAC, pastor of St. Stephen said.

“Just having them sharing that with their friends and talking about it is significant, because the opposite, that life doesn’t count, that it doesn’t matter, has serious consequences for everybody.”

The idea for a pro-life Hike came after Houle took a group of teens to a youth leadership retreat in July. After the retreat, the teens went back to St. Stephen and formed different groups dealing with areas like music, liturgy, and sports, for other parish youth to participate in. 17-year-old Amy Gibson took the reins for the newly formed pro-life group, The Voice. Within the first few meetings, the teens in the group decided they should do a pro-life march to raise awareness and take a stand.

The youth took the idea to Houle, who began making calls to find out how to start a local march. A week afterward, she met Tom Clark, president of Hike for Life, at a diocesan conference, and Clark agreed to help them set up the first hike in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Hikes for Life are annual 5 or 10k fundraising marches held in several North Texas cities. The profits from the Hikes go toward crisis pregnancy centers chosen by the hikers. Hike For Life, Inc., a non-profit organization started by the Knights of Columbus, sponsors the events. The hikers aren’t just raising money though, Clark said. Rather, the hike is often a “seed” that leads them to become more involved in other pro-life activities.

They’re doing something physical; they’re using their bodies, every step is a prayer, so as they’re hiking, they’re enjoying life,” said Clark, who is also state pro-life chairman for the Knights of Columbus. “They may be praying; they may be silently reflecting; they may be chatting with their friends: It’s all about celebrating life and allowing people to know that life is a gift.

Usually, the hikes are held in the fall, but the youth wanted this hike to be held in January, on the same weekend as the national March for Life in Washington, D.C. A lot of work went into setting it up for that date, Houle said. The teens had to raise funds and spread the word about the hike, aside from meeting. A week before this hike to be held in January, the group met their deaths that day and the other 13, left inside crumbling buildings, had no idea how we revere it.

Farrell’s words that day was his confidence that prayer would prevail and renew a culture of life — Bishop Kevin Farrell, of Dallas, spoke of “the two Kevins” — Roe v. Wade, “the two Kevins” — Bishop Kevin Farrell, of Dallas, and our Bishop Kevin Vann —con-celebrated mass.

As I listened to Bishop Farrell’s homily that day, I was jolted by the connection he made between pro-life and Haiti, where, “Mothers, knowing that their children were left inside crumbling buildings, went in, only to lose their lives, trying to defend or to rescue loved ones.”

“It is a part of each and every human being, no matter what our faith commitment may be,” he said. “To defend human life is a part of nature.”

What struck me about Bishop Farrell’s words that day was his confidence that prayer would prevail and renew a culture of life in America. He was steadfast, with faith like I see in our seminarians before they are ordained. He was as confident of the fight for life as my granddaughter Emma — The information is sure her words will meet willing ears, sure her mother will play “vacuuming” with her, sure her grandmother will give her a baggie of cookies.

I felt renewed in spirit when Bishop Farrell confidently announced: “If Jesus is in our hearts, who can defeat us? We will never give up and we will win.”

I believed him. Of course, bishops are not The Real Informers in my own life.

Emma is.

Kathy Cribri Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. In May, 2009 her column received the second place award for best family life columns by the Catholic Press Association for the second time in two years at the Catholic Media Convention in Anaheim. In 2005, Kathy’s column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.

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LENTEN SPEAKER SERIES
St. Joseph Covenant Keepers will sponsor a Lenten speaker series at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 2011 Willis Lane, Keller. The series is sponsored by the Faith Ministry group with guest speaker Chris Aubert. Aubert is a nationally known Catholic evangelist and apologist focusing on Pro-Life and the Pro-Life Movement. For more information call Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 737-6768 and fellowship. For more information, call Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics with HIV/AIDS. The Feb. 16, 2010, session will be “The Passion According to St. John’s Gospel: The Crucifixion and Death of Christ.” For more information on the Lenten speaker series, contact Frank Lau at (817) 839-6954.

END OF LIFE WORKSHOP
All are invited to attend an end of life workshop using the National Catholic Bioethics Center’s (NCBC) resources. The NCBC helps Catholics understand the issues as they have been featured on numerous Catholic radio and TV outlets. The schedule for workshops is as follows: Feb. 12—“Death and Dying: Following a Path of Peace” taught by Sr. Mary of Namur, St. Mary of Namur, the first Friday of each month from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory Church, 3701 Forest Hill Ave., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth. Details are also available online at RespectLifeDFW.org. For reservations, call (817) 498-7960. The workshop will also include periods of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration and time for confession. For further information on the Grapevine chapter of the NCBC, look under the events calendar and resources section of the Fort Worth diocesan Web site, at www.fwdoc.org.

RESPECT LIFE HOLY HOUR
The Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth sponsors a Holy Hour from 7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral on the third Monday of each month for single Catholic women. The hour begins with Adoration and time for prayer and confession. All are invited to come and pray for an end to abortion and all the offenses to the sanctity of human life. For more information, contact Brother Chavez-Ruth Killinger, director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 560-3300 ext. 251.

MOTHER/Daughter Tea
The Spring Mother/Daughter Tea will be held Sunday afternoon, March 28 from noon to 4 p.m. The location of the tea has been changed to Jubilee Hill Guest House in Keller. All young ladies, ages 10 to 13, their mothers, grandmothers, or any other special woman in their lives are invited to enjoy the tea as well as the special gifts and qualities we have inherited from those who have gone before us. The theme for this year is “Feminine Perspective.” This role will explain the physical, emotional, and psychological changes that occur in a woman from a female-biased, stereotyped perspective,” states Kathy Stojak, coordinator of the program. There is a $12.50 per person fee. Reservations can be made by calling Kathy Stojak at (817) 772-8096. Due to limited space, reservations are being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The Knights of Columbus Hall is located in Keller at 1907 Whitley Rd.

SMMN ANNIVERSARY
The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur will be celebrating their 150th anniversary this year. Friends of Sisters of St. Mary of Namur are making plans to celebrate the sisters’ years of service to the community. A celebration will be held on March 6, at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth and Saturday, April 24, at Bishop Studio Dunne High School in Dallas. All are invited to join in celebrating with the sisters. For more information visit www.smmn.org or e-mail ssmmn137@msn.com.

ST. PATRICK CHOIR
The St. Patrick Cathedral Adult Choir is searching for new voices for the 2010 Cathedral Choir presentations. Rehearsals are from 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesdays at St. Patrick Catholic School, located at 2100 Bridge St., Fort Worth. The day will begin with registration and a continental breakfast at 8 a.m. for those who wish to attend. For further information, contact the Director of Music, Patrick Nguyen at (817) 927-9248 or by e-mailing pcnguyen@charterinternet.com. The director of music, Patrick Nguyen, is looking for singing timberline music directors, choirs, and other music directors. Job requirements include coordinate, rehearse, plan liturgy, and provide music for liturgical worship. Those interested must be Catholic and able to provide a religious education and music degree preferred. Job description and application available online at www.stpattycathedral.com. To register for a position, call (817) 560-2452 ext. 900 or e-mail to cj.ferner@charterinternet.com. The remaining officers, Sr. Maureen Langton, Sr. Gabriel Hesselink, and Chuck Pelletier will present “ _______ and Ascension.” For more information, contact Sr. Yolanda Cruz, SSAMN, at (817) 923-3091 or ycrull@stcatholic.com.

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
St. Joseph Catholic School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller; 817-560-2452 ext. 115. For more information, contact Sr. Maureen Langton. Sr. Maureen will be the presenter for the spring retreat at St. Patrick Cathedral. She will present “A Day of Communion” on March 20 at 9 a.m. For more information, contact the director of music, Patrick Nguyen at (817) 927-9248 or by e-mailing pcnguyen@charterinternet.com. The director of music, Patrick Nguyen, is looking for singing timberline music directors, choirs, and other music directors. Job requirements include coordinate, rehearse, plan liturgy, and provide music for liturgical worship. Those interested must be Catholic and able to provide a religious education and music degree preferred. Job description and application available online at www.stpattycathedral.com. To register for a position, call (817) 560-2452 ext. 900 or e-mail to cj.ferner@charterinternet.com.
Clouds loomed overhead and rain fell steadily as people bundled in raincoats, with umbrellas in hand, gathered to publicly spread a message that was the idea of a most unlikely group — a handful of teenagers.

Despite the cold, blustery day, the rain stopped just in time for those 10 teens from St. Stephen Church to lead almost 150 marchers down Main Street, an arterial road in the heart of Weatherford, in the town’s first ever Hike For Life.

“I always get so touched because these are 15- and 16-year-olds that are leading us, that are leading the way for us to realize that it is our job to stand up for those who have no voice,” said Jeanette Houle, director of Religious Education and youth minister at St. Stephen, during the ceremony before the hike.

People of all ages participated. Youth from St. Paul Church in Fort Worth and teens from the Church of God in Lakeside joined St. Stephen parishioners in the 5K hike. Along the way, several cars slowed down to honk and flash thumbs-up signs at the hikers.

Alex Bogdanoff (right) took part in the 5k Hike on Saturday. A steady rain stopped just before the hike began.