Easter Sunday the Church will proclaim Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

A Raphael fresco featuring the risen Christ from the Vatican’s “Sala della Segnatura” (CNS photo courtesy Catholic Communication Campaign)

Bishops urge vigilance to keep abortion funding out of health reform

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Here is the text of a statement from the U.S. bishops on health reform signed into law March 23 by President Barack Obama. The statement, by Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, president of the bishops, was approved by the Administrative Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

For nearly a century, the Catholic bishops of the United States have called for reform of our health care system so that all may have access to the care that recognizes and affirms their human dignity. Christian discipleship means “working to ensure that all people have access to what makes them fully human and fosters their human dignity” (U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, p. 454). Included among those elements is the provision of necessary and appropriate health care.

For too long, this question has gone unaddressed in our country. Often, while many had access to excellent medical treatment, millions of others including expectant mothers, struggling families or those with serious medical or physical problems were left unable to afford the care they needed. As Catholic bishops, we have expressed our support for efforts to address this national and societal shortcoming.

We have spoken for the poorest and most defenseless among us. Many elements of the health care reform measure signed into law by the president, address these concerns and so help to fulfill the duty that we have to one another for the common good. We are bishops, and therefore pastors and teachers. In that role, we applaud the effort to expand health care to all.

Nevertheless, for whatever good this law achieves or intends, we as Catholic bishops have opposed its passage because there is compelling evidence that it would undermine what has been the law of our land for decades and threaten the consensus of the majority of Americans: that federal funds not be used for abortions or plans that cover abortion.

The statute appropriates billions of dollars in new funding without explicitly prohibiting the use of these funds for abortion, and it provides federal subsidies for health plans covering elective abortions. Its failure to preserve the legal status quo that has regulated the government’s relation to abortion, as did the original bill adopted by the House of Representatives last November, could undermine what has been the law of our land for decades and threaten the consensus of the majority of Americans: that federal funds not be used for abortions or plans that cover abortion.

For that reason, we have long and strongly opposed any health reform legislation that fails to preserve the Hyde amendment, which forbids federal funding of most abortions.

SEE HOUSE, P. 9

All Things Possible Campaign passes halfway point, $23 million pledged

Bishop Kevin Vann has announced that $23 million has been pledged toward the $40 million All Things Possible Campaign.

“I am deeply grateful for the early support our campaign has received. Even in these challenging times, the people of our diocese have been generous in their support of their brothers and sisters,” said Bishop Vann. “I ask everyone to continue to pray for the success of this campaign, as a sign of the intimate communion we share with our Lord and with one another.”

The $40 million campaign, the largest in the history of the Diocese of Fort Worth, is intended to meet numerous identified needs, which will strengthen the ministries of the Church in North Texas well into the future.

Bishop Vann said, “Because of the strong personal commitment of the faithful in our diocese, and with the leadership of our pastors, pastoral administrators, local staff, and volunteers, I have every confidence that our campaign will reach its goal. The challenge it presents allows each of us to think beyond our own local needs, to help make room in the Church for Catholics across our 28 counties. With God, truly all things are possible.”

The campaign was conducted in one-third of the diocese’s parishes and missions last fall, with the remaining parishes’ efforts currently in progress. The All Things Possible campaign plan calls for a series of receptions and a process of ongoing education, giving every Catholic household the opportunity to learn about the challenges facing the local Church. This spring, over 170 receptions are being hosted

See RECEPTIONS, P. 9

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien

House passes health reform; effort to insert abortion language fails

The vote on the reconciliation package, which concluded shortly before midnight, was 220-211. Twenty-three Democrats joined all 178 House Republicans in opposing the measure.

There was no immediate comment on the votes from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which said in a March 20 letter to the House the Hyde amendment must be included in the final health reform measure. The bishops also had urged enhanced conscience protections. (See Bishops’ March 23 statement below)

Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, praised the legislation, saying it “represents great progress.”

SEE HOUSE, P. 9
Dear brothers and sisters in the Risen Lord,

I hope the season of Lent has been a time of reflection, grace, and moments of turning to the Lord for all of you. We are about to enter into Holy Week, which is not only about a series of special liturgical services, but more importantly a personal invitation from the Lord Himself to walk with Him and enter fully into the events of our salvation. In doing so, our own personal triumphs and sorrows, Calvaries and Gethsemanies, will point us to the reality of the Lord’s Resurrection in our lives.

I would encourage you to take full advantage of the Holy Week services each day — in our Cathedral and parishes of the Diocese. The parish priests, religious, and parish staff members have worked hard so that these liturgical moments can be a dynamic encounter with the Lord and His Body on Earth, the Church. There are not only individual moments, but moments of true communion for all of us together.

As we look to Easter Sunday, the great day of the Resurrection, the words of Pope Benedict XVI can help us reflect on this most central day to us, that Christ is truly risen indeed:

“Quite definitely, this is what faith in the Resurrection is concerned with: the real power of God, and the importance of human responsibility. That the power of God is hope and joy: this is the liberation revealed at Easter. In thePasch, God reveals himself, his power — superior to the power of death — the power of the love of the Trinity. So the paschal revelation gives us the right to sing “Alleluia!” in a world overcast with the cloud of death.”

— Journey to Easter, pg. 132

These words of the Holy Father also certainly recall and confirm St. Paul’s encouraging and triumphant words to the Corinthians:

“Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Cor. 15:54-57

This great hope of Easter is the Good News that needs to be proclaimed to the entire world through the witness of our lives. This world that is often “overcast with the clouds of death” needs to be brought into the light of the Resurrected Christ, and we, the witnesses of Christ, are that light! This is seen so powerfully in the rich symbolism expressed in the Easter Vigil — beginning with the light of the Paschal Candle and then gradually through the lighted candles of each and every person — the light of Christ pierces the darkness of sin and death and reveals the glory and power of Christ. We must be that witness to the world that Christ is truly risen and that his grace and power are really manifested in our own lives.

We must also remember as well that the glory and truth of the Easter season lasts 50 days until Pentecost. In this Paschal tide, let us walk with the Risen Lord as He reveals to us again His Body on Earth, to strengthen our faith and show us that He indeed has truly conquered sin and death.

Bishop Kevin W. Vann
Diocese of Fort Worth

Pope earmarks Holy Thursday collection for rebuilding Haiti’s seminary

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has decided the collection taken up at his Holy Thursday evening Mass will be used to help rebuild Haiti’s major seminary in Port-au-Prince. The seminary will be used to help rebuild Haiti’s major seminaries, will point us to the reality of the Lord’s Resurrection in our lives.

The appearance of advertising in these pages does not imply endorsement of businesses, services, or products. Readers must exercise prudence in responding to advertising in all media.
**From Holy Spirit to team spirit: Clericus Cup inspires ethical play**

By Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service  
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — It was a weekend of hard-earned wins for Team USA. Not only did the U.S. Olympic hockey team beat traditional rivals Canada in a 5-3 victory Feb. 21 in Vancouver, but the Clericus Cup friendly soccer series in Rome got off on the right foot Feb. 20 when the U.S. team beat the Brazilians 5-4 in a tie-breaking shootout.

What made the Pontifical North American College’s victory stand out even more was that the team was not only without its leading scorer from last year, but that same star player had signed up for the opposing squad, Brazilian forward Joao Kalevski, who netted the NAC scorer from last year, but that same star player had signed up for the opposing squad.

Tempering those aggressive instincts, he said, are critical “human skills you’re going to need as a seminarian and eventually as a priest.”

One thing that helps players keep it all in perspective is that many of them are friends with players from other teams since they often attend the same classes and events as part of their seminary studies.

Whenever a team wins or loses, it’s easier to “just continue with life as normal” because of those bonds of friendship, said Santos.

The goal of the soccer series, he said, is to show that people from all over the world can come together, compete fairly, and “be able to just recognize that somebody has to win, but at the end we’re all brothers and there’s definitely more important things in life.”

The Catholic sports association that organizes the Clericus Cup also has set up a Facebook page so people from all over the world can become a fan and see photos, news, and status updates from players and other fans.

Each game already includes a “third half” in which players come together in prayer at the end of the match.

But he added many seminarians wanted to set the right tone before each game, too, with a blessing and prayer “so that we are beginning and ending everything in prayer just like we try to do in our lives.”

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

**To pray for and honor them, we want to know who from our diocese has Chosen to enter the religious life?**

The Vocations Office would like to honor the many men and women from the Diocese of Fort Worth who have joined religious communities since the year 2000 by publicizing them in the North Texas Catholic and on the diocesan Web site. We need your help!

Several of the other dioceses in Texas have recently begun to provide an annual roster of men and women from their diocese who have joined religious communities and have placed their photos on their Web site, and we would like to do the same. We already provide annual posters of our seminarians, and now we are ready to include the many men and women in religious formation or who have made their final vows after the year 2000.

While many may know of one or two people who have joined a religious community, this project will help all of us to see how abundantly Christ has blessed us and how fruitful our diocese has been as we begin this new millennium.

In addition, we know that some men who have roots here in the diocese have found homes in other dioceses and are seminarians or priests there, and we want to acknowledge them, too.

In honoring these men and women, we will be honoring their parents, families, and parishes as well. To make all this happen, we are asking families and friends of these chosen men and women of God to go to our diocesan Web site, www.fwdioc.org, and click on “Vocations” near the top. From there, click on the tab for “Religious Life” which divides into “men religious” and “women religious.” On those two pages we will list the names of the men and women we know have entered the religious life or are studying for or have been ordained by another diocese in recent years.

In many cases we will not have someone posted or we will have a name but incomplete information, which will mean that we need you to help us. In all cases we need their names, their original parish, the community they have joined, the year they joined, and, if applicable, when their vows were taken. We also need their contact information, which should include their phone number and e-mail address.

It is important that we express our gratitude as a diocese to the many men and women who have heard the call and have chosen to give their lives to the Lord. By establishing a central location to obtain contact information, we believe that the diocese will be able to provide more spiritual support to these young men and women in the years ahead.

While I am on this subject of the need to support our brothers and sisters who have entered religious communities, I would also like to know of any women’s organizations, and others, who would be willing to sponsor women from our diocese who wish to enter the religious life but are unable to do so because of student loans. This is, by far, the largest obstacle that faces many young women. If a community says that they must be debt-free, then for many that would take more than 10 years. Many women see this as an insurmountable obstacle, believing that the Church, in essence, is saying they are not wanted or needed when that could not be further from the truth.

If we value sisters, and we do, then we owe it to the next generation of generous women who are willing to give their lives as brides of Christ to assist them in their student loan debt. I believe we can set up agreements between communities of women religious and local organizations who are willing to accept the temporary responsibility of the minimum monthly loans due for these women to allow them up to three years to explore the religious life and determine whether the sisterhood is the calling Christ has given them. Please let us know by e-mail if you, as a private donor, or you, as an organization, are able to help.

If, on the other hand, you know of a young woman who would like to enter the religious life, then let us know, so that we can assist them at each step on their journey of prayer and discernment in their calling from our Lord.

Let us all share in this springtime of growth in the Church as her foundation, generosity, and richness in Christ, her groom, becomes more visible. Let us all pray to the Lord that he calls members of our own families. Let us support God’s vocational call to the religious life for our children, teenagers, and young men and women, for the harvest is abundant but the laborers are few.

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations, is shown walking out of Sacred Heart Parish in Muerner following his ordination to the priesthood in May 2002. Even then, he appeared to be inviting people to ask if they were being called to a vocation.

**It is important that we express our gratitude as a diocese to the many men and women who have heard the call and have chosen to give their lives to the Lord.**
25th annual Rosary Vigil for Life planned for Good Friday

Catholics United for Life and Mother and Unborn Baby Care will hold their 25th annual Rosary Vigil for Life at the Planned Parenthood abortion center, 301 South Henderson in Fort Worth, from 1 to 2:50 p.m. on Good Friday, April 2. The event is held each Friday to pray for conversion of the hearts of those who perform abortion, those who do by abortion before they ever see the light and love of this world, state event organizers.

Prayers will also be offered for the abortionists and staff and for all who suffer after abortion, and in keeping with the request of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for a conciliar prayer, they will also be offered in reflection for all sins of abortion; in thanksgiving for all the graces God gives to those who fight abortion; and for petition for the end of abortion. Bishop Kevin Vann and other priests from the diocese will participate. For more information, call (817) 738-1086.

NFP to offer classes at two locations in April

The Couple to Couple League offers classes in the symptothermal method of natural family planning for married and engaged couples. The course consists of three classes at monthly intervals, engaged couples are encouraged to attend, a course beginning at least four months before their wedding. The first class will be offered on April 9 at 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 1501 Ninth St., Weatherford. The second class will register for a course starting April 11 at 11:30 a.m. at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, 1505 Deer Park Rd., Decatur, and the third class will be held on April 16 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. for children who will be ages three, four, and five as of July 1, 2010. To register, and children are welcome to visit the classrooms and tour the school. ICS is in its 15th year and is state accredited.

The school offers an all-day kindergarten program. “Little Knights” preschool has an all-day program for preschool children ages three and four years old. ICS is tuition-based and offers financial assistance. For more information, contact CRC at (817) 429-2520.

Diocesan Singles Retreat to be held in May

The Diocesan Singles Retreat will be held May 7, 8, and 9 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. The theme is “Walking With Jesus” will begin Friday night at 7:30 p.m. Saturday will include a day of sharing and interactive sessions.

The weekend is designed to “build your spirit and energy, welcoming God into your current life,” according to promotional materials. There will be a Saturday evening dance and a Sunday Mass, and returning this year is a “Marriage Encounter” for couples willing to commit to the program, which addresses the healing and recovery process. The program, which addresses the healing and recovery process. The participants are encouraged to run with it. The next series, “Marriage Encounter,” will begin Thursday April 29 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the parish center at St. Andrew Church, 2700 Normandy Dr., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Howard Katzfli at (817) 365-1155 or visit www.dfwme.org. To register, contact Howard Rattliff, Jr. at (817) 738-9925, leave a name and number; a team member will return the call.

Intracommunity singles retreat for couples to be held in May

Three graduates from St. Rita School earn Eagle Scout Award

ICCS to host preschool and kindergarten open house

Our Lady of Victory School to celebrate 100th anniversary gala April 17

Our Mother of Mercy Golf tournament to be held April 24

Diocesan singles retreat to be held in may

Submit items to jrusseau@fwdioc.org. Items for the April 9 issue must be received by noon on March 15. Items for the April 23 issue must be received by noon on April 14.

Submit information or to register, contact Michael Alonso at (817) 923-0058.

UTA to host annual pro-life art fair

Diocese of Fort Worth

The UTA Catholic Campus Ministry is hosting the second annual Amor Vitae: A Love of Life Juried Art Show, April 9-11. The show aims to give high school and college students an opportunity to showcase their artwork and potentially sell their artwork that upholds the culture of life. Proceeds will benefit Mother and Unborn Baby Care. Admission is free. The gallery opening will be held Friday, April 9 at 7 p.m. at the Art & Architecture Museum of Art. For more information, call (817) 466-1155.

St. Paul the Apostle Parish to host Divorce Care series

St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 5508 Black Oak Ln., Fort Worth, is offering a Divorce Care Series with the addition of a companion series Divorce Care for Kids (DCk) to run with it. The next series, “Divorce Care: A Journey of Hope,” will begin Thursday April 29 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and will be held every Thursday evening through June. Registration is required. Pre-reg-istration is required. For more information or to register, call Alice Currant at (817) 927-5585 or Delphine Exman at (817) 292-1457.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend to be offered in April

Worldwide Marriage Encounter will host a Marriage Encounter weekend April 16-18 and June 11-13. “Marriage Encounter is designed to give married couples the opportunity to examine their lives together — a time to share their feelings, their hopes, disappointments, joys, and frustrations — and to do so openly and honestly,” said Maria G. Faccio, the heart-to-heart-to-heart encounter with the one person they have chosen to live their life with, according to promotional mate-rials. The emphasis of Marriage Encounter is to provide a safe and supportive environment for couples to communicate about their relationship and experiences with others in the same or similar situations is one of the main goals of our marriage encounter, beyond the pain of divorce to a life of wholeness and joy.

There is a $15 registration fee, which covers the cost of the book and supplies. Pre-reg-istration is required. For more information or to register, contact Alice Currant at (817) 927-5585 or Delphine Exman at (817) 292-1457.

Our Lady of Victory School golf tournament to be held April 24

The golf tournament will be held April 24 at the Fort Worth Country Club. The entry fee is $75 per player with discounts available for groups of four. There will be a golf tournament breakfast and lunch, a putting contest, hole-in-one prizes, and numerous door prizes. The tournament will begin at 8 a.m. Registration deadline is aprill 14. For more information, contact Howard Katzfli at (817) 365-1155 or Michael Barks at (817) 923-0058.
The Human Experience to open in Southlake theater April 9, endorsed by diocesan Catholics Respect Life Office

By Tony Gutiérrez
Associate Editor

The Human Experience, which has been screened twice in the Diocese of Fort Worth in the last year with the support of the diocese’s Catholics Respect Life Office, will have its theatrical release at select theaters in the United States, including the Harkins Southlake 14 Theater located at 1450 Plaza Place in Southlake on Friday, April 9.

The film is produced by Grassroots Films, which also produced The St. Francis House, and God in the Streets of New York. Grassroots Films is based out of St. Francis House, a home in Brooklyn, New York. The mission of St. Francis House is to provide a safe haven and highly structured home environment designed to meet the needs of young men who have run out of alternatives and are looking for a new start in life.

“We were pretty much all sitting around the table here in Brooklyn and asking ourselves what’s the next big thing,” said Michael Campo, associate producer, Grassroots Films. “It’s a beautiful film that truly does change your outlook on life and the rest of the world.” Campo said that during the filming, he and his companions were able to strengthen their faith and gained a greater understanding and appreciation for each other, the people they met, and the importance of human relationships.

“All the stories in the film are real; all the characters you learn about are real people…. When you actually go through these experiences, it actually does change your outlook on life and the rest of the world,” Campo said.

The film has been recognized with a number of awards and has been screened twice in the diocese’s Catholics Respect Life Office. “Some of these people [interviewed] are facing challenges that you and I can’t even imagine, and yet they’re so grateful for their lives. The joy [the filmmakers] are able to capture in this movie is so beautiful.”

Campo said that during the filming, he and his companions were able to strengthen their faith and gained a greater understanding and appreciation for each other, the people they met, and the importance of human relationships.

“All the stories in the film are real; all the characters you learn about are real people…. When you actually go through these experiences, it actually does change your outlook on life and the rest of the world,” Campo said.

The film has more than 100,000 people attending the films, he and his companions were able to strengthen their faith and gained a greater understanding and appreciation for each other, the people they met, and the importance of human relationships.

“All the stories in the film are real; all the characters you learn about are real people…. When you actually go through these experiences, it actually does change your outlook on life and the rest of the world,” Campo said.

The film has had more than 100,000 people attending the films, he and his companions were able to strengthen their faith and gained a greater understanding and appreciation for each other, the people they met, and the importance of human relationships.

“All the stories in the film are real; all the characters you learn about are real people…. When you actually go through these experiences, it actually does change your outlook on life and the rest of the world,” Campo said.

The film has more than 100,000 people attending the films, he and his companions were able to strengthen their faith and gained a greater understanding and appreciation for each other, the people they met, and the importance of human relationships.

“All the stories in the film are real; all the characters you learn about are real people…. When you actually go through these experiences, it actually does change your outlook on life and the rest of the world,” Campo said.
Supporters, former students thank Sisters of St. Mary for 137 years of service as educators, mentors

By Nicki Prevou
Correspondent

The cost of a month’s tuition at St. Ignatius Academy in downtown Fort Worth, administered by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, Western Province, from 1884 until 1956: six dollars. The impact that the sisters have had upon the Catholic Church in Texas, and many other areas of the state of Texas, is invaluable to the faith community here in North Texas, and I’m also thankful that we are able to offer them support in recognition of their hard work and presence here in our diocese for so many years,” said Bishop Kevin Vann.

“We are among those early church women who opened up opportunities for others. They paved the way for educational development for parents and their children; they taught and prepared future leaders of our parishes in Texas, and helped form many civic leaders in schools and parishes all over our state and nation. They are women whose life witness has given the Texas Church many vocations to the priesthood and religious life.”

Yet another featured speaker, Sister Dorothy Powers, SSMN, evoked laughter as she shared memories of her own education as a young boarding student who learned to live to the rhythm of the “clickers” used by the nuns at Our Lady of Victory School. “I believe that it was through the use of those signals that we learned discipline, order, an economy of words, and developed a deep sense of being a part of, belonging to, something greater than just one’s self; a whole class moved as one to the beat of those clickers,” Sr. Dorothy reflected. “If you were caught talking in class, not a word from Sister, but the immediate and rapid ‘click-click-click’ put an end to any unnecessary chatter.”

The sisters, while imparting a quality education to their students, “also taught us good control, and an appreciation for the arts, so that not only our minds but our souls were nourished,” added Sr. Dorothy, describing the nuns as “our educators, mentors, and models … and also, our friends.”

Bishop Kevin Vann agreed, while expressing regret that an unexpected surgery prevented him from offering opening remarks at the fundraising event, as originally planned. “The sisters have been very good friends to me since my arrival here in Fort Worth [in 2005],” said Bishop Vann. “I’m very grateful to the sisters for the important work they have done in establishing the Faith here in North Texas, and I’m also thankful that we are able to offer them support in recognition of their hard work and presence here in our diocese for so many years.”

Sister Patricia St. Marie, SSMN, provincial superior for the Sisters of the Western Province, says that she, in turn, is grateful for the bishop’s commitment to the sisters’ cause. “Bishop Kevin Vann has been most supportive of and generous with his time and concern for the sisters. When he became aware of our financial needs, he made a five-year commitment of $125,000 for the sisters’ support,” she wrote, noting that his example has led to many donations from other members of the Catholic community, including Dallas resident Jim Martin, who first met the sisters as a young student at Our Lady of Good Counsel Academy in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas in 1953.

With the help of teams organized in Waco, Wichita Falls, Dallas, and Fort Worth, Martin has worked tirelessly for the past three years to raise funds for the congregation’s retirement needs and medical care. He called himself “overjoyed” to see nearly 500 friends of the sisters pulling out checkbooks and credit cards at the March 6 event.

“The sisters of the Western Province deserve our help, because they gave their lives for us,” said Martin, who has helped to organize another approximately $250, and costs associated with their medical care are rapidly rising, say members of the sisters’ financial advisory board.

Financial advisory board members joined with other friends of the sisters to help plan the gathering to garner financial support while also recognizing the sisters’ pioneering work in Catholic education, faith formation, and many other areas of ministry in Texas since 1873. That was the year in which the sisters, originally from Namur, Belgium, arrived in Waco, and opened Sacred Heart Academy for girls.

The sisters opened St. Ignatius Academy in Fort Worth in 1884 on the grounds of the property that became home to St. Patrick Cathedral, and went on to establish a total of 10 Catholic academies in Waco, Corsicana, Denison, Sherman, Dallas, Ennis, Wichita Falls, and Fort Worth, while also co-founding four high schools in Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, and Dallas and the University of Dallas in Irving. Members of the order also served in countless parishes and ministries, while also teaching in 24 Catholic schools throughout the state of Texas.

Calling the sisters “pioneers in the truest sense of the word,” retired State District Judge Mary Sean O’Reilly, who joined the order in 1966 and served as a trial lawyer, and later as a judge, during her 16 years as a member of the congregation, offered welcoming remarks at the March 6 gathering.

“I have been and remain a total devotee of these magnificent and humble women,” O’Reilly told her attentive audience, comprised, for the most part, of hundreds of former students of the sisters. “They were among those early church women who opened up opportunities for others. They paved the way for educational development for parents and their children; they taught and prepared future leaders of our parishes in Texas, and helped form many civic leaders in schools and parishes all over our state and nation. They are women whose life witness has given the Texas Church many vocations to the priesthood and religious life.”

Approximately 500 friends and supporters came out to the March 6 “Celebration of Gratitude” to give more than $210,000 for the SSMN’s medical and retirement needs.

“Celebration of Gratitude,” in an effort to assist the 42 members of the congregation, offered welcoming remarks at the March 6 gathering.

Students pose with the Sisters of St. Mary and priests outside of Our Lady of Victory Academy, which opened in 1910. (Photo courtesy of Sisters of St. Mary of Namur)

Sister Dorothy Ann Flori (center right) talks with Brigid Breazeale (center) and other supporters who attended the March 6 event. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)
Diocesan

Divine Mercy celebrations planned throughout diocese

Churches throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 11, the week after Easter. The desire for this annual celebration was expressed by Jesus to St. Maria Faustina and found recorded in her diary from 1931 to 1938. The novena for Divine Mercy begins on Good Friday, and the Divine Mercy Chaplet is typically prayed at 3 p.m., which is considered the hour of mercy. Additional information on Divine Mercy, St. Faustina, the novena prayer, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy can be found on the Web site www.marian.org.

CELEBRATIONS IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH INCLUDE:

ST. MARIA GORETTI CHURCH — 1200 S. DAVIS DR., ARLINGTON

Novena begins at 12 p.m. April 2, ending at 2 to 3 p.m. April 11

The Divine Mercy Novena will begin following the noon Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. Each day, the novena prayers and readings will be said at the 8 a.m. daily Masses. On Divine Mercy Sunday, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration from 2 to 3 p.m. followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction. For more information, call the parish office at (817) 274-0643.

ST. MARK CHURCH — 2800 PENNSYLVANIA DR., DENTON

1:30 to 3 p.m.

This celebration will include a teaching video, eucharistic holy hour, and recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The Knights of Columbus from the L.W. MacKenna Fourth Degree Assembly will form an honor guard for the image of Divine Mercy. Deacon LeRoy Berens will preside over the service. For more information, contact the parish office at (940) 387-6223.

SAN MATEO MISSION — 3316 LOVELL AVE., FORT WORTH

2 to 5 p.m.; Mass at 3:30 p.m.

Apostolatus Uniti’s 18th annual Divine Mercy Celebration will begin with the veneration of the Divine Mercy image and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The service will include a Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, opportunities for confession, a Mass, outdoor eucharistic process, and Benediction. Light refreshments will follow in the parish hall. In order to help extend mercy to others, organizers request that participants bring non-perishable pantry goods or basic toiletries for those suffering financial difficulty. For more information, contact Apostolatus Uniti, Inc., at (817) 294-5579.

ST. PETER CHURCH — 424 MAIN ST., LINDSAY

3 p.m.

Father Raymond McDaniel will lead a service that will include exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, along with a special blessed image of Divine Mercy, and a first class relic of St. Faustina available for veneration. The service will be held at the grotto of the church, and inside the school cafeteria if it is raining. Participants are asked to bring their own chairs. Fr. McDaniel will be available to hear confessions from 2 to 3 p.m.

SSMN... FROM PAGE 6

fundraising event to be held at Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas on April 24. “It’s an honor to do whatever I can on their behalf. They deserve every bit of appreciation and support they receive. They’re an amazing group of women.”

The Nolan school community also shares ties of appreciation with the sisters. In 1961, the sisters co-founded Nolan Catholic High School with the Society of Mary. At the March 6 event, Nolan showed its support by providing use of the arena, set up, table rental, security, cleanup, and the services of Nolan Student Ambassadors and volunteers from the school’s faculty and staff.

Additionally, the Nolan community donated over $4,300 for the benefit of the sisters’ retirement fund.

A second “Celebration of Gratitude,” which will also serve as a reunion event for all former students of schools administered by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, will be held April 24, from 3 to 6:30 p.m. at Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas. For more information about the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur or to RSVP to the April 24 event, call the Provincial office at (817) 923-8393, or visit the sisters’ Web site at www.ssmnwestern.org.
Mission program to educate needy children in Bolivia continues thanks to generosity of supporters

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Correspondent

“I am in eighth grade and I have six brothers. My community is very far from my school. For two years, I have studied here, and for two years I have not seen my parents and brothers.”

The stories of children who must leave their families to get an education are the most heart-wrenching, Father Bob Thames told Educate the Children supporters attending a March 5 fundraiser for the school he started in Cabezas, Bolivia six years ago. More than 150 people attended the gala and silent auction held in the Marriott DFW Airport South.

“We feed the children, take care of them, and help them with their homework,” he said, describing dormitory life for the youngsters age five to 11 who are part of Nuestra Señora del Carmen School. “Some, who live far away, can’t go back home. They stay with us all year and it’s sad. The little kids cry almost every night for their families. It’s a difficult situation, but the parents are intent on giving them an education.”

The education program, which currently serves 800 students, has 150 high school graduates who have gone on to become teachers, entrepreneurs, and health care workers. Fr. Thames recounted numerous alumni success stories for the audience, many of whom donate $25 a month to cover the cost of tuition, books, lodging, and supplies, for a needy youngster in Bolivia. The Educate the Children sponsorship program is a Mission Council project of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The benefit dinner raised an additional $8,500 for the various education ministries spearheaded by Fr. Thames, a diocesan priest from Fort Worth who has worked in missions in Mexico and Bolivia for the past 40 years. Dressed in a working man’s flannel shirt and slacks, the guest of honor told his listeners it takes the good will of 14,000 individuals to keep the school flourishing.

“The parishes I visit and the people who contribute make it all possible,” he said, modestly. “One person does very little. Many times I’m given the credit, but the truth is many other people are doing the work.” Fr. Thames called the partnership forged between the diocese and Cabezas, Bolivia, “love in action.”

“We’re all connected by the Body of Jesus Christ,” he said. “Only the spirit of God could bring 14,000 people together to do the work we do. Without Him it’s impossible.”

Started in 2004, the education program includes schools for elementary and high school students, a high school equivalency certificate and a technical school. The trade curriculum includes courses on agriculture, beekeeping, forestry, and clothes making.

“We are hoping this year to add nursing and computers,” the school’s administrator said, outlining plans for future growth. Nuestra Señora del Carmen also manages two houses for university students. One in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra accommodates 25 to 30 people. “We feed them, they live there, and sometimes we can help with a little bit of money or transportation to go to the university,” the priest said.

January donations went towards the purchase of a second home south of Cabezas that will house about 47 students. The Church’s outreach in Cabezas extends beyond education, Fr. Thames continued.

His pastoral team of 12 people works with broken families, physical and sexual abuse cases, and offers sacramental preparation classes and retreats.

“We have the only psychologist and sociologist in the area working with us,” he pointed out. “So we provide those services to the community.”

Because of the school, young people growing up in Cabezas, Bolivia, have a promising future, and Fr. Thames shared several of their hardship-to-triumph stories with the audience.

One young man, who studied clothes making at the school, recently opened his own wholesale factory in the community with his father. “They hope to sell the clothing not only in Bolivia, but as an export,” the priest said. “They are proud of their production.”

Another determined graduate was so impressed by the young man’s tenacity, he recommended her for a scholarship. “She just completed her first semester of medical school to become a doctor,” he announced, to the applause of his listeners.

Nuestra Señora del Carmen is making a dent in the region’s cycle of poverty, “and you’re making that possible,” Fr. Thames said resolutely. “That’s love in action.”

Mike Wuller, an Educate the Children participant, has visited the Cabezas school compound three times since 2006.

“There’s been tremendous progress,” said the St. Bartholomew parishioner who remembers when the town had no electricity.

During one trip to Bolivia, Wuller, the technical director for local pickle and condiment manufacturer Best Maid Products, taught agricultural students how to preserve vegetables in vinegar.

“They have wonderful apple cider vinegar, and we taught them how to make food shelf stable for a long time,” he explained. “The students are always enthusiastic to learn...”
Bishops urge vigilance on abortion funding

FROM PAGE 1
Plans that cover abortion to pay for other peoples’ abortions with their own funds. If this new law is intended to prevent people from being complicit in the abortions of others, it is at war with itself.

We share fully the admirable intention of President Obama expressed in his pending executive order, where he states, “It is necessary to establish an adequate enforcement mechanism to ensure that federal funds are not used for abortion services.” However, the fact that an executive order is necessary to clarify the legislation points to deficiencies in the statute itself. We do not understand how an executive order, no matter how well intentioned, can substitute for statutory provisions.

The statute is also profoundly flawed because it has failed to include necessary language to provide for conscience protections (both within and beyond the abortion context). As well, many immigrant workers and their families could be left worse off since they will not be allowed to purchase health coverage in the new exchanges to be created, even if they use their own money.

Many in Congress and the administration, as well as individuals and groups in the Catholic community, have repeatedly insisted that there is no federal funding for abortion in this statute and that strong conscience protection has been assured. Analyses that are being published separately show this not to be the case, which is why we oppose it in its current form. Many and many others will follow the government’s implementation of health care reform and will work to ensure that Congress and the administration live up to the claims that have contributed to its passage. We believe, finally, that new legislation to address its deficiencies will almost certainly be required.

As bishops, we wish to recognize the principled actions of the pro-life members of Congress from both parties, in the House and the Senate, who have worked courageously to create legislation that respects the principles outlined above. They have often been vilified and have worked against great odds.

As bishops of the Catholic Church, we speak in the name of the Church and for the Catholic faithful. The Catholic faith is not a partisan agenda, and we take this opportunity to recommit ourselves to working for health care which truly and fully safeguards the life, dignity, conscience and health of all, from the child in the womb to those in their last days on earth.

House passes healthcare bill without abortion safeguards

FROM PAGE 1

in the long effort to make health care available and affordable to everyone in the United States.” She urged the Senate to take quick action to pass the reconciliation package.

The House votes came only after Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Michigan, obtained a promise from the White House that President Barack Obama would sign an executive order stipulating that the Hyde amendment would apply to the health reform legislation. Obama signed the health reform bill into law March 23. The White House has not indicated whether it will issue the executive order.

Stupak, a Catholic, had led a group of pro-life House Democrats in opposing the Senate health reform bill unless it were amended to include abortion language passed by the House last year. The U.S. bishops had backed those efforts, saying the Senate-passed bill’s abortion language was morally unacceptable because it contained “no relevant provision to prevent the direct use of federal funds for elective abortions.”

Rep. Joseph R. Pitts, R-Pennsylvania, said the House language was needed in the Senate measure despite the promised executive order because “an executive order does not trump a statute.”

“The courts will look to the legislative statute to interpret the law,” he said.

In a March 21 memo to congressional staff, Richard Doerringer, associate director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, said that “the statutory mandate construed by the courts would override any executive order or regulation.”

“This is the unanimous view of our legal advisors and of the experts we have consulted on abortion jurisprudence,” he said.

“Only a change in the law enacted by Congress, not an executive order, can begin to address this very serious problem in the legislation.”

In introducing his motion to send the bill back to committee, Cappella referred to the proposal to codify Hyde in the measure as the “Stupak-Pitts amendment,” but Stupak spoke against it, saying it “purports to be a right-to-life amendment” but was actually an attempt “to codify Hyde.”

“Nothing is more than an opportunity to continue to deny 32 million Americans health insurance,” Stupak said. “It does not promote life. The executive order ensures that the sanctity of life will be protected.”

The text of the draft executive order released by the White House said its goal was to “establish an adequate enforcement mechanism to ensure that federal funds are not used for abortion services (except in cases of rape or incest, or when the life of the woman would be endangered), consistent with a longstanding federal statutory restriction that is commonly known as the Hyde amendment.”

Receptions held throughout diocese help spread the word about campaign

FROM PAGE 1

“We have had tremendous attendance at all our receptions. On March 1 we had over 150 people attend!” said Judy Wegner. Judy and her husband Vern Wegner are campaign chairpersons at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington “It has been a great opportunity to meet people in our parish community.”

Judy continued, “Looking out at the large crowd of people while speaking about the All Things Possible Campaign, made us feel like we could count on the support of our St. Joseph family to make our goals achievable.”

This spring, diocesan Catholic schools are joining the efforts of all 90 parishes and missions by offering up the prayers of their faculty, staff, students, and families for the success of the campaign. Christina Mendez, principal of All Saints School in Fort Worth said, “One of the best gifts our students receive in the Catholic school system is the ability to pray while in school. Bishop Vann has asked everyone in the diocese to pray for those parishes and missions actively involved in this effort and for the success of our campaign.

“As a recipient of campaign dollars through the Center City Catholic Schools Capital Improvements portion of the campaign case,” she added, “All Saints Catholic School feels privileged to be able to participate in this way.”
Taking the first steps toward Christian belief

By David Mills

Many people who came to Christianity from the outside can remember the serene confidence with which they refused to believe it. I speak as one of them. We were too smart to believe all that wishful thinking and all those silly fairy tales.

Many of us can remember the anticipation with which we would pick up the latest book offering an argument that would put down Christianity forever — and the feeling of disappointment when we found the new Last Word on Religion was pretty much the same as all the earlier Last Words, and no more convincing than they had been.

It was as if our favorite heavy-weight boxer kept getting in the ring with some scrawny little guy, with the odds-makers giving four-to-one odds he’d knock out the poor man in the first round, and when the bell rang at the end of the fifth round the scrawny little guy was still there. He was panting and sweating and a little bruised, but our favorite was reeling around the ring and crying for his mom, if not lying flat out on the canvas.

Some of us began to worry that maybe Christianity was not so obviously wrong as we hoped. The highly intelligent men who wrote these Last Words on Religion, who wrote with such confidence, who held important positions in major universities, whose articles appeared in all the major magazines, should have been able to knock it out cold. If they couldn’t do it, maybe Christianity wasn’t so wrong after all.

When I was young, the Last Word against Christianity was packaged in different ways. One of the most popular was the “Death of God” movement. Time magazine’s editors thought it so important they gave it a cover story.

The argument was that religion evolved because people needed to explain the universe, but modern man had learned so much about the universe he didn’t need God any more. Science gave us facts, and replaced religion, which could only offer us feelings and intuitions and stories.

Ancient man believed in demons because they didn’t understand mental illness. They believed in Jesus because they couldn’t face life on their own. But now man had grown up and could boldly go where no man had gone before.

This made sense to me, but then I found out that all sorts of very smart and learned people disputed it. Some of them argued that modern science developed in the Middle Ages, as a natural expression of the Christian understanding of the creation. Others argued with sophistication that the discoveries of science did not and could not contradict or override the insights of Christianity. Even I could see that science hadn’t replaced our need for a savior.

I didn’t understand all this at the time, but even in my youth I began to feel that the scrawny guy was a lot bigger and tougher than I thought.

But Christianity wasn’t just hard to knock down. It was alarmingly attractive. I found the Christians I started to read more interesting than the writers I thought I preferred.

For one thing, they would argue a point where my favorite anti-religious writers would just assert it. The atheist would accuse them of having a simple-minded faith, yet they took much more seriously the atheist critique of Christianity than the atheist did the possible truth of Christianity.

Later I found that C. S. Lewis had felt the same thing. In his atheist youth, he loved the Christian writers even though he hated their Christianity. Chesterton, he wrote, “had more sense than all the other moderns put together.”

But the great secular writers he liked “all seemed a little thin; what as boys we called ‘tinny.’” They entertained him, but didn’t do much else for him. “There seemed to be no depth in them. They were too simple. The roughness and density of life did not appear in their books.”

The Christians, he concluded, “were all wrong, but all the rest are bores.”

Reality is infinitely more interesting than unreality. In particular: Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and wrong ways, false truths, and death are not nearly so interesting.

David Mills is the author of DISCOVERING MARY: ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOTHER OF GOD. He can be reached at CatholicSense@gmail.com.
Some celebrate vigil all night long

By Maureen Daly

All Catholic churches celebrate the Easter Vigil, but very few celebrate all night long!

At St. Vincent de Paul Church in Baltimore and at St. Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota, these communities keep alive the age-old practice.

It was an ancient letter from Egeria, a Gallic woman who made a three-year pilgrimage to the Holy Land in about 381-384, and a phrase from St. Augustine that captured the imagination of St. Vincent’s pastor, Father Richard T. Lawrence, who started the grueling practice there in 1952.

“The young and the strong keep vigil all night, the rest do what they can,” said Fr. Lawrence, quoting Egeria.

Egeria was describing the Easter Vigil service she attended in Jerusalem. Incredibly, her pilgrimage letter survives. An 11th-century copy was found in an Italian monastery in 1884. Her detailed account of Holy Week liturgies was an important resource in the movement for liturgical renewal, Fr. Lawrence said.

St. Augustine, Egeria’s contemporary, referred to the Easter Vigil as “the mother of all vigils,” Fr. Lawrence said.

Pope Pius XII restored the Easter Vigil as a night service in 1951 and encouraged the faithful to participate in the three-hour night service. Previously, it was celebrated on Holy Saturday morning, and few beyond the clergy attended.

Like all Catholic Easter Vigils, St. Vincent’s all-night service has four parts, what Fr. Lawrence calls fire, Word, water, and bread.

“When we decided to go all night, we expanded the Word portion,” Fr. Lawrence said. Like other Catholic parishes, they read the story of creation, a part of Exodus, and end with the story of Christ’s resurrection. St. Vincent’s adds other readings from the Hebrew Scriptures.

“What do you do at a wake?” asked Fr. Lawrence. “All the old family stories are told again. That’s what we do in the readings from Scripture, but not the same stories every year.”

Each segment follows the format of the Liturgy of the Hours: Scripture, chanted psalms, reflection, and 30 minutes of quiet time for prayer. Some participants use this time to snack, nap, or help prepare the Easter morning feast.

“We are very traditional in our reading of the Scripture,” Fr. Lawrence said, but the reflections can take many forms: from stunning slides of the universe from the Hubble space telescope to a puppet show, folkdance lessons, or yoga stretches. Movement helps the participants keep alert in the wee hours of the morning.

It is a long night, but it is the heart of St. Vincent’s worship.

The 150 sisters in residence at St. Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph who also keep an all-night Easter Vigil begin their service after sunset, gathering outside for a fire in a huge cauldron, said Sister Elaine Schroeder, community liturgist.

They’re joined by 50 others, many on retreat. The group moves inside for Scripture readings. Then the night is divided into six or seven watch- es, each reflecting an aspect of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults journey.

At daybreak, the whole community gathers around the baptismal font for festive sprinkling and song, followed by Eucharist.

“Attending the Easter Vigil is one way Catholics can welcome new members into the church,” said Father Richard Hilgartner, associate director of the U.S. Bishops’ Secretariat of Divine Worship. “It is during the Easter Vigil that the sacraments of baptism and confirmation are celebrated,” along with Eucharist.

“The great Vigil of Easter is the ‘night of nights,’ the liturgy for Holy Saturday declares,” Fr. Hilgartner added.

“This celebration is long, but it is the heart of the church’s worship and speaks clearly to fill participants with the joy of the resurrection.”

Maureen Daly is a freelance writer for Catholic News Service and others, living in Baltimore. This article is part of the 2010 Faith Alive! Easter package from CNS.

I n a quiet dad-and-daughter conversation, Natalie’s father asked his seven-year-old child, “Who is your favorite artist?”


Thoughtfully, the little girl answered, “Aunt Julie.” “Two great choices,” my son-in-law confirmed. “Can you tell me your third favorite artist?”


Natalie has confidence, creativity, and spunk. And similar to her two other favorite artists, Natalie focuses intensely on her art, sometimes to her own detriment.

“Natalie loves to create so much it’s hard for me to get her to do normal dressing in the morning,” her mother says. “Half of a uniform, no shoes or socks — but she is busy making somebody a card or creating something.”

Recently Nattie drew a picture of herself and a teacher next to her. Below the drawing she wrote, “Today is my ‘adition’ for Annie. I am trying to be an orphan. Me and Miss Cornovan have to wait for two whole days to see if we get a call back. A call back is an email or a call to tell you if the director likes your singing.”

Artists use their talent to express feelings, I am told, like Natalie did in that drawing. Back when I was an “artist” I didn’t express feelings, except love of recess. I was an elementary school artist, when Monsignor Joseph Warna, pastor, taught pupils the fine points of drawing. If we were good enough, we could be on his TV show “Father Warna’s Art Class.” I was good enough only once.

What I remember from art classes are three sketches. One was a cartoon picture of Mickey Mouse in a drum major’s hat, leading a parade — a lesson in imagination.

One was a homework assignment: draw your childhood memories. I have deposited an image of my sometimes art isn’t about art at all; sometimes it’s about seeing the face of Jesus everywhere; sometimes He is the

Sie HAMER, p. 22
The light of Christ pierces our darkness

By Jeff Hedglen
North Texas Catholic
Columnist

The congregation is seated in the darkened church. Last night Jesus died and now we hold vigil, waiting for the story to come to completion again. But Jesus is not yet ready to rise; He has descended into hell. In this moment, in this light-deprived sanctuary, we wait.

Into the darkness comes a single light, piercing the void, driving out fear and death. It is the light of Christ. This light dispels, not only the darkness of the church, but the shadows in our hearts as well.

As the light enters the church the mood changes, darkness flees, and each of us with our candle outstretched, reach toward the Light of the World. The flame on our candle is a living symbol of the fire that burns within us. We take that light and turn to the person next to us and share the flame, each of us, united with Jesus, bring each other out of the darkness of death into the life of Christ.

Holy Saturday is about a lot of things, but there is one aspect of this penultimate day of our faith that is often overlooked. Holy Saturday is about death. Not the morbidity of death or the fear of death, or even the sadness of death. It is about the death Jesus endured and embraced, for us.

The God of the universe, the God who is the essence of all that is alive and is in fact life itself, died. God died a real death. We often move too quickly from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. Perhaps this is why the Apostles Creed makes sure to remind us that “He descended into hell.”

It is important to note that the hell mentioned here is not the hell we think of when we hear this word. At the time of Jesus there was not a developed understanding of heaven and hell. Instead there was heaven, where God is and the “place of the dead” or Sheol. This “place of the dead” is where the just and unjust alike went to await the Redeemer. Jesus descended to Sheol to free the just who had gone before him (Catechism of the Catholic Church 633).

When Jesus experienced death, He embraced one last aspect of our humanity. And in doing so, the nature of death was changed forever. His embracing of death redeemed death itself. Death became a doorway to eternity. It is no longer a dead end in the journey of life; it has become the passageway to eternal life in the full presence of God.

When Jesus experienced death, He embraced one last aspect of our humanity. And in doing so, the nature of death was changed forever. His embracing of death redeemed death itself. Death became a doorway to eternity. It is no longer a dead end in the journey of life; it has become the passageway to eternal life in the full presence of God.

Jeff Hedglen and his wife Monika are members of St. Bartholomew Church in Southwest Fort Worth where Jeff is the youth minister. Jeff is a long time columnist of the North Texas Catholic.
A few years ago, I lost my father. This was the first in an expected series of deaths of those who are close to me. And one day I presume I will be a source of that same experience for others whom I love.

No one can journey to the threshold of death with a beloved family member or friend without confronting that horrible, natural question of whether this is all, the end. Even to those enlightened by Christian belief, the possibility still haunts us, for faith has to do with things unseen, a life promised but yet to come.

We journey toward that new life together. That is why the fires of faith are first lit and then fanned within a community of faith, the Church.

Together, the seasons of Lent and Easter bring us to the center point of this great mystery: the fact of real and bloody death, an execution in fact, and the faith-filled vision that love will not be denied, that those we love continue, as does their love for us, that love reigns supreme and will have the final word.

These two seasons make up the great ninety days in which we go there, into that mystery, together and in the company of Christ. And this we understand as the journey toward baptism and into baptismal living, a form of life that always, always holds together the two mysteries of death and life.

Lent begins with our Lord being drawn by the Spirit into the desert for 40 days following his baptism by John. The community of the Church follows him there in our great 40-day Lenten retreat as we prepare our newcomers, our catechumens who are now elect, for baptism, and prepare ourselves to renew our baptismal covenant alongside them.

We simplify our lives and strive to walk more consciously with the Lord (prayer). We experience hunger (fasting), our weakness and our simple humanity. We are opened by the Spirit to the physical and spiritual hungers of others and learn new ways to offer them both kinds of bread (almsgiving).

As we newly experience these central communal disciplines, we immerse those preparing for baptism in them with us.

Lent makes the transition to Easter during the three days of the Easter triduum. Note that the liturgies of Holy Thursday and Good Friday have no concluding rite: the community is not sent forth, we simply depart. In other words, these three holiest of Christian days form one continuous act of worship that holds in vital tension the whole central mystery of human life redeemed in Christ: a voluntary, sacrificial death and a things-will-never-be-the-same resurrection.

What is the central act of the three days in which the community of faith proclaims this seminal mystery?

It is nothing less than the plunging of new believers into the dying and rising of Jesus Christ through the waters of baptism. And it is in that same central baptismal liturgy that all of us then renew our baptismal commitment to Christian discipleship.

This is a discipleship that does not deny suffering and death but stakes it in the face, in the strength of Christ, and declares that love has won and that we will live forever in that love, beginning in these waters.

By baptism we are plunged into the very dying and rising of our Lord (see Romans 6:3-11). We share in that great mystery and are offered its full grace in the living out of our lives. In this way, our dying has already happened in baptism, dying to a world that lives for itself and not for God and others.

Our physical death will only be the final act of that dying begun in these waters. But all along the dying was of a piece with the rising, the coming up from those waters with fresh heart and hands, the heart and hands of Christ still loving and feeding a hungry, longing world.

This real, sacramental experience is the very rhythm of our lives through baptism. Lent and Easter plunge us anew into that deep and mysterious rhythm each year, simplify us to see once again a Lord who longs to transform us and all into that new garden place where tears and suffering and, yes, death simply have not one square inch to call their own.

The resurrection of the Lord is the centerpiece of this great hope.

Isn’t this the full force of St. Paul’s heart-felt cry to the Corinthians?: “If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:16-17).

Jim Schellman is executive director of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.

By Jim Schellman
Catholic News Service

Imagine for a moment that you just won several million dollars in the lottery. How long do you think you would celebrate? Would you have just one party for your friends and then go back to life as usual? Or would you party for a week or more?

I suspect that whatever way you might celebrate your win, your life after winning the lottery would never be the same. You might spend a lot of time in the weeks after you learned of your good fortune figuring out just how your life has changed and how you would live your life in the future.

That experience is something like the experience of the early Church after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The joy engendered by the good news that Christ was alive surely lasted longer than a day. And it took them awhile after that first Easter to figure out how their lives had been changed by the event and how they would live in the future.

In our celebration of Easter each year, we are invited into a similar process. But one day is surely not enough rejoicing!

So the liturgy of the octave of Easter (the first week after Easter) is almost the same each day as it was on Easter Sunday. It’s as though the Church wants to prolong the joy of that glorious day as long as it can.

And even a week of celebrating is not enough. We, too, need to figure out how our lives have changed as a result of the windfall we have received through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So the Church celebrates Easter for fifty days, all the way to Pentecost (which means “the 50th day”).

During the 50 days, the Church focuses special attention on those who were initiated at the Easter Vigil. It is a time for them to grow into their new identity as members of the order of the faithful, those who are baptized.

It is also a time for them to reflect on the meaning of the sacraments they celebrated at Easter: baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. It is a time for them, as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults puts it, “to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity (No. 244).”

The newly initiated don’t go through this alone, however. The rite notes that the whole community shares in this opportunity for deepening our appreciation of the sacraments and their implications for our daily lives: “The period of postbaptismal catechesis is of great significance for both the neophytes and the rest of the faithful.

Through it the neophytes, with the help of their godparents, should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook (No. 246).

This “postbaptismal catechesis” is to occur during the Sunday Masses of the Easter season, so the readings for those Sundays are chosen to foster reflection on what it means to be Christians: How are we to live, once we have gone through the waters of rebirth and entered into resurrected life? What effect should the gift of the Holy Spirit have on our daily activity?

We all join the newly baptized to ponder such questions as we continue to share the joy of the resurrection. As we do, we may realize that the gift of Easter is even better than winning the lottery!

By Father Lawrence E. Mick
Catholic News Service

Celebrating a windfall

Father Lawrence E. Mick is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and a freelance writer.
Jesus’ Resurrection gives us life

An Easter story: Breakfast with Jesus

By Father Stan Konieczny Catholic News Service

For Father Pat, the fifth Sunday of Lent came to be known as the time of “the question.” After the early Sunday Mass, the young priest met with the parish delegation of older women headed by Helen, who asked the same question each year.

“We know you are very busy, Father, but are you going to bless food baskets on Holy Saturday morning like we used to do in the old days?” Her English had a Polish accent.

“Twelve noon just like in the old days,” Father Pat would reply with a forced smile, knowing that for the next two weeks Helen would leave daily Mass shaking her finger at him with the gentle warning, “You didn’t forget, did you?”

How could he forget? In his first Easter as a priest, Father Pat was introduced to the custom of blessing Easter food on Holy Saturday at St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish. Families would gather with baskets filled with food to be blessed for the Easter breakfast table.

The young priest just did what he was told to do, sprinkling holy water and with food to be blessed for the Easter break—Families would gather with baskets filled Saturday at St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish.

as a priest, Father Pat was introduced to

formed moral character.

succeeded to influence behavior and between two grandsons.

The ancients believe the dogma of the resurrection, but how do we extend the Christian faith is in vain if it does not succumb to the debilitating pull of bad news. When difficulties tend to weigh down the spirit, the Christian tries to deal with them in creative ways.

Christian hope remains steadfast, is strong and takes courage in Christ’s resurrection, which has already been won for us. “Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid,” consoles the risen Lord, “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (John 14:27; Matthew 28:20).

The “Hallelujah Chorus” in Handel’s Messiah exemplifies these thoughts. It has retained its popularity since its first performance in 1742 and is most often performed during the Advent-Christmas season. After Handel finished composing the piece, he exclaimed with joy, “I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself.”

The text tells us what to believe. With a dramatic introduction, the full-throated chorus bursts forth with “allelujah,” the spontaneous and joyful praise of God to God. The text proper proclaims the reign of the omnipotent Lord God. “The kingdom of

the omnipotent Lord God. “The kingdom of

this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, who shall reign forever and ever, and ever. Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:16). The words from Revelation sound to the four corners of the earth.

The music itself is replete with vitality. The string section 쉽게s with joy while the brilliant Baroque trumpets and thunderous timpani alert the soul. “Here is musical resurrection!”

Audiences stand when listening to the “Hallelujah” chorus as they follow the lead of King George II, who in 1743 stood in utter amazement at its glorious sound. The music rouses the soul to feel Christ’s resurrection. If Christ’s resurrection did not happen, Christian faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). Christ has triumphed on death, declares the Byzantine Easter liturgy. Christians believe the dogma of the resurrection, but how do we extend the Church’s exuberance beyond Easter Sunday and throughout the Paschal season?

Here are three ways to sense deeply the power of Christ’s resurrection:

• Let the mystery wash over you during the Easter Vigil service, as salvation history unfolds and culminates in the Lord’s resurrection.

• Sing the great Easter hymns as wholeheartedly as Christmas carols are sung and allow the powerful texts to fill you with joy.

• During the Paschal season, repeat the phrase, “Christ is risen, my hope is in the risen Lord.” Praying this prayer will eventually be synchronized with one’s heartbeat; it will reach deep into the soul even on dark days.

Despite daily hardship, the Christian does not succumb to the debilitating pull of bad news. When difficulties tend to weigh down the spirit, the Christian tries to deal with them in creative ways.

Easter joy resounds with Hallelujahs

By Sister Joan L. RoccaSalvo, CSJ Catholic News Service

Of all the fine arts, music possesses the greatest power to move people at their core. The ancients believed that the music one listened to influenced behavior and formed moral character.

The “Hallelujah Chorus” in Handel’s Messiah exemplifies these thoughts. It has retained its popularity since its first performance in 1742 and is most often performed during the Advent-Christmas season. After Handel finished composing the piece, he exclaimed with joy, “I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself.”

The text tells us what to believe. With a dramatic introduction, the full-throated chorus bursts forth with “allelujah,” the spontaneous and joyful praise of God to God. The text proper proclaims the reign of the omnipotent Lord God. “The kingdom of

of King George II, who in 1743 stood in utter amazement at its glorious sound. The music rouses the soul to feel Christ’s resurrection. If Christ’s resurrection did not happen, Christian faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). Christ has triumphed on death, declares the Byzantine Easter liturgy. Christians believe the dogma of the resurrection, but how do we extend the Church’s exuberance beyond Easter Sunday and throughout the Paschal season?

Here are three ways to sense deeply the power of Christ’s resurrection:

• Let the mystery wash over you during the Easter Vigil service, as salvation history unfolds and culminates in the Lord’s resurrection.

• Sing the great Easter hymns as wholeheartedly as Christmas carols are sung and allow the powerful texts to fill you with joy.

• During the Paschal season, repeat the phrase, “Christ is risen, my hope is in the risen Lord.” Praying this prayer will eventually be synchronized with one’s heartbeat; it will reach deep into the soul even on dark days.

Despite daily hardship, the Christian does not succumb to the debilitating pull of bad news. When difficulties tend to weigh down the spirit, the Christian tries to deal with them in creative ways.

Christian hope remains steadfast, is strong and takes courage in Christ’s resurrection, which has already been won for us. “Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid,” consoles the risen Lord, “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (John 14:27; Matthew 28:20).

Chicago Archdiocese begins sainthood process for first black diocesan priest in U.S.

By Joyce Duriga and
Daniel Smith
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO (CNS) — Father Augustin-Tolton was born into slavery in St. Louis, Missouri, and was a slave in the Union Army. Shortly afterward, when Augustin was 9, Martha Tolton bundled up her three children and escaped across the Mississippi River and hiked to Quincy, Illinois, a sanctuary for runaway slaves. After the war, Martha Tolton learned her husband had died soon after his arrival in St. Louis.

In Quincy, Martha Tolton and her sons began working in a cigar factory. They also served Mass at St. Boniface Church with other black Catholics. Augustine attended St. Boniface School for a brief time, then went to public school.

Later he went to school at St. Peter’s Parish, where he became an altar server and began to feel he was a priest. He was accepted at St. Francis Church in Quincy for ordination, but because his African heritage was not widely known, Fr. Tolton was often credited as the first black U.S. priest.

After six years of study there, Augustine was ordained on April 11, 1886, at St. Boniface Basilica in Rome. College officials felt he should be a missionary in his own country, not in Africa. Fr. Tolton was uneasy about service to the U.S., knowing the racism he would face. But he returned to Quincy, celebrating his first Mass July 18, 1886, at St. Boniface Church. He was named pastor of St. Joseph Church, a black parish affiliated with St. Boniface.

Racism and anti-Catholicism hindered his ministry in Quincy. He asked his superiors if he could accept an invitation from Bishop Patrick Feehan in Chicago to minister to black Catholics there. His appeal was granted in December 1889.

By all accounts Fr. Tolton worked tirelessly for his congregation in Chicago, even to the point of exhaustion. On July 9, 1897, he died of heat stroke while returning from a priest’s retreat. He was 43.

Brothers Bishop James Healy of Portland, Maine, and Jesuit Father Patrick Healy, a president of Georgetown University, were of mixed African and Irish ancestry and were ordained before Fr. Tolton, but because their African heritage was not widely known, Fr. Tolton is often credited as the first black U.S. priest.

Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry is organizing Fr. Tolton’s cause for the archdiocese. He said he is now poring through archival material to prepare a report about his life that will go to Cardinal George and then on to the Congregation for Saints’ Causes at the Vatican.

In Fr. Tolton’s case, this will be termed an “ancient” cause because there are no living witnesses to the candidate’s life and all research comes after the fact. Bishop Perry explained, but said he thinks there will be “enough material for Rome’s initial examination.”

Bishop Perry’s office is putting together a holy card with a prayer that God intercede on behalf of Fr. Tolton’s cause that will be distributed throughout the archdiocese.

“We are trying to find out what devotion to Fr. Tolton exists,” the bishop said.

Fr. Tolton is an example for all Catholics because he represents the highest ideal they wish to see in priests, Bishop Perry said.

“He quiet witness is a challenge to our prejudices and narrow-mindedness that keeps us insulated from the variety in the kingdom of God,” he said.

Father Augustine Tolton, also known as Augustus, is pictured in a photo from an undated portrait card. The canonization cause of Fr. Tolton, the first U.S. diocesan priest of African descent, was opened in Chicago earlier in March. (CNS photo/courtesy of Archdiocese of Chicago Archives and Records Center)

Pope apologizes to Irish abuse victims, orders Vatican investigation

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a letter to Irish Catholics, Pope Benedict XVI personally apologized to victims of priests’ sexual abuse and announced new steps to heal the wounds of the scandal, including a Vatican investigation and a year of penitential reparation.

“You have suffered grievously and I am truly sorry. I know that nothing can undo the wrong you have endured. Your trust has been betrayed and your dignity has been violated,” he told victims in his letter, released March 20 at the Vatican. The pope told priest abusers that they would answer to God for their sins. He said the church had made serious mistakes in responding to allegations of sexual abuse, and he encouraged them to implement new church norms against abuse and cooperate with civil authorities in such cases. “Only decisive action carried out with complete honesty and transparency will restore the respect and good will of the Irish people toward the Church,” he said.

The 4,600-word letter was distributed at Masses across Ireland March 20-21, and priests there were preparing homilies on the text. The letter came in response to the disclosure last fall that Irish church leaders had often protected abusive priests over the last 35 years. Similar allegations have since come to light in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland. Pope Benedict, who met with Irish bishops to discuss the problem in February, began his letter by saying he shared in the sense of betrayal Irish Catholics felt when they learned of these “sinister and criminal acts” and the “often inadequate responses” by Church authorities in Ireland.

Court’s ruling on ‘under God’ in pledge seen as ‘breath of fresh air’

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — A federal appeals court’s ruling upholding the constitutionality of the phrase “one nation under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance is a “breath of fresh air from a court system that has too often seemed to be almost allergic to public references to God,” according to the head of the Knights of Columbus. Carl Anderson, supreme knight, also called the March 11 decision by a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in San Francisco, a “victory for common sense.”

The Knights, which led efforts to persuade Congress to add the phrase to the pledge in 1954, joined the case as defendants when it was filed in 2005 by California atheist Dr. Michael Newdow. With the majority in the 21-1 vote, Judge Carlos T. Bea said, “Not every mention of God or religion by our government or our government’s direction is a violation of the Establishment Clause.”

The pledge is constitutional,” Bea added. Newdow had charged that references to God in the pledge violated his religious beliefs. In an earlier challenge to the phrase, Newdow had said recitation of the pledge in public schools violated his daughter’s constitutional rights and the 9th circuit court had agreed in 2002. But the U.S. Supreme Court overturned that ruling in 2004 on technical grounds, saying that Newdow lacked standing to sue on behalf of his daughter because he did not have primary custody of her.

Pope will beatify Cardinal Newman in England over September visit

LONDON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI will preside at the beatification ceremony of Cardinal John Henry Newman in Coventry, England, during a four-day visit to the United Kingdom Sept. 16-19, British Catholic leaders said. The step is unusual because under Pope Benedict’s own rules, a beatification is to be performed by a cardinal in the diocese where the candidate for sainthood died. Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster, president of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, told a March 16 press conference in London that to see Cardinal Newman “declared ‘blessed’ towards sainthood — will be a very, very important moment. . . . He is a towering figure in English history over the last 200 years. Pope Benedict has a particular attentiveness to the writings of Cardinal Newman,” the archbishop added.

“He is making an exception to his own rules to do this.” Cardinal Newman was an Anglican cleric who founded the Oxford Movement to bring the Anglican Church back to its Catholic roots. He became Catholic at the age of 44 after a succession of clashes with Anglican bishops and was made a cardinal by Pope Leo XIII.

He died in Birmingham in 1890 at age 89.


By Sharon K. Perkins

I am at an age where I need to wear glasses for reading but not for driving. That means if I forget to take off my glasses while walking down a flight of stairs, I run the risk of misjudging the distance, missing a step and falling. If I don’t wear them when I need to sign my name on a sales slip, I sometimes write on the wrong line. I’d prefer not to wear glasses at all — but as I’ve learned the hard way, when I can’t see clearly what’s right in front of my face, it’s time to seek optical assistance.

The readings for Easter are about things hidden and things visible, about people thinking that they see things clearly while completely missing what is right in front of them. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had envisioned the redemption of Israel until Jesus’ crucifixion turned their hope to an illusion. Although women from their group had reported a “vision of angels,” they themselves saw nothing at the empty tomb to reassure them.

Cleopas and his friend took their unidentified traveling companion to task for being ignorant of recent events in Jerusalem — yet they were blind to their true significance. It was only when Jesus interpreted the Scriptures and broke the bread in their presence that they recognized him.

Why do we observe the feast of the Resurrection year after year? What is the purpose of commemorating every Sunday as a “little Easter”? And why is frequent celebration of the Eucharist essential to Jesus’ followers? Because, as St. Paul reminds us, our lives are “hidden with Christ in God,” and it is by repeatedly sharing the deeper meaning of the Scriptures and breaking bread in communion with one another that Jesus and the ultimate purpose of our lives in him become visible once more.

Left to the limitations of physical sight, we cannot see the risen Lord in our midst, nor can we perceive his presence in the people he has placed directly in our line of vision. But in Jesus’ precious gift of Eucharist, we are given all of the “optical assistance” we need to see him clearly — and as the psalmist proclaims, “It is wonderful in our eyes.”

QUESTIONS:

When have you been blind to the presence of the risen Lord directly before your eyes? How can this Easter celebration bring you to a deeper commitment to Jesus in the Eucharist?

Copyright © 2010, Diocese of Fort Worth

Pope contrasts rationality of Aquinas, faith of Bonaventure

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI asked Irish Catholics to read his pastoral letter on the sexual abuse crisis “with an open heart and in a spirit of faith.”

Addressing Irish visitors at his weekly general audience March 17, St. Patrick’s Day, the pope said he had written the letter as “a sign of my deep concern” over “this painful situation.”

He used his audience to announce that he would sign the letter March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, and send it “soon after.”

“My hope is that it will help in the process of repentance, healing, and renewal,” he said.

In December, the pope had said he would write the letter in the wake of the scandal that followed publication of an independent report that faulted the Church for its handling of 325 sex abuse claims in the Archdiocese of Dublin in the years 1975-2004. The report said bishops sometimes protected abusive priests, and were apparently more intent on protecting the Church’s reputation and assets than on helping the victims.

Pope Benedict called all the bishops of Ireland to the Vatican in February, discussing both the scandal as well as the potential content of his letter.

At his audience, he said that “the Church in Ireland has been severely shaken as a result of the child abuse crisis.”

In his main audience address, the pope continued his series of talks about medieval Catholic theologians by looking at the similarities and differences in the teaching of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, who were contemporaries.

St. Thomas saw theology “as primarily a theoretical science,” whose aim was to help people know God.

St. Bonaventure, he said, “saw it as practical, concerned with that ‘wisdom,’ which enables us to love God and conform our wills to his.”

Reacting to erroneous trends in theology, which probably were present among his Franciscan brothers “and are also present in our day,” St. Bonaventure warned against “the violent attitude” of over-analyzing faith, thinking that reason can explain everything about God, the pope said.

“Before the word of God, we must contemplate, not analyze,” the pope said.

The Franciscan saint knew that while reason was important and could help explain many things about God, at a certain point only love could help people draw closer to God and to understanding why he would sacrifice his son to save humanity, he said.

St. Bonaventure knew that “precisely in the dark night of the cross, there appeared the greatness of God’s love,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict XVI reads his talk during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican March 10. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
**Scripture Readings**

By Jeff Hedglen

I have experienced some really special dinners in my life. Nights like senior prom, all dressed up with a group of people at a fancy restaurant, or a banquet at a nice hotel for a wedding, or the dinner I had at Chili’s on my wedding night because my new bride and I spent so much time talking to guests that we forgot to eat at the reception. But none of these compares to the simple meal that comes each year on the Thursday before Easter.

The specialness of this night reminds me of a poster that used to hang on the wall in my office. It was a picture of a loaf of bread and a cup of wine with the caption: “Your presence is requested at a dinner in your honor.” These words are never requested at a dinner in your schools, offices, homes, friends, or when we celebrate the Mass of the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper. When we receive the Eucharist we are united more intimately of ways (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1396).

Each of us uniting to Christ connects us to each other at the same time. This unity spans time and space bonding us with Christians across the world, down through history, and all the way to eternity.

--- CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1396

**Questions:**

Have you experienced conflicting emotions and circumstances, juxtaposed in odd ways in your own life? How might it be possible to remember Jesus’ admonition to share in his peace when life gets rough?

---

By Jeff Hensley

The Eucharist cleanses us, unites us, empowers us. It was a picture of a loaf used to hang on the wall in my family’s living room. It reminds me of a poster that said: “Your presence is requested at a dinner in your honor.” These words are never requested at a dinner in your schools, offices, homes, friends, or when we celebrate the Mass of the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper. When we receive the Eucharist we are united more intimately of ways (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1396).

Each of us uniting to Christ connects us to each other at the same time. This unity spans time and space bonding us with Christians across the world, down through history, and all the way to eternity.

--- CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1396

John seems to be recognizing this kind of mixture of conflicting emotions and situations when he identifies himself as “I, John, your brother, who share with you the distress, the kingdom, and the endurance we have in Jesus.”

In John’s Gospel reading, the resurrected Jesus suddenly appears on two separate occasions in locked rooms where his followers were hiding for fear of those who opposed this good news. Jesus’ first words to them were, “Peace be with you.”

The account says his followers were overjoyed at his miraculous appearance, but then he repeats the same phrase “Peace be with you,” before he tells them, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The second time he appears to them, he repeats that phrase again: “Peace be with you.”

Then he has Thomas see for himself that it is indeed the real, flesh-and-blood savior who stands before him.

There is great joy and doubt, and a word from Jesus settles their hearts and minds. How important it must be, in this season of Easter, for us to remember those words, as we go about our lives amid our own joys and sorrows, seeking to give to others a bit of the love of God. No matter how difficult the circumstances, Jesus says, “Peace be with you.”

---

Copyright © 2010, Diocese of Fort Worth
Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil invite us to walk with Christ during the monumental moments of our Faith

By Lucas Pollice

After living and celebrating the holy and penitential season of Lent, we enter into Holy Week, which is the holiest and most important time in the Liturgical Year.

Holy Week is the time in which we enter into the Paschal Mystery of Christ in a most unique and profound way. This reaches its climax in the celebration of the Triduum, the greatest of all liturgies, on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, when we truly walk with Christ and enter into his saving mystery.

Even though the Triduum is celebrated over three days, it is actually one liturgy that begins Holy Thursday evening and ends late Holy Saturday night. In fact, it is often called the “mother of all liturgies.” Through the Triduum, we literally walk and journey with Christ from the celebration of the Last Supper, to the Agony in the Garden, through the Passion and Crucifixion, unto the celebration and joy of the Resurrection. It is a powerful and moving experience that all Catholics should experience if they are able to.

Holy Thursday

The Triduum begins on Holy Thursday night with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The Triduum starts on a very celebratory note as we thank God for the gift of the Eucharist and the institution of the priesthood. For the first time in weeks, we sing the Gloria and the presence and power of Christ in our lives. I encourage all to experience, not only during the celebration of the Easter Vigil and the entire Triduum received into the Church. Finally, the Eucharist is brought into the church and the liturgy again proclaims. Christ indeed is risen!

The Triduum is a powerful liturgical experience, not only during the celebrations at the parish, but also throughout the entire three days. One is able to literally experience and live the Paschal Mystery, the passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ… Walking this journey with our Lord only deepens our awareness of the power and reality of the Resurrection and the presence and power of Christ in our lives.

Good Friday

The Triduum resumes with the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday. The liturgy begins in silence as the priests enter the church and then prostrate themselves before the altar as a sign of penance and sorrow. We then move into the Liturgy of the Word, which includes a passage from Isaiah’s description of the Suffering Servant. We then pray the powerful Psalm 22, which Christ exclaimed from the Cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” The Passion according to St. John is then read, followed by the Veneration of the Cross. In this powerful moment, we literally find ourselves at the foot of the Cross adoring Christ, the Lamb of God, who as both Priest and Victim, offered Himself for the salvation of the world. Finally, the Eucharist is brought in procession back into the church so that we may receive the very Body of Christ, the fruit of the New Tree of Life, who is Christ crucified. The Eucharist is then taken in procession back out of the church and the liturgy again pauses as we enter into the time of hopeful anticipation of the Resurrection.

The Easter Vigil

The Triduum ends with the celebration of the Easter Vigil, which is the climax of the entire Liturgical Year. It is the celebration of the Resurrection of the Christ, and the entire loving plan of salvation accomplished in Christ.

The Easter Vigil begins in total darkness, the darkness of sin and the darkness of the grave. Then, the Easter fire is lit outside the church, which represents the light of the Resurrection. The Paschal candle is then prepared and slowly brought into the church in solemn procession as a symbol of the Resurrected Christ. As the Paschal Candle is processed, the choir sings “Light of Christ.” The light of the Paschal Candle shatters the darkness of sin and death! As the Paschal Candle continues to process into the church, the individual candles of the gathered faithful are also lit, reminding us that each and every one of us, through our baptism, are called to be the light of Christ in the world. Suddenly, the entire church is full of light, the light of the Resurrection!

“Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God’s throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!” These powerful words of the Exultet, the great prayer of the Church that first announces the Good News of the Resurrection, are then proclaimed. This begins the Liturgy of the Word that is a series of nine readings. These readings cover God’s entire plan of salvation accomplished in Christ, beginning with Genesis, then the Exodus, then readings from the Prophets. Then, in glorious fashion, the Gloria is sung and as the lights of the church come on, the full celebration of the Resurrection begins. The Epistle of Paul is read and the Gospel is proclaimed. Christ indeed is risen!

After the homily, the full fruits of the Resurrection are made visibly present through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. The elect and candidates who have been preparing for full communion with the Catholic Church are received into the Church. Finally, the Easter Vigil and the entire Triduum concludes with the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Triduum is a powerful liturgical experience, not only during the celebrations at the parish, but also throughout the entire three days. One is able to literally experience and live the Paschal Mystery, the passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ. It is a profound way to truly contemplate the face of Christ and to deepen our communion with Him. In addition, walking this journey with our Lord only deepens our awareness of the power and reality of the Resurrection and the presence and power of Christ in our lives. I encourage all to experience this journey of grace!
Hablando del Domingo de Pascua, el gran Día de la Resurrección

Estimados hermanos y hermanas en el Señor Resucitado,

Espero que la época de cuaresma haya sido para ustedes una de reflexión, de gracia, y de encuentros con el Señor. Estamos a punto de entrar en la Semana Santa, que no es sólo una serie de servicios litúrgicos especiales, pero más importante, es una invitación personal del Señor mismo a caminar con él y a entrar completamente en los eventos de nuestra salvación. Al hacer esto, nuestros propios triunfos y dolores personales —calvários y huertos de Getsemaní— nos señalarán el camino hacia la realidad de la Resurrección del Señor en nuestras vidas.

Les invito a tomar la oportunidad de asistir en los servicios diarios de Semana Santa —en nuestra Catedral y en las parroquias de la diócesis. Los sacerdotes, religiosos, y personal parroquial, a través de la diócesis, han trabajado duro para que los momentos litúrgicos puedan ser un encuentro dinámico con el Señor y con su cuerpo en la tierra, la Iglesia. Habrá no tan sólo momentos individuales, sino también momentos de comunión verdadera para todos nosotros, juntos.

Al acercarse el Domingo de Pascua —el gran Día de la Resurrección— las palabras del Papa Benedicto XVI pueden ayudarnos a reflexionar sobre este día tan central para nosotros, el día en que Cristo resucitó indudablemente.

Absoluta y definitivamente, esto es a lo que se refiere la fe en la resurrección: el verdadero poder de Dios, y la importancia de la responsabilidad humana. Que el poder de Dios es esperanza y gozo: ésta es la liberación revelada en la Pascua. En esta Resurrección, Dios se revela, revela su poder —superior al poder de la muerte — el poder del amor de la Trinidad. Así que la revelación pascual nos da el derecho de cantar “Aleluya” en un mundo cubierto con nubes de la muerte.

— VIAJE A PASCUA, página 132 (Versión en inglés)

Estas palabras del Santo Padre también recuerdan y confirman las palabras animadoras y triunfantes de San Pablo a los Corintios:

La muerte ha sido vencida. ¿Dónde está, muerte, tu victoria? ¿Dónde está tu aguazón? Porque lo que provoca la muerte es el pecado y lo que da fuerza al pecado es la ley. ¡Demos gracias a Dios, que nos ha dado la victoria por nuestro Señor Jesucristo!

— 1 Cor. 15:54 - 57

Esta gran esperanza de la Pascua es la buena nueva que necesita ser proclamada al mundo entero, a través del testimonio de nuestras vidas. ¡Este mundo que es a menudo “cubierto con las nubes de la muerte” necesita ser traido a la luz del Cristo Resucitado, y nosotros —los testigos de Cristo— somos esa luz! Esto se ve con todo su poder a través del rico simbolismo expresado en la vigilia de Pascua.

Comienza con la luz del Círculo pascual y entonces gradualmente —a través de las velas de cada persona que se van encendiendo— a la luz de Cristo perfora la oscuridad del pecado y de la muerte, y revela la gloria y el poder de Cristo.

Debemos ser ese testigo en el mundo, que Cristo ha resucitado y que su gracia y poder se están manifestando en nuestras vidas. Debemos también recordar que la gloria y la verdad de la época de Pascua dura 50 días hasta Pentecostés. En esta época pascual, caminemos con el Señor Resucitado mientras nos volvamos a revelar su Cuerpo en la tierra, la verdad que fortalezca nuestra fe y nos demuestre que Él ha efectivamente conquistado el pecado y la muerte.

+ Monsenor Kevin W Vann
Obispo de Fort Worth

En Ciudad de México aumentan tensiones entre iglesia católica, gobierno

Por David Agren
Catholic News Service
Ciudad de México (CNS) — El alcalde Marcelo Ebrard fue testigo de cuatro matrimonios entre personas del mismo sexo el 11 de marzo en el antiguo edificio del gobierno de Ciudad de México, las primeras tales uniones en el gobierno de Ciudad de México, mientras tanto, expresó decepción. Padre Hugo Valdemar Romero, portavoz arquidiocesano, dijo el 11 de marzo en una declaración: “Esto es claro que el Sr. Marcelo Ebrard es responsable de la aprobación y ejecución de estas leyes que son destructivas para la familia, y que no oculta su aversión a las iglesias y a la mayoría de la gente que goberna, la misma gente que proclama la fe cristiana y rechaza la perversión de sus valores más atesorados”.

El desacuerdo aumentó las tensiones entre la arquidiócesis y el gobierno local. Durante los últimos tres años, Ciudad de México ha rechazado los intentos del gobierno de Ciudad de México, que siempre habían sido cordiales”, dijo Agren.

La arquidiócesis de Ciudad de México, mientras tanto, expresó decepción. Padre Hugo Valdemar Romero, portavoz arquidiocesano, dijo el 11 de marzo en una declaración: “Esto es claro que el Sr. Marcelo Ebrard es responsable de la aprobación y ejecución de estas leyes que son destructivas para la familia, y que no oculta su aversión a las iglesias y a la mayoría de la gente que goberna, la misma gente que proclama la fe cristiana y rechaza la perversión de sus valores más atesorados”.

El desacuerdo aumentó las tensiones entre la arquidiócesis y el gobierno local. Durante los últimos tres años, Ciudad de México ha rechazado los intentos del gobierno de Ciudad de México, que siempre habían sido cordiales”, dijo Agren.

La arquidiócesis de Ciudad de México, mientras tanto, expresó decepción. Padre Hugo Valdemar Romero, portavoz arquidiocesano, dijo el 11 de marzo en una declaración: “Esto es claro que el Sr. Marcelo Ebrard es responsable de la aprobación y ejecución de estas leyes que son destructivas para la familia, y que no oculta su aversión a las iglesias y a la mayoría de la gente que goberna, la misma gente que proclama la fe cristiana y rechaza la perversión de sus valores más atesorados”.

El desacuerdo aumentó las tensiones entre la arquidiócesis y el gobierno local. Durante los últimos tres años, Ciudad de México ha rechazado los intentos del gobierno de Ciudad de México, que siempre habían sido cordiales”, dijo Agren.
Proponentes de reforma de inmigración acuden a Washington, presionando para cambio

Por Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON (CNS) — En autobús desde todo el país y a pie desde toda la ciudad, un estimado de 200,000 personas acudieron al National Mall el 21 de marzo para presionar al Congreso y al presidente — con rótulos, banderines, camisetas, consignas y oraciones — a que cumplan las promesas de arreglar el sistema de inmigración.

Ciudadanos estadounidenses, inmigrantes legales y algunos que admitieron que están ilegalmente en el país, cubrieron un área de seis cuadras del Mall para presentar su caso a favor de reformar un sistema que mantiene familias separadas, limita los prospectos de educación de los estudiantes, y causa que millones de personas existan “en las sombras” porque carecen de documentos legales.

Antes de marchar tres millas pasando el capitolio hacia el estadio RFK, donde sus autobuses esperaban, la exuberante y esperanzada muchedumbre ondeaba banderas y agitaba letreros, mientras oradores contaban sus historias personales de inmigración. Otros oradores comprometieron el apoyo de sus iglesias, sindicatos y grupos de derechos humanos.

Un mensaje grabado en video del presidente Barack Obama trajo el silencio del público, tornándose en vitoreo mientras él se comprometía a “hacer todo lo que esté en mi poder para forjar un consenso bipartidista este año en este asunto importante. Ustedes saben tan bien como yo que esto no será fácil, y no sucederá de un día a otro. Pero si trabajamos juntos cruzando líneas étnicas, estatales y partidistas, podemos edificar un futuro digno de nuestra historia como nación de inmigrantes y nación de leyes”.

Unas cuantas cuadras de distancia del capitolio, en la iglesia St. Aloysius antes de la concentración, el cardenal Roger M. Mahony de Los Ángeles pasó 30 minutos saluando a la gente que llegaba para una misa especial. Durante una homilía invocó al fallecido líder laboral César Chávez, con quien el cardenal trabajó durante muchos años por los derechos de los trabajadores agrícolas. señaló que después de los eventos en el capitolio ese día, sería el momento propio para que la reforma de inmigración tomara su lugar en el escenario político.

En entrevista telefónica con Catholic News Service a la mañana siguiente, el cardenal Mahony dijo que la aprobación, por parte de la Cámara, de un proyecto legislativo de reforma de los servicios médicos, horas después de la concentración “es provechosa para los esfuerzos de la reforma de inmigración”, dado el ambiente político actual.

“El presidente hizo un compromiso muy firme durante la campaña, y otra vez recientemente, que la reforma de inmigración sería una de sus prioridades más altas”, dijo el cardenal. Ahora que un proyecto legislativo de servicios médicos ayudará a los tantos que no tienen seguro para recibir servicios médicos asequibles, él añadió, es tiempo de ayudar a los millones de personas que están viviendo en las sombras porque carecen estado de inmigración legal.

“Estos son asuntos inconclusos”, dijo el cardenal, añadiendo que traer a esos inmigrantes al sistema para pagar impuestos y conectarse con una variedad de servicios públicos ayudará a la recuperación económica estadounidense.

Entre el público en el Mall, estimado por los organizadores en 200,000 personas, José describió su motivación por hacer un viaje de 15 horas en autobús, desde Florida.

Ciudadano estadounidense nacido en México, José explicó que su esposa carece de estado de inmigración legal. Él vive con temor constante que ella sea arrestada y deportada.

Ellos tienen tres hijos pequeños ciudadanos estadounidenses. Mientras él trabaja días de 13 a 14 horas, su esposa atiende el hogar, lleva y trae los niños a la escuela, a médicos y a otras actividades, dijo.

Pero ahora la ley de Florida requiere mostrar prueba del estado de inmigración legal para renovar su licencia de conductora el año próximo. Careciendo esa licencia, el modo de vida de la familia tendrá que cambiar.

De mayor preocupación para José, quien pidió que no se usara su apellido, que “estoy asustado, en todo momento, que ella sea arrestada y alejada de mí y de nuestros hijos”.

Cree que ni él ni su esposa podrían regresar con seguridad a su México natal, mayormente debido al predominante crimen violento.

“Mi familia allá ya es amenazada porque los criminales saben que ellos reciben ayuda mía”, dijo José.

“Ella tiene tanto corazón”, dijo, describiendo cuán perdidos él y sus hijos estarían si la deportan. “Ella es una madre maravillosa”.

Como parte de ACTS, la iglesia St. Mary patrocinó el primer retiro en español para mujeres dentro de la diócesis

Cincuenta y dos mujeres participaron en el primer retiro de ACTS en español para mujeres del área en el norte de Texas. El evento, llevado a cabo entre el 11 y el 14 de marzo para los feligreses de Saint Mary en Gainesville, fue uno de los más grandes retiros de ACTS en el área. Un equipo de 27 personas de San Antonio y cinco feligreses de Saint Mary guío el retiro. La sede de las misiones de ACTS en Fort Worth sirve como extensión de las Misiones de ACTS y como tal está organizada para difundir el evangelio de Jesucristo en las comunidades católicas y entrenar directores de equipo para promover, consultar, facilitar, y patrocinar retiros de ACTS en la diócesis de Fort Worth.
América

Obispos alientan a la vigilancia para que la reforma de salud no finance el aborto

WASHINGTON — El Cardenal Frederick W. DiNardo, presidente de la CONFERENCIA DE OBISPOS CATÓLICOS DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS (USCCB), hizo un declaración para los obispos el 23 de marzo, minutos después de que el Presidente Barack Obama firmara la revisión del último de la reforma de salud aprobada por estrecho margen por la Cámara de Representantes el 21 de marzo. La declaración oficial fue aprobada unánimemente por los 32 miembros del Comité Administrativo de la USCCB:

por cerca de un siglo los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos han pedido una reforma de nuestro sistema de salud para que todas las personas puedan tener acceso al cuidado que reconoce y afirma su dignidad humana. El discípulo cristiano significa “trabajar para la dignidad humana. El discipulado ha ejercido su ministerio cuando las dos obispos auxiliares previos que incluyen al aborto a pagar por los abortos de otras personas con sus propios fondos. Si esta nueva ley intenta evitar que las personas sean cómplices en los abortos de otras personas, se contradice a sí misma. Compartimos plenamente la intención admirable del Presidente Obama expresada en el borrador de su Orden Ejecutiva, donde afirma que “es necesario establecer un mecanismo de cumplimiento adecuado para asegurar que el fondo de fondos federales no sean usados para servicios de aborto”. Sin embargo, el mismo hecho de que una Orden Ejecutiva sea necesaria para clarificar la legislación señala las deficiencias del mismo estatuto. No entiendo como una Orden Ejecutiva no importa la buena intención, puede sustituir las provisiones estatutarias. El estatuto también es profundamente deficiente porque no incluye el lenguaje necesario para otorgar protección de conciencia esenciales (tanto en lo referente al aborto como más allá de este contexto). Del mismo modo, muchos trabajadores inmigrantes y sus familias podrían quedar en una peor situación dado que no se les permitirá comprar seguro médico en los nuevos intercambios, o mercados, que se crearán, incluso si usan para ello su propio dinero. Muchas personas en el Congreso y en el Gobierno, así como grupos y personas en la comunidad católica, han insistido repetidamente en que este estatuto no incluya la financiación federal del aborto y que asegura fuertes protecciones de conciencia. Análisis publicados de forma separada muestran que éste no es el caso y esta es la razón por la que nos oponemos a él en su forma actual. Nosotros, junto a muchos otros, como obispos de la Iglesia Católica, hablaremos en nombre de la Iglesia y de la fe católica. La fe católica no es una agenda partidista, y aprovechamos esta oportunidad para comprometernos a un nuevo aporte a un nuevo estatuto que haya respeto a la libertad de conciencia de todos los ciudadanos de la nación. Nuestra declaración hoy demuestra que el grupo de obispos de la Iglesia Católica nos hemos opuesto a su naturaleza, y esta es la razón por la cual estamos unidos hoy.

El papa nombró a dos sacerdotes de Dallas como obispos auxiliares de la diócesis

Por David Sedeno
El Católico de Texas
DALLAS—El papa Benedicto XVI nombró a dos sacerdotes que se han dedicado por largo tiempo a su ministerio en la diócesis de Dallas como obispos auxiliares para que ayuden al obispo Kevin J. Farrell, que dirige la diócesis, y que para que puedan servir a la diócesis.

El nombramiento del padre J. Douglas Deshotel, que tiene 58 años de edad, y que es el actual vicario general; y el de monseñor Mark J. Seitz, que tiene 56 años de edad, y que es pastor de la parroquia de Santa Rita en Irving, fue anunciado el 13 de marzo en Washington por el arzobispo Pietro Sambi, nuncio papal ante los Estados Unidos.

Los obispos nombrados serán ordenados el 27 de abril en el Santuario de la Catedral de la Virgen de Guadalupe, en el Centro de Dallas.

La diócesis ha tenido solamente dos obispos auxiliares previos que ejercieron su ministerio cuando las fronteras de la diócesis iban desde
During long career, Constantine oversaw the expansion of Catholic Charities

From Page 24

spearheaded the program as director of Catholic Social Services.

“She was very active in that phase of Catholic Charities,” he remembers. “We became involved in immigration, particularly with bringing people in from Vietnam and other places in Southeast Asia. So we developed a department to address that issue.”

To assist refugees, the agency hired employees of Vietnamese heritage who knew the language and culture.

“I had some good people involved in that. One of them, Eldon Hager, ran the immigration part of it,” Constantine recalls. “He now works for the United Nations.” (Hager is a resettlement officer with the U.N.’s Refugee Agency.)

Since his retirement 18 years ago, Constantine has watched the agency’s outreach to needy families and individuals mushroom. In the past five years, demand for assistance has grown 130 percent. To meet the challenge of helping more than 111,000 people a year in a 28-county area, Catholic Charities is finishing out the construction of a nearly 84,000-square-foot building in South Fort Worth to centralize operations, improve efficiency, and expand services. Constantine has monitored the building’s progress through newsletters and conversations with old friends.

The 86-year-old Fort Worth resident, who used to work from an office in the basement of the old Laneri High School, applauds the idea of housing all of Catholic Charities operations under one roof. Although he won’t attend ceremonies dedicating the new building April 9, the veteran advocate for the poor will be there in spirit. Constantine says the continuing success and growth of Catholic Charities confirms his belief that people respond to compassion and justice.

“I hope the employees do as well as they have been doing in recent years and use the new facility to make an even bigger impact on the communities,” he said. “They’ll do all right.”

Hamer... 

From Page 11

“...and me, just drawing. I believe that may have been a lesson in love, not art.

The third drawing skill I remember from grade school art class is a sunset, which Fr. Warnat said was colorful, and you could always see God in. As the years went by, I continually confirmed that was true.

It is significant to me that the only art education I ever received in my life was intricately intertwined with my life in the Church: learning from Fr. Warnat was a sneaky part of my faith formation. Even though he was an artist, the class was never, really, about art.

From the surroundings of a small Colorado parish I received a knowledge of Christ and a love and understanding of him that were more sensory than educational; they were bound in simple faith and expression like my limited drawing skills.

Faith is an art, isn’t it? Natalie made a get-well card for her little sister Emma.

“...the artist is thinking of heaven and higher places. Some provide simple thoughts — some show passion.”

Today we are at the crossroads of those emotions. In the poignant, expectant part of the liturgical year, we commemorate the passion of the cross, contrasted with the most life-giving event that ever happened, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

No one ever was unaffected by that happening. Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection were history with such relevance that the essence of time came to be forever named by whether it was before or after the year of Our Lord.

What we commemorate in these few days has more emotion than can be said with words, so we sing it, we pray it, we kneel and meditate it. We reenact it. Sometimes we draw it.

Years ago, when we sketched pictures of the sunset, Fr. Warnat said, “You can see Christ’s face there.” I went on to learn that you can see the face of Jesus Christ everywhere. He is the art in our lives.

Recently Natalie drew a full-page image of a sunrise. Every color in the rainbow was there, and the image had shading and nuances that were representative of a much older painter — as old as Aunt Julie, perhaps, although probably not as old as Picasso, Natalie’s third favorite artist.

When the picture was finished, and Natalie had signed it on the back, her mom said, “Nattie, usually artists title their work. They give it a name and write it on the front.”

Natalie left the room, came back with her signed work and handed it to her mom. “I named it,” she said. This is exactly what she had written:

“The Name Is Sunrise.”

“Maybe, The Name Is Sunrise,” I will tell Nattie some day. “And maybe The Name Is (really) Jesus.”

Son. Rise.

Kathy Cribari 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 column 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.

By Jean Denton

Copyright © 2010, Jean Denton
To Report Misconduct
If you or someone you know is a victim of violence, call the Dallas Police Hotline at (214) 577-2426 ext. 21 or the Dallas Police Department at (214) 560-2462 ext. 201 or contact the Domestic Violence Center of Dallas at (214) 560-2462 ext. 102 or ask for the chancellor/moderator of the church.

To Report Abuse
Call the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services) at 1-800-962-2520 or 9-1-1 for immediate assistance.

RACHEL’S VINEYARD
Rachel Ministry will host an inter-denominational Rachel’s Vineyard weekend retreat for healing after abortion April 23-25. “Come explore the mercy, forgiveness, and healing love of God in the company of others who understand what you’re going through and will help you find hope and healing,” encourage event organizers. The weekend is a safe, confidential, and healing experience that brings healing after abortion. All denominations are welcome. For more information or to register, call (817) 923-4757. All calls are kept confidential.

DIVORCE AND BEYOND
Divorce and Beyond, an eight-week parish-based ministry for those facing a separation or divorce who have already filed for divorce, will begin April 9 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Andrews Basilica, 3715 University St., Fort Worth, beginning April 8. The program is based on the book ‘Becoming Whole Again: Rediscovering Your Self’ by Elmore. There is a $25 registration fee per person or $60 per couple. To register for a course starting April 9 at 6:30 p.m., contact (817) 737-6768 ext. 102 or mark@scottsdale.org or call (817) 737-6768 ext. 102 or fax (817) 737-6772.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING
The Dallas Couple’s Life in Christ offers classes in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning for married and engaged couples. Contact (817) 346-8023, ext. 640 to register. For more information, contact Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSVM, at (817) 923-3091 or yolanda@stjohnthebaptist-dfw.org.

DISCERNMENT AT OLV
Single women, ages 18 to 45 are invited to come for an evening of prayer, supper, sharing, and silence at Our Lady of Victory Parish, 3320 Hemphill St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSVM, at (817) 923-3091 or yolanda@stjohnthebaptist-dfw.org.

OLV ANNIVERSARY EVENT
All are invited to join Our Lady of Victory Parish April 10 for an anniversary dinner, games, dancing, and auction to celebrate Our Lady of Victory Parish’s 100th anniversary. The event will take place at the Parish Hall in the Great Hall, 3601 Altavista Blvd., Fort Worth. Tickets may be purchased from the Parish office, 3320 Hemphill St., Fort Worth. For more information call (817) 924-5123 or contact Rachael Garnett at rachaelg@stjohnthebaptist-dfw.org. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

KNISSH BASS TOURNAMENT
The St. Jude Knights of Columbus Council 10167 will host the 16th annual St. Jude Bass Tournament Sunday, April 11 at Hubbard Creek Lake in Breckenridge. The tournament registration will begin at 8 a.m. and check-in will begin at 4 a.m. and will take place at Sandy Creek Marina. Fish tournament participants can enter for any two days of the tournament but can only enter for one check-in night from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the marina. Entry fee for the tournament is $40 per person and includes $10 for food. For additional information or to register, call Michael Sills at (214) 520-6076, Michael Salas at (214) 523-1655, or Tony Baza at (214) 524-1582.

MOUNT CARMEL CENTER
The Mount Carmel Center will host “The Way of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration” from the teachings of St. Teresa of Jesus. Part one, to be held Wednesday, April 14 or Saturday, April 17, will be an introduction to the Adoration. The second part will be held Thursday, April 1 and the registration deadline for the women’s weekend is April 22. More information can be found online at www.worshipinpublic.com or by contacting Frances Marquez at (214) 921-6917 or marquisz@mountcarmelcenter.org.

VOCATION RETREAT
Women interested in knowing about religious life are invited to come “A Come and See” retreat at St. Peter’s Catholic Church, 4501 Bridge St. in East Fort Worth. The retreat will be held April 17 and 18. Contact Sister Mary Paul at (817) 642-5191 or (817) 262-5137 ext. 24.

ST. PATRICK CONCERT
St. Patrick Catholic Church will host a concert presented by the St. Patrick’s Adult Choir. The performance of Maurice Duruflé’s “Requiem” will begin at 6:30 p.m. The concert will be held Wednesday, March 31 in the cathedral sanctuary located at 1206 Throckmorton Ave. in downtown Fort Worth. For additional information, contact Father Kyle Wohreschild, director of music and worship, at (817) 560-3000 ext. 110 or kwohreschild@diedos.org.

GOOD FISH FRY
The Knights of St. Peter Claver Council #1111 will sponsor a Good Fish Fry Event at Our Lady of Mercy School, 107 E. Terrell Ave., Fort Worth, on Good Friday, April 2. Meals will be served between 5 and 7 p.m. at the school cafeteria. The cost of the dinner is $6.50 per person. To purchase a ticket for a dinner, contact a knight or Frank Nevarez at (253) 525-0866. Proceeds from the event will go to support the council’s annual charitable activities.

GOOD SHEPHERD GALLERY SALE
Good Shepherd Women’s Group will host a garage sale Saturday, April 18 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Community, 10155 Tinker Rd., Colleyville. “The Good Shepherd team has invested in ‘gently-used’ items ranging from furniture, appliances and other home products, to clothing, shoes, baby items, jewelry, gifts, and clothing to be sold for sale to benefit the Poor.” For more information, contact Teresa at www.gscn.net or call the parish office at (817) 421-1387.

ST. GEORGE SPRING EVENT
All are invited to support St. George Church in Fort Worth by attending its 3rd annual spring fundraising event, to be held April 16 from 6:30 to 11 p.m. The event will take place at the school, 1301 Paxton Ave. in the gym in Fort Worth. The entrance to the gym is located on Karnes Street. “Come enjoy an evening of fellowship with friends and family, games, dinner, dancing, and auction honoring the memory of our beloved and much missed priest, Father Woyd.” For more information call the school office at (817) 222-1221.

ICCS OPEN HOUSE
Immaculate Conception School, 2381 North Bonnie Brae St., Denton, will host a preschool and kindergarten open house from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. for the years 2010-2011. To register for part two, contact the school office at (214) 331-6224 ext. 314 or admin@mountcarmelcenter.org. Mount Carmel Center is located at 4600 West Davis St.

OMM GOLF TOURNEY
Golfers and event sponsors are invited to participate in the fifth annual Our Mother of Mercy School golf and community-networking event to be held Saturday, April 24 at the Glen Garden Golf Club located at 2916 Glen Garden Dr., Fort Worth. The format will be a four-person team Florida Scramble with a 1:00 shotgun start. Early registration before April 1 will receive a bag with a registration rate of $60 for ladies and college and high school golfer participants. The golf course includes a putting green, driving range, and an 18-hole golf course. For more information, call (940) 318-3402 or visit the Web site at www.tourneytime.com/omm10/. For more information, contact Howard Raitt, Jr. at (817) 365-8980 or hrraitt@gmail.com or the school principal, Dr. Carolyn Yusuf at (817) 923-0056.

OMM FISH FRY
The Knights of Columbus Council #8947 and Our Lady of Victory School will host a “Come and See” weekend for single Catholic women up to 50 years of age. This weekend is open to ages 17-50 and will be offered the weekend of April 10-11, 17-18 in Isaac Ward Convent in Victoria. For more information, call (361) 575-7111, or e-mail ivbsvoc@yahoo.com, or visit the Web site at www.isacoward.org.

SERVICES AVAILABLE
Construction work/repairs inside and outside of your home, window, door, floor and ceiling replacement, painted, plastered, insulated, and brick, stone, stucco, and other masonry repair work. Custom moving lots and acres. Call (817) 732-4083.
During 21 tireless years as director, Clem Constantine served immigrants, the elderly, and the homeless, all while helping make Catholic Charities into a growing and active advocate for those in need.

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

When Clem Constantine first became interested in social work as a University of Notre Dame student in the 1940s, caring for the hungry and homeless was considered women’s work.

“In those days, men weren’t too prominent in the field,” admits the former executive director of Catholic Charities who wrote an undergraduate thesis encouraging his peers to become more involved in social issues. “I guess you could call me a pioneer.”

While other members of his graduating class went on to pursue careers in business and medicine, Constantine earned a master’s degree in social work from Boston College and was hired by the non-profit United Way of America. After working for the agency in Ohio, Michigan, and New Hampshire, he arrived in Fort Worth in 1968 to administer a county-wide poverty program that became fraught with problems and controversy.

“It was one of those deals where you couldn’t do anything right,” remembers the Bangor, Maine native who was constantly hounded by investigative reporters and troubled by bickering community groups. “So I just got out of it.”

His escape became an opportunity to join Catholic Charities. Initially hired to lead the community action department, Constantine later was chosen by then-Fort Worth Bishop John Cassata to replace Monsignor Eugene Witkowski as executive director. From 1971 until his retirement in April 1992, the seasoned administrator saw the organization increase in size, service, and budget.

“When I arrived, we were a very small organization with five to 10 employees. Now we have over 150. And our budget was once less than $100,000. Now we’re spending six million. We’ve grown,” he reported in a March 1992 North Texas Catholic article announcing his retirement.

Several projects developed during his 21-year tenure still thrive today. Fort Worth CASA, Nuestro Hogar in Arlington, and CASA Brendan in Stephenville continue to provide affordable, safe housing for the elderly and disabled. Without these low-income apartments, many residents would face homelessness.

Too modest to call the housing program his proudest accomplishment, the former Catholic Charities executive director does concede that CASA — which stands for Catholic Association for Social Action — was one of his better ideas. But making the concept a reality wasn’t easy.

“We had a tough time getting Housing and Urban Development to do things with us Catholics,” explains Constantine who teamed up with the late Herbert Manning, a housing attorney, to get money from the federal government. “They weren’t too fond of us.”

Constantine remembers receiving a check for $500,000 during a meeting with HUD employees in Dallas.

“I had it in my pocket and they decided something about the paperwork wasn’t right and they wanted it back,” he says recalling his frustration.

“We called Jim Wright who was Speaker of the House at the time and he straightened them out.”

HUD returned the check, but, “it was a struggle to get the money we had coming to do the job we needed to do,” Constantine adds.

The community-designed CASA apartments evolved into a model HUD housing project and spawned two additional sites in Arlington and Stephenville. Today, disabled and elderly residents continue to enjoy the benefits of living in a safe, affordable neighborhood thanks to Catholic Charities.

The faith-based social service agency was able to expand rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s because the larger community recognized it as an entity that could get things done, Constantine said.

“People knew we were interested in helping everyone and not just other Catholics,” he continued. “Catholic Charities was accepted and, further down the road, received the support of other agencies like United Way.”

—Clem Constantine, Former executive director

Mailing label: Please enclose label with address change or inquiries concerning mail delivery of your paper. Thank you.

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Check out what a group of young men from Brooklyn discover about the meaning of life while filming The Human Experience, their documentary endorsed by the diocesan Catholics Respect Life Office. 5

At a “Celebration of Gratitude,” honoring the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, friends and supporters donate $210,000 to help the sisters with their retirement and medical needs. 6-7

In the Easter package, Jeff Hedglen, Fr. Stan Konieczny, Sr. Joan L. Roccaudo, and others invite us to rejoice in Christ’s victory over death through his resurrection. 12-14