Bishop Vann to lead Stations of the Cross in downtown Fort Worth

Bishop Kevin W. Vann will lead a liturgy on Good Friday along Fort Worth’s new downtown grand boulevard, Lancaster Ave., to commemorate the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Organized by the diocesan Office of Peace and Justice, Bishop Vann will be joined by a gathering of people on Lancaster between Houston and Jennings Streets, at 10 a.m. Friday, April 10, for the Stations of the Cross which recalls the final hours of Jesus’ life on Earth. The liturgy will use the Stations of the Cross written by Pope John Paul II.

The public proclamation of the Stations of the Cross is a reminder to Catholics and all Christians of Jesus’ example of the power of prayer, especially at times when there are crosses to bear, diocesan Peace and Justice Director Deacon Len Sanchez said. “In walking the Stations of the Cross we will join the faithful in praying a rosary, as thousands of people the world over do each year,” he said.

By María del Carmen Uceda and Jesús Gras

Correspondents

DALLAS — Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell and Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann received a special award March 28 for their leadership and support in protecting the sanctity of life.

With more than 2,200 people in attendance at the 16th annual Catholic Pro-Life Dinner, Bishops Farrell and Vann received the Bishop Grahmann Award for Exemplary Pro-Life Leadership from the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of North Texas.

In his remarks, Bishop Farrell spoke about Pope John Paul II’s “Gospel of Life.”

“He’s the reason we need to create a new culture of life and we do that by building on our youth. We need to transmit the value of life,” he said. “Our young people do not live in a world in which most of us lived where human life was sacred, and we need to transmit that culture.

“It is a time when we need to make a special effort to promote a culture of life from conception to natural death among our young people,” Bishop Farrell said. Bishop Vann, in an interview, said that teaching is important for shepherds.

“The mission of a shepherd is that of a teacher, and you do what you need to do ... you teach,” he said.

Like the bishops, the keynote speaker, Gianna Jessen, an abortion survivor who has cerebral palsy, talked to the youth about making faithful decisions. Jessen’s Left to Right: Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell and Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann pose with the plaques they were awarded, signifying their receipt of the Bishop Grahmann Award for Exemplary Pro-Life Leadership from the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of North Texas at their 16th annual banquet March 16. (TEXAS CATHOLIC PHOTO BY DAVID SEDEÑO)

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The Resurrection of the Lord

Dear Friends in the Risen Lord,

Once again, with great joy and Faith, our local Church is united with followers of Christ around the globe to celebrate the triumphant Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the central mystery and foundation of our Faith. As St. Paul says in another place:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes… (Romans 1:16)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes… (Romans 1:16)

God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power… (1 Corinthians 6:14)

Pope Benedict XVI in his Urbi et Orbi message in 2006 also emphasized this point of the power of life over death in the Risen Christ:

His resurrection becomes our resurrection, through Baptism which “incorporates” us into him. The prophet Ezekiel had foretold this: “Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel” (Ez 37:12). These prophetic words take on a singular value on Easter Day, because today the Creator’s promise is fulfilled; today, even in this modern age marked by anxiety and uncertainty, we relive the event of the Resurrection, which changed the face of our life and changed the history of humanity. From the risen Christ, all those who are still oppressed by chains of suffering and death look for hope, sometimes even without knowing it.

I think it is important to remember that this, the power of life, comes only from God and is solely in his hands. No one but God has this power of life, and any effort to take the power of life into our own hands results in “playing God” with the attendant evil consequences. To promote and defend life in its truest sense to promote the Easter message of respect for God’s sovereign power over all life.

Many times English does not have the exactness nor the preciseness of the biblical languages. This is certainly true for the use of the word “power.” For example, while St Paul uses various words to speak of us power of his favorite Greek terms are the two words dynamis and energias. It is from these Greek terms that we get words like dynamic and energy, words that convey a profound meaning especially when used to refer to the power of the cross and resurrection of Christ, which is shared with every member of the Body of Christ.

The Risen Christ also offers us a unique perspective regarding the true power of life. He shows us that this power of life is born out of weakness expressed by his humble death on the cross on Good Friday. Christ is an example to all of us of the connection between power and humility. He also shows us how power without humility does not promote life and many times can weaken and end it. This is not unlike some of the leaders in the Lord’s day and our day as well, as we strive to live a culture of life in the face of challenges in our own culture and our own household, at times.

Salvation is the power of life which we celebrate throughout Easter. Sin and death have been given a fatal blow and have been defeated for all time. We need to joyfully celebrate and sing our Alleluias with dynamis and energias! We need to give testimony by our lives that as people of the Resurrection, we live in hope and love.

I would like to bring my reflection to a close with the final words from Pope Benedict’s Urbi et Orbi Message from 2006:

May the Risen Lord grant that the strength of his life, peace and freedom be experienced everywhere. Today the words with which the Angel reassured the frightened hearts of the women on Easter morning are addressed to all: “Do not be afraid! … He is not here; he is risen” (Matthew 28:5-6). Jesus is risen, and he gives us peace; he himself is peace. For this reason the Church repeats insistently: “Christ is risen — Christós anésti.” Let the people of the third millennium not be afraid to open their hearts to him. His Gospel totally quenches the thirst for peace and happiness that is found in every human heart. Christ is now alive and he walks with us. What an immense mystery of love! Christus resurrexit, quia Deus caritatis est! Alleluia!

May we live the truth of the power and love of the Lord’s Resurrection in all of the Season of Easter. This “immeasurable mystery of love” should be reflected in all aspects of our lives: our relationships, our speech, and how we treat each other in the Body of Christ and to all who come our way.

The clearest witness to God’s love is, in that the power of the Risen Lord is evident in our lives and how we live. If Christ is not risen, then we are the most foolish of men” as St. Paul says in Romans 6:9. We know that Christ raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

Why does St Paul teach this in his letter to the Romans? Because Christ has the POWER OF LIFE! The Paschal candles of the Easter Vigil throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth are lights that proclaim to the world that our Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the world, is alive! He has the Power of Life and because of this the tomb is empty!

The meaning and true significance of power is often difficult to understand and live in today’s world. For example, many believe that money is power, whereas those in the political realm believe it comes from the number of their adherents or the exercise of authority over others.

While all these examples may be true in their limited scope, they must be seen in the light of the power of life manifested in our Risen Lord in his victory over sin and death itself. Jesus Christ truly is the resurrection and the life as he himself said.

Easter (or more properly the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord) is our celebration of Christ’s triumphant conquering of evil and eternal death. Easter is our proclamation of the infinite Power of Life clearly manifested through Christ’s resurrection from the dead. The Resurrection of Christ, which we celebrate during the 50 days of the Easter season, points every believer to salvation and eternal life.

All those who unite themselves to Jesus Christ, The Way, The Truth and The Life through the living waters of baptism, as done during the Easter Vigil, participate in the new and everlasting life of the Risen Christ. St Paul, whose year we are still celebrating, speaks of this power of God in the Risen Christ, by saying:

We know that Christ raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

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Catholics advocate life, family life issues at Texas Capitol

AUSTIN — Over 400 Catholics from around the state, including more than 50 from the Diocese of Fort Worth, gathered in Austin to participate in the Life and Family Life Advocacy Day at the state Capitol. The annual event promotes the Advocacy Day t-shirts that read “One Catholic Voice — Life, Charity, Justice,” volunteers from around the state made visits to legislative offices to address public policy priorities of the bishops of Texas.

“As a community of faith, we have a moral obligation to be involved in our political process,” said Andrew Rivas, executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference. “We are called to share our Catholic Teaching with our civic leaders so that they can make the best decisions on behalf of our overall community, especially for the most vulnerable in our society, which includes those who cannot represent themselves.”

The Advocacy Day began with prayer at Mass celebrated by Bishop Gregory Aymond of Austin and concelebrated by Bishop Armando Ochoa of El Paso, as well as other deergy from around the state.

“We come here to speak of the value of family life, the value of human life, and we do so respectfully, with perseverance, and determination, knowing that God is working in us,” Bishop Aymond said during his homily.

Aware of the rain clouds overhead, volunteers briskly walked the short few blocks from the cathedral to the state Capitol after Mass. Participants of the Advocacy Day were recognized in the House and Senate chambers, and Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio opened the Senate chamber with prayer.

“We are born into families. This was by your design, to reflect your marvelous wisdom, for you are a God of love, graciousness, and unity,” said Bishop Cantú. “Give us clarity to discern your wisdom, an unshakable resolve for justice, compassion for the weak, love for truth, and respect for every human person.”

After a quick lunch, volunteer groups began their Capitol visits. Over the course of the day, every single legislative office in the Capitol received a visitor from concerned Catholics who discussed the importance of funding abortion alternatives providers, programs that encourage healthy marriages and families, and tuition exemption, “Choose Life” license plates, and adult stem-cell research, while opposing the use of the death penalty as well as any funding for embryonic stem-cell research, cloning, or comprehensive sex education. Diocesan directors and representatives made visits to the speaker’s office and also visited with Governor Rick Perry.

Once the visits were complete, several volunteers were able to submit testimony on two house bills, HB 741 and HB 1567, which were being heard in committee that day. Both bills would reduce the focus on abortion services and education during education on human sexuality. Twice as many witnesses testified against these bills as for them, a committee clerk told the Texas Catholic Conference the following day.

At a debriefing at the conclusion of the event, several volunteers stated that they had positive visits and felt that their visits helped shed light on the issues for which they advocated. Many also mentioned their intent to continue to followup with their legislators back in their districts.

Diocesan staff and volunteers promoted the Advocacy Day as an opportunity to engage in public policy in the state and helped raise awareness for the Catholic Call to Faithful Citizenship. Several dioceses held advocacy day trainings to organize and prepare their volunteers for the day. In addition to advocacy days, the conference also sends out e-mail “Action Alerts” and e-newsletters to keep Texas Catholics informed legislatively.

For more information on the Texas Catholic Conference, visit www.TXcatholic.org.

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

We must proclaim with our words and actions, Jesus is Risen!

What do Christians believe about Jesus? Was Jesus simply a great teacher, a miracle worker, a prophet, or a servant? No, we believe him to be far more significant than any other human being. We believe that in his earthly life Jesus was fully human and fully divine. Jesus’ teachings, miracles, and service are all unmatched in human history.

All the more, out of love for humanity and obedience to God the Father, we believe that he emptied himself of his divinity and brought about the only true atonement of the sins of the world by humbly accepting a most torturous death: he was severely beaten and scourgéd by whips; he was crowned with thorns; he carried a heavy wooden cross, and then he was crucified as his hands and feet were nailed to a cross; and he hung to death. We believe that he is the first to rise from the dead. Death did not have power over him as he won the favor, through obedience of his heavenly Father and is thus forever exalted. We believe that he is the Son of God who chose to come into this world in human flesh to redeem all mankind from their sins. We also believe that he is the only way to heaven for all mankind as he opened the doors to eternal life, as he opened up his hands on the cross and died for us.

Alleluia! Jesus is risen! Yes, as Christians we proclaim loudly our belief in our Redeemer and our Savior. Now we all have a reason to live. As St. Paul writes, “… I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me … I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Thus, as Christians we have a specific purpose for our existence. We live not for ourselves but for Christ and for the building of the Kingdom of God here on Earth. With faith in Christ, or rather, in faithfulness to Christ, we believe that we shall inherit eternal life. I make this distinction because many Christians, if not most, in our nation and throughout the world say they believe in Christ, but their works reveal their true beliefs which prove them liars. This sounds harsh, right? It sounds like I am being judgmental, right? It is neither harsh nor judgmental, rather, it is the truth.

We, the Christian majority of our country have slowly let the Christian values and the Christian principles, which this nation was founded on, be eroded away. Why? I am not sure why, but mainly because our focus and our faith in Christ have eroded away. The teachings of Christ are no longer being lived by the overwhelming majority of people who consider themselves Christian. At the same time, the perversions of this age that are now acceptable as mainstream social norms are unbelievable. How can any form of pornography, abortion, or contraception be a protected as a right? These are all moral evils; they promote promiscuity and directly violate the teachings of Christ. They not only remove human dignity but create deep psychological scars that may never be healed.

Likewise, the easiest battle I would think our society could overcome is drugs. We all know the facts. Drugs are an assault on every aspect of the person: the mind, the body, and the soul. Even as they remain illegal, our society’s addiction is so strong it is now causing chaos in other countries. If we can’t eliminate drugs from our society, then I say as a society we couldn’t fight our way out of a wet paper bag. We need to turn to our Lord, and we need to turn to him now! Jesus is the only one who can save us; save us from our enemies and save us from ourselves. Jesus has Risen! The apostles and the early Christian community testify to this. They saw him in his resurrected body many times after he was crucified. Jesus is real and he is here for you and me. He gives his Spirit to all who are baptized in his name. He is the only One, the only Truth, and the only Life that brings us to heaven. Our lives certainly depend on him, so let us strengthen our faithfulness to him.

Can we not work together in our communities to build up the body of Christ? Are we not called, as was St. Paul, to glorify God in our body and to help build the Kingdom of God on earth? Can we not renew a Christian culture in which parents are honored and children are seen as a blessing from God rather than a curse? Sisters, brothers, and priests come from Christ-centered families and Christ-centered families are to be strengthened by sisters, brothers, and priests. Together we are called to build a culture and spirit of life in Christ. Let us live by faith in the Son of God who has loved us and given himself up for us. Alleluia!

Father Kyle Walterscheid is the director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail at kwalterscheid@dioceseoftx.org.
OMM prepares for first Spring Festival

Our Mother of Mercy Church in South Fort Worth will host its first annual Spring Festival Saturday, April 25 at 7 p.m. at its building at 1001 E. Terrell St.

“We are kicking off 2009 with one purpose in mind — to share God’s unconditional love and word with everyone; to express the true joy of the Lord in serving Him with fellowship, worship, praise, prayer, music, and dance,” says a flyer for the event.

Our Mother of Mercy will host multiple choirs and other groups from a variety of Christian denominations to join in its celebration coinciding with the parish’s 80th anniversary.

For more information, call Joi Bernard at (817) 565-6717.

People Events

Pax Christi Texas Annual Conference scheduled for April

Kathy Kelly, co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, a peace activist organization opposed to the war in Iraq, will speak at the 2009 Pax Christi Texas annual conference in Houston April 18. The theme of her presentation is “Courage and Hope in a Violent World.” Kelly has written a book titled Other Lands Have Dreams, which is available through www.courney.org.

Pax Christi Houston and the Dominican Sisters of Houston will host the conference, which will be held in the Dominican Sisters meeting room at 5011 Almeda Rd. in Houston. Registrations begins at 8 a.m.

For more information about registration or the conference, call Holly Godinez at (817) 685-0758 or e-mail fdeves@shcglnet.com.

Pax Christi strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring, articulating, teaching and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. Pax Christi rejects war, poverty, and all systems that cause hatred, division, and war, and every form of violence and domination. It advocates primary economic, social, and community justice, and respect for creation.

St. Rita includes Jamaica celebration with 100th anniversary festivities

As part of its 100th anniversary celebration, St. Rita Parish Church in Fort Worth will host the second annual Jamaica charity fair Saturday, April 4, led by Mary Escamilla, who was assisted by Lenas Hernandez, Marie Gonzalez, Jose Hernandez, and Gloria Mendez. Student helpers were Sonora Escamilla, Elda Hernandez, and Hilda Mendez. The candidates’ first holy Communion will be celebrated Sunday, April 26 at 9 a.m.

St. John invites potential students to kindergarten and preschool ‘Round Up’

St. John the Apostle Church, Tarrant County’s only 2008 nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School, will host a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten ‘Round Up’ on Saturday, May 2 from 9 to 11 a.m. This is open for all families who wish to learn more about the programs for the 2009-2010 school year.

Children who will be between ages 3 and 5 by Aug. 1 will be able to experience pre-kindergarten or kindergarten while parents focus on the curriculum and benefits of the program.

Siblings between the ages 1 and 3 are welcome to stay in the St. John Child Care at no cost. Reservations for childcare are required.

This free event will begin in the St. John School office located at 7412 Glenview Dr. in North Richland Hills. The office entrance is located on Glenview Street, off Glenview Drive.

For more information, call Linda Wren, preschool teacher, or Cindy Cummings, principal, at (817) 284-2228 or visit the Web site at www.stjohn.org. Childcare reservations for children ages 1 to 3 must be made by Friday, April 24, to assure availability.

YOUTH 2000 retreat at Nolan April 17-19

St. Paul the Apostle Church in the River Oaks area of Fort Worth, will host a parish mission April 26-28, with Passionist Father Cedric Pigosna, CP, giving talks at 7 p.m.

Father Tom Wigginton, pastor of St. Paul, says that Fr. Pigosna is an “excellent retreat master and in the previous retreats has received a great response from people of all ages. He includes much humor in his talks and is down to earth.”

Fr. Pigosna has been giving retreats for the last 10 years and will preach at all the Masses on the weekend of April 25-26.

The parish mission will start on Sunday night with the topic “Happiness,” Monday night, with the theme “Change is Possible;” Tuesday morning with the theme “The Holy Spirit and Passion;” and St. Paul the Apostle is located 5508 Black Oak Ln., in Fort Worth. The Mass schedule is Saturday at 5 p.m., Sunday at 8 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1:45 p.m. in Spanish. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 738-9925.

FertilityCare Center offers training for NFP teachers

The FertilityCare Center of North Texas will offer an informational luncheon May 30 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for individuals interested in teaching a natural family planning method to couples in a marital family planning method,” say event organizers.

Divorce and Beyond program to be held at St. Andrew Apr. 16

St. Andrew Church will host a “Divorce and Beyond” program Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. April 16 through June 1 in its pastoral center at 3717 Stadium Dr. in Fort Worth.

Divorce and Beyond is an eight-week parish-sponsored self-help program for people who are divorced or who have already filed for divorce, and is based on the premise that sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences with others in the same or similar situation is one of the most helpful ways to move beyond the pain of divorce to a lifetime of healing.


The cost for registration is $15, and includes the cost of book and supplies which will be available the first evening.

Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, call Alice Curran at (817) 972-6537 or Deephane Exman at (817) 292-1453.

St. Rita includes Jamaica celebration with 100th anniversary festivities

As part of its 100th anniversary celebration, St. Rita Parish Church in Fort Worth will host the second annual Jamaica charity fair Saturday, April 4, beginning with a “Jamaica Night” at 5 p.m. From 6 to 11 p.m., the celebration will include food, carnival rides, games, live music, including Gospel dance with a live band and DJ from 7:30 to 11 p.m. St. Rita is located at 5550 E. Lancaster Ave. in Fort Worth. For more information, call the church office at (817) 451-9383.

Silent retreat at Montserrat to be held May 14-17

Contemplative Outreach of Dallas’s annual Four-Day Silent retreat will be held May 14-17 at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House located at 600 N. Shady Shores in Lake Dallas.

The annual retreat is for anyone seeking interior peace in their spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude and community. Father Justin Langille, an experienced retreat director from San Diego, will again return as retreat leader. For more information, registration form and details are available at www.Cell01000.com or e-mail at dallas@Cel1000.com, or call, (972) 722-6029. Registration deadline is May 1.
These men are currently in formation for the priesthood to proclaim the Risen Christ to the people of the Diocese of Fort Worth...

Let us thank the Lord for suffering and dying on the cross to destroy our enslavement to sin and for rising to restore our life. Let us thank the Lord that so many men and women from our diocese are choosing to glorify God in their body by consecrating their lives to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the religious life: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24), as some “renounce marriage for the sake of the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:12). For this reason the Church in her wisdom, following the consecrated life of Christ himself, requires her sons as priests to “remain as they are,” celibate and chaste, as “an unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, but a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife…” (1 Corinthians 7:32-33).
Retired rail worker ordained to diaconate

Story and photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

For 30 years, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway carried a locomotive engineer, Ruben Aguirre, on trip after trip. But it was his last trip back home to the Metroplex that meant the most because it returned him to the Diocese of Fort Worth where he would begin his second career as a deacon.

Ordained to the diaconate March 29 at St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, Deacon Aguirre had taken his training for the diaconate in Longview, where he was transferred in 2000, he said, when his long-time job with the BNSF began to dwindle. His family lived in Hurst, where he and wife Carmen and their three children attended St. Michael Parish in Bedford, the new deacon said.

So, when Aguirre took the work transfer, Carmen remained in Hurst, with her husband working in Longview, making regular two-and-a-half hour trips back home.

Aguirre became active in his Longview parish, where he volunteered to work in the flowerbeds. As he became closer to the church, Aguirre spoke to the pastor, who suggested he might have a calling, “and he told me the diaconate program orientation was the following Saturday.”

“I attended the orientation,” Aguirre said, “and when they mentioned the length of time the program would take, I counted the years, and thought, ‘That’s when I retire.’”

So Ruben Aguirre began his deacon formation in Longview for the Diocese of Tyler in 2000, and in December 2007, he retired from the BNSF, and made plans to return to the Diocese of Fort Worth where he would begin a year’s internship at St. John’s.

“I used to tell the guys, ‘I’m closing one door working on the railroad, and with the other foot I’m working for the Lord.’”

Deacon Aguirre’s ordination took place in front of a crowded sanctuary at St. John the Apostle, where the new deacon said the people not only accepted him, but embraced him from the first day of his pastoral year. “It was a blessing to be there,” he said, “I learned so much and I was better formed because of it.”

His actual formation in Longview took seven years of twice-monthly all-day sessions, where the class received instruction from University of Dallas.

At his ordination, Bishop Kevin Vann spoke of the history that had returned the deacon to the diocese, noting the Gospel reading (John 12:20-33) where the people came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."

“Their words,” Bishop said, “reflect on all the events that brought you to St. John’s. Think of all the people that will come your way — it will be your job to help those people find the Lord.”

When I was lying on the floor,” Deacon Aguirre said of the ordination liturgy, “I felt like I was on air. I could not feel the concrete. It is like marble — hard! But I could not feel anything. ”

“All the people singing the litany sounded so angelic,” he remembered, “and later, when I lifted the chalice, I was teary-eyed. It was a big moment for me.”

Deacon Aguirre spoke of the actual moment of ordination, during the laying on of hands. “It was glorious. I thought I would feel a little shock or something, but it just felt like, ‘I’m there now… The Lord has accepted me as a deacon.’”

Your contributions to the Easter Sunday Collection
April 11-12, 2009
will support the education and training of seminarians and permanent deacons for service throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth.
Please remember them in your prayers and be as generous as possible in making your gift.

MY FATHER WILL HONOR THE ONE WHO SERVES ME.
—JOHN 12:26

Seminarians today.
With your prayers and support, priests tomorrow.

ALFREDO BARBA • JOHN BURTON • DENIS CURRAN
JUAN CARLOS DE JESUS • EDWIN FLORIANO • MIKE GALRAITH
DAVID KEITH GARVIN • MICHAEL GREGO • KEITH HATHAWAY
STEPHEN HAUCK • ANGEL HERRERA • DEREK HISTEN
TOM KELLEY • RICHARD KIRKHAM • Raul Martinez
RONALD MERCADO • DR. MICHAEL MOLONEY • KHIEM NGUYEN
NHIA NGUYEN • TOMMY NGUYEN • AMADO VALLEJO
JOHN PACHECO • PHILIP PETTA • KHOI TRAN
FERNANDO PRECIADO VILLEGAS • JAMES WILCOX
UTA Catholic Community to host diocese-wide art contest

The University Catholic Community at the University of Texas at Arlington is sponsoring a juried art contest entitled "Amor Vitae: Love of Life!" on Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26 at Artspace 111 in downtown Fort Worth.

The show is open to high school juniors and seniors and undergraduate college students throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth. Artists are asked to depict work that reflects Catholic Social Teaching to respect all forms of life including, but not limited to, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, human cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and contraception.

Entries should not exceed 24 inches by 36 inches in size and should be mounted with wire for hanging. A limit of three pieces per artist is allowed. Entries can be in all mediums and multi-dimensional. There is a $5 entry fee for each piece submitted. Artists will also be permitted to offer their work for sale with a 25 percent commission collected by the UCC to support pro-life initiatives in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

There will be one first-place winner with a cash prize of $100 and one second-place winner with a $50 cash prize in each of the following categories: 1) high school juniors and seniors; 2) university freshman and sophomores; 3) university juniors and seniors.

To receive an application, call the UCC at (817) 460-1155 or download it from the Web site at www.utacatholics.org.

Deadline to submit work will be Monday, April 20. Artwork, application forms and money can be dropped off Monday through Friday from 12 to 6 p.m. at the UCC, located at 1010 Benge Dr. in Arlington, or at the Catholic Campus Center for the University of North Texas, located at 1303 Eagle Dr. in Denton, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Lisa Campbell at the UCC at (817) 460-1155 or by e-mail at lcampbell@fwdioc.org.

Nolan Catholic freshmen honor Mary Mother of Nations in annual celebration

Nolan Catholic High School freshmen recently celebrated their class patroness, Mary Mother of Nations, with a special festival. In keeping with the school’s Marianist heritage, and since freshmen study world cultures in various areas of their curriculum, world cultures teacher Stephen K. Nemeth, along with other freshmen teachers, chose this title and designed a celebration in her honor, which they do annually.

“One year, this festival has taken various forms,” said Nemeth. “This year, we chose a special prayer service which included NCHS alumna and principal of St. Peter’s Elementary School, Erin Vader portraying Mary.” In her role as Mary, Vader, accompanied by a freshmen court of honor, led the service.

The celebration included various cultural presentations including a special dance by the Nolan Catholic Asian Club. Also performing in the celebration were the NCHS band and choir. “This is a special blessing for our freshman students,” said Nemeth. “It is a time to show class unity, to honor global cultures, and most important, to honor our beloved Mother.”
Mother Nadine Brown, founder of Intercessors of the Lamb invited to speak at Magnificat breakfast in Grapevine May 2

Mother Nadine Brown, founder of Intercessors of the Lamb, has been invited to speak at the Grapevine chapter of Magnificat’s breakfast for Catholic women in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The breakfast will be Saturday, May 2, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the DFW Hilton Lakes Executive Conference Center and Hotel at 1800 Hwy 26 East in Grapevine, followed by a prayer and confession service.

According to a flyer provided by Magnificat, Mother Nadine spent 16 years as a contemplative with the Sisters of the Cross and Rosemarians of the Pillar, before she discerned God was calling her out of the cloister.

“She was to bring the rich heritage of this contemplative spirituality and its intercessory fruits to the broader Church, offering to all Christians the means of achieving a relationship with God, which was formerly seen as only available to consecrated religious. She will lead us in meditative prayer at the conclusion of her testimony,” the flyer says.

The Intercessors of the Lamb were recognized as a Public Association of the Christian Faithful on May 27, 1998 and promotes contemplative spirituality by providing spiritual guidance in the development of individual relationships with God. Their primary ministry is contemplative communal intercession. More information about the Intercessors can be found at their Web site, www.bellwetheromaha.org.

Tickets are $18 and are available at various Catholic bookstores in the area, including: St. Anthony’s Bookstore located at 3121 McCart Ave. in Fort Worth and can be reached at (817) 924-7221; Little Angels Catholic Store, located at 600 E. Sandy Lake Rd., Ste. 108 in Coppell, which can be reached at (972) 304-5200; and Catholic Art & Gifts located at 2761 Valwood Pkwy. in Farmers Branch and can be reached at (972) 934-3553.

To obtain tickets or prepaid reserved tables by mail, send a self-addressed stamped return envelope to Nancy Ferri at 8921 Thornmeadow Ct., N. Richland Hills, TX 76180, (817) 498-7980, with a check made out to Magnificat-Grapevine Chapter.

Because the day is designed for women to be free of distraction, organizers request that children not attend. The cutoff date for tickets is Tuesday, April 28, and tickets will not be sold at the door.

Queen of Peace Center invites Mariology expert to speak in diocese

Monsignor Carl Morris from the Archdiocese of Saint Louis will give a talk entitled: “The Blessed Virgin Mary: Pillar of Faith and Model of Truth” at St. Patrick Cathedral located at 1206 Throckmorton St. in Fort Worth on Tuesday, April 28, beginning with Mass at 7 p.m.

He will also speak at St. Maria Goretti Church located at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington on Wednesday, April 29.

Monsignor Morris was born in 1965 and has been a priest in St. Louis since 1996. He served as a parish priest before eventually being assigned teaching positions first in a Catholic high school and then in the seminary. Currently, he is the director of the Office of Permanent Diaconate, the director of the Saint Maximilian Kolbe House of Discernment, an adjunct professor of sacramental theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, a lecturer for the Paul VI Catechetical Institute, and the spiritual advisor to the Marian Catechists in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

In addition to these responsibilities, Msgr. Morris hosts a weekly radio program on WRYT, Catholic radio in St. Louis, and is considered an expert on Mariology. He frequently gives retreats and days of recollections both in St. Louis and around the United States. He received the title monsignor in September of 2008.

For more information, contact the Queen of Peace Center at (817) 244-7733 or (817) 588-9805. For information about the presentation at St. Maria Goretti, contact Cindy Alford at (817) 274-0643 ext 223.
Holy Family School remembers Easter through class activities

Kimberly Pierce and her sixth grade class at Holy Family School in West Fort Worth prepare for a re-enactment of Jesus’ Last Supper, at which they celebrated the Jewish Seder meal of Passover.

Holy Family students also participated in an Easter food drive to assist the St. Vincent DePaul Society with Easter food baskets. Ellen Muffett’s third grade class was assigned to collect rice and set the standard for the other classes by collecting the most rice.

Divine Mercy celebrations planned throughout diocese

Churches throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 19, the week after Easter. The desire for this annual celebration was expressed by Jesus to St. Maria Faustina and found recorded in her diary. 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 include:

Our Lady of Mercy — Hillsboro
107 Crestridge Dr.
2:30 p.m.

Father Baby George will preside over a prayer service that will include the Divine Mercy Chaplet, conclude the novena, and end with Adoration. For information and directions call the church office at (254) 582-5640 or Linda Alesi-Miller in the evenings at (254) 694-6188.

Saint Maria Goretti — Arlington
1200 S. Davis Dr.
Divine Mercy Novena
A Divine Mercy Novena will begin on Good Friday, April 10, after the Stations of the Cross at 12 p.m. Prayers for the second day will be held at 8 a.m., and because of large crowds during Mass on Sundays, participants should pray the novena on their own for the third day, say organizers. From the fourth day, Monday, April 13 to the ninth day on Saturday, April 18, the novena prayers will begin following the regularly scheduled 8 a.m. Mass. On Divine Mercy Sunday the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after the 1 p.m. Mass until 3 p.m. and conclude with Divine Mercy prayers and Benediction. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 274-0643.

St. Mark — Denton
2800 Pennsylvania Ave.
1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The event will include a 45-minute video presentation, a eucharistic holy hour, and singing of the Divine Mercy Chaplet with Knights of Columbus from Assembly 2043 serving as an honor guard for the image of Divine Mercy.

St. John the Apostle — North Richland Hills
7341 Glenview Dr.
3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Pastoral music expert Joanne Werner to lead OCP reading session in Bedford May 2

Nationally-recognized Catholic music authority Joanne Werner will lead an Oregon Catholic Press reading session at St. Michael Church located at 3713 Harwood Rd. in Bedford. The two-hour workshop will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 2.

Werner currently serves as chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), after eight years on the NPM as director of the Music Ministries Board. She is a faculty member for NPM’s Cantor Express and has given workshops and presentations to cantors throughout the country.

“A reading session isn’t just about learning new music,” says Shannon McNerney, OCP’s Executive Manager of Events. “This is a master class for musicians. Our clinicians highlight the spiritual dimension of the music that participants will carry with them long after they leave.”

The $25 registration fee ($20 for members of the NPM) includes time with the presenter, 25 octavos, discounted merchandise, a question and answer period with the clinician and other benefits. Werner will teach 15 of the octavos in detail.

OCP, a not-for-profit publisher of liturgical music and worship resources based in Portland, Oregon, has been in operation for more than 80 years. Worship programs produced by OCP are used in two-thirds of Catholic churches in the United States and are distributed worldwide. For more information on OCP, visit OCP.org/about.

For more information on OCP reading sessions or to register for this reading session, e-mail events@ocp.org, or call 1 (800) 548-8749.

Catholic author to discuss proof of God May 16

World-renowned theologian Dr. Peter Kreeft will give two talks at St. Maria Goretti Church, located at 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday, May 16. The topics covered will include “A Refutation on Moral Relativism”, and “Proofs of God’s Existence.”

“Both of these powerful talks will give the philosophical and theological arguments on how to refute the modern errors of moral relativism and atheism and help you develop sound reasoning and logic on how we can know God’s existence with certainty, and also be certain about his moral truths,” say event organizers in a press release.

Kreeft is a professor of philosophy at Boston College and is considered one of the best Catholic philosophers currently residing in the United States. He is a regular contributor to several Christian publications, is in wide demand as a speaker at conferences, and is the author of over 45 books including Fundamentals of the Faith, Everything you Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven, and Back to Virtue. His ideas draw heavily from religious and philosophical tradition, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, Socrates, G. K. Chesterton, and C. S. Lewis.

The event is free, but donations will be accepted. For more information, contact Lucas Pollice, director of the Office of Adult Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 560-3300 ext. 260 or lpollice@fwdioc.org or John Cox at (817) 274-0643 ext. 226 or jcox@smgparish.org.
April marks Child Abuse Prevention Month
Catholic Charities offers abuse prevention resources through CARE

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

It was a sadly familiar story, the Catholic Charities social worker explained. “I went to meet this new client at her home,” she recalled.

“This tiny, emaciated woman met me at the door. She looked like she had been in a war. She was so traumatized, so fragile, and very fearful. We sat down together, and she just fell to pieces. She told me it was such a relief to talk with someone who would not judge her, who would help her to know how to offer a better life to her children.”

The caseworker’s new client was a longtime victim of domestic abuse, she explained. Fears for the safety of her two young children had finally compelled the woman to flee from her husband after years of enduring his violent, controlling behavior.

With the help of services provided through the Catholic Charities Community Approach to Resource Empowerment (CARE) child abuse prevention program, she and her children embarked on an intensive 90-day process. During that time, the family received individualized counseling, food, clothing, and the help of an attorney who assisted the young mother in obtaining a restraining order against her husband.

Through therapy, the woman came to believe she was no longer a victim, but a capable mother with the ability to effectively care for her family. “She, like so many victims of domestic violence, had felt powerless to leave the relationship, but ultimately she realized that she had to do so in order to protect her children,” said Ed Mahan, lead case manager for the CARE program. “One of the best things about the CARE program is its flexibility. Our staff members are able to design programs that help each family to meet their particular needs. In this situation, our social worker was able to give the client the tools she needed to strengthen her family and to be a successful parent. CARE is really about breaking the cycle of abuse, which is generational.”

Increasing public awareness of the need to ensure the safety and welfare of children led to the creation of the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month, held in April of 1983. Since then, child abuse and neglect awareness activities have been promoted across the country during the month of April each year, when current statistics on child abuse and neglect are released by the national Department of Health and Human Services.

“CARE does a great job of giving these families tools for parenting classes, assistance in dealing with the dynamics of abuse and neglect, help that they can get. I see the CARE program providing these families tools for self-sufficiency, to be successful when they transition out of our shelter. Children who are abused or neglected, these are the ones who end up in the prison system later on. This program stops the problems before they start.”

The client who fled her abusive husband recently sent a glowing letter of thanks to Catholic Charities. “CARE does a great job of teaching parenting skills and modeling alternatives in disciplining your children,” she wrote. “From the first day [the social worker] helped me and my girls to get us on our feet.... The main service that CARE has provided is the opportunity to see that I can make it and that I am a great mother.”

For every dollar raised in funds, volunteer hours, or in-kind donations, the state of Texas will provide three dollars to the CARE program. For more information on how to help prevent child abuse, contact Catholic Charities at (817) 413-5926 or at sdeleon@ccdefw.org.

Freshmen could attend St. Mary’s University tuition free

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — St. Mary’s University in San Antonio announced a new financial aid program called “Access St. Mary’s” to enable incoming freshmen who have excelled in high school and who have financial needs to get a tuition-free college education.

University officials said the program, announced Feb. 5, was created in response to the nation’s current economic climate that could make college tuition an extreme hardship or simply out of reach for many families.

It was approved by Charles Cotrell, president of the Marianist-run university, and the alumni association. The program is for members of the 2009-10 freshman class.

“There is the misconception that St. Mary’s as a private, liberal arts university is too expensive, when in fact we are very affordable,” said Cotrell in a statement.

“We don’t want to be off the table when students are considering their college options during these tough economic times,” he said. “When students choose St. Mary’s, they are getting a huge return on their investment because we have one of the highest graduation rates in Texas.”

Prospective full-time freshmen for fall 2009 can qualify for the tuition program if they are eligible for a federal Pell Grant and qualify for the St. Mary’s president’s or trustee’s academic scholarships. Students must plan to attend St. Mary’s full time and live in university housing.

The school’s annual tuition is approximately $21,000. “Access St. Mary’s” would be a four-year commitment for students who meet the requirements for renewing the aid. With the full price of tuition covered, students will be able to apply other aid for which they are eligible toward room, board and other fee charges.

Students must complete the school’s undergraduate admissions application, available online at www.stmarytx.edu/finaid, and the U.S. government’s free application for federal student aid, found online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
Pastoral theologian to speak on diocesan anniversary theme

The diocesan Office of Adult Catechesis has invited Douglas Bushman, STL, director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University, to speak on Wednesday, April 22 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church's parish hall located at 861 Wildwood Ln. in Grapevine. In the talk, titled “The Spirituality of Communion: God’s Gift to Our Task,” Bushman will speak to reflect on the topic of communion, the theme Bishop Vann has chosen for the diocese’s 40th Anniversary Celebration.

“This is a great opportunity to learn more about this theme and how we are called to live in communion as a local and universal Church,” say event organizers in a press release.

According to the release, the presentation will address how “communion is the inner mystery of God’s own life and how in Jesus Christ the very life of God becomes a gift so that we can be drawn into this life of communion. This communion is also the vital source of all mission and service in the Church.”

Bushman’s work in pastoral theology and the master’s program he directs are recognized nationwide as faithfully developing the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI. Besides numerous journal articles and magazine pieces, he is the author of In His Image: Program of Renewal through Education, (1990), introductions to a new publication of The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II (1999) and several articles in the forthcoming Catholic Encyclopedia of Apologetics and Evangelization. In addition, he also appears regularly on Catholic radio and television.

There is no cost to attend. For more information, contact Lucas Pollice, director of the diocese’s Office of Adult Catechesis at (817) 560-3300 ext. 260 or at lpollice@fwdiocese.org.

Rachel Ministries conference to offer training and tools to help people heal

“T he incredibly deep hurt they feel is matched only by how much they crave forgiveness. Coming in touch with what their pain is like makes it much easier to address their problems in a healthy way.” — Father Tom Kennedy

Rachel Ministries of North Texas retreat chaplain

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

A ccording to some researchers, women who terminate a pregnancy experience no negative emotional or mental effects after the procedure. They claim the term “post-abortion syndrome” is a myth fabricated by anti-abortion forces.

Don’t tell that to Lee, a middle-aged mother of six. The Abilene resident suffered bouts of depression and suicidal tendencies for years after her 1976 abortion.

“We were both divorced, not married and had other children. A pregnancy would have been difficult to explain,” Lee says citing the reason for the decision. “Things got worse right away. We separated but eventually married. Thirty-one years is a long time to carry shame and guilt.”

Offering hope and healing to women like Lee is the focus of Pregnancy Loss & Unresolved Grief — an abortion recovery conference set for Friday, May 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. Hosted by Rachel Ministries of North Texas, the program is designed to give therapists, clergy, counselors, and others involved in abortion recovery the tools needed to help people deal with grief and loss. Theresa Burke, a licensed professional counselor and founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministry, will conduct the workshop along with her husband, Kevin Burke. Both are published authors and internationally recognized experts in post-abortion trauma and healing.

Cost of the conference before April 17 is $65 and includes lunch. Late registration is $85. The continuing education workshop is worth 6.5 credits.

Organizers say therapists who attend the conference will gain insight into recognizing and treating the symptoms of post-abortion syndrome. Despite reports to the contrary, 80 percent of women who terminate a pregnancy develop emotional and psychological problems, says Steve Kopor, a licensed professional counselor who serves as the clinical director for Rachel Ministries.

“Of those, approximately 20 percent have symptoms serious enough to be classified as post-traumatic stress disorder,” he adds.

Problems can range from sleep disturbances and intrusive thoughts to eating disorders, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and marriage or family problems.

“Some women may avoid going places like parks for fear of seeing kids or babies,” the counselor says. And the psychological distress can manifest itself in physical symptoms, like sweating and a faster heartbeat.

While ignored by many mental health professionals, abortion-related issues are becoming more and more prevalent in patients seeking help.

“Our therapists in the Fort Worth Diocese have a clear concern for their clients, and this conference will prepare them with the knowledge and skills they need to diagnose and treat post-abortion trauma,” Kopor explains.

The conference will also explore issues relevant to the clergy’s role in post-abortion ministry and the importance of connecting the post-abortive person to a larger support system.

Father Tom Kennedy, who serves as the chaplain for Rachel’s Vineyard retreats in the diocese, didn’t fully understand the pain felt by people affected by abortion until he began actively working in the pro-life ministry.

“The incredibly deep hurt they feel is matched only by how much they crave forgiveness,” the priest, who offers spiritual direction and counseling to participants attending the abortion recovery weekends. “Coming in touch with what their pain is like makes it much easier to address their problems in a healthy way.”

The presence of clergy at the retreat serves as a conduit for individuals estranged from their faith. Women and men troubled by abortion trauma often feel unworthy and create a wedge between themselves and the Church.

“This is a way to connect people with God and show how much the Church loves and cares for them,” Fr. Kennedy says. “People receiving help with pregnancy loss and unresolved grief are freed from their guilt and often feel an intense spiritual connection to their child. That’s how Lee and her husband, Truett, felt at the end of a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat they attended in Fort Worth two years ago. During the weekend, the devout non-Catholic churchgoers spoke with a professional counselor, prayed with clergy, and attended worship services.

Today the couple not only feels forgiven, but healed. They call the baby they aborted, Matthew.

“We could never find peace because of the loss of Matthew,” Truett says. “It was that personal intimate experience with the living Christ that finally gave us a sense of resolution.”

To register for the conference, visit www.racheltx.org and follow the link to “2009 Conference” or call (817) 923-4757.

Nolan Catholic hosts middle school summer band camp

Middle School band members from across the Metroplex are invited to attend the Nolan Catholic High School’s ninth annual Middle School Summer Band Camp June 8-12 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Summer band camp provides opportunities to bring together young musicians from across the Metroplex and learn from some of the best music teachers in the area, according to a press release.

“Participants will be able to perform in both concert and jazz bands as well as attend master classes,” said Camp Director Chuck Compher. “Summer band camp is a great way to help motivate students to practice during the summer months.”

The camp is geared toward private and parochial school students who have completed at least one year of band and are entering the fifth grade through completing the eighth grade. Band members from public schools are welcome to attend.

Camp will be held in the Music Hall of the Multi-Purpose Activity Center at Nolan Catholic High School located at 4501 Bridge St. in East Fort Worth. An end-of-camp concert will be held on June 12 at 11 a.m.

Cost of the camp is $75 which includes five days of group, ensemble, and individual instrument instruction, and a concert experience. The cost is $65 for those who register and pay by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 22, and an additional $10 can be saved for each new student referred to this year’s camp.

For more information and to register, visit the “Band” page on the school’s Web site at www.nolancatholics.org or contact Melissa Korzekwa at mkorzekwa@nolancatholics.org, or at (817) 457-2920 ext. 1733.
Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives purpose to our faith

By Lucas Pollice

Thus, the Resurrection is at the very heart of the Christian faith. If Christ is not truly risen, then all is in vain. However, our hope as Christians lies precisely in that Christ is alive and is present and working in and through the Church. Our task is to live as if Christ is truly risen! Do we really believe that Christ is risen and has truly conquered sin and death? Do our lives truly reflect this? St. Paul challenges us to vibrantly live our lives alive in Christ:

For Paul, just as the disobedience of Adam brought death to all, the obedience of Christ through his death brings life to all in the Resurrection. In the same way that Original Sin affected all of humanity, the blessings of the Resurrection change and elevates the entire human family to a dignity beyond measure. Thus, Easter morning is truly the dawn of a new humanity, a new creation transformed and alive in Christ. What then, are the true consequences of the Resurrection of Christ? Paul concludes with this powerful passage:

But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If this life only has hope in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.

— 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Paul then teaches us the reality of the Resurrection: that Christ is truly alive and has destroyed sin and death forever and that the mystery of the Resurrection transforms us from being dead to sin to being alive in Christ and complete sharers in his victory over death:

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: “Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your sting? Where, O death, is your victory?” 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 Corinthians 15:51-57

Thus, the Resurrection is at the very heart of the Christian faith. If Christ is not truly risen, then all is in vain. However, our hope as Christians lies precisely in that Christ is alive and is present and working in and through the Church. Our task is to live as if Christ is truly risen! Do we really believe that Christ is risen and has truly conquered sin and death? Do our lives truly reflect this? St. Paul challenges us to vibrantly live our lives alive in Christ:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory. Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Put on, then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another, with all wisdom you teach and admonish the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom you teach and admonish. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom you teach and admonish.

— Colossians 3:1-12

May we, through the intercession of St. Paul, encounter anew the life and grace of the Risen Christ and become more effective witnesses of the truth of the Resurrection. It is only through the grace, power, and conviction of the Resurrection that we can be the instruments that transform our culture into a culture of life and civilization of love so that all may come to know fullness of life in Christ. Happy Easter!
**Stem Cell Decision**

a step toward darkness

*By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk*

The president is offering Americans the prospect of using the powers of science to oppress, or more accurately, to suppress the youngest members of the human family to serve the interests of older and more wealthy members.

...they feigned they couldn’t hear him and continued to swim out even further. Their dad got nervous, and began to walk out into the water, as it got deeper and deeper, and suddenly he moved into the drop-off section and began sinking.

From a distance, the boys spotted him flailing around in the water, gasping for breath, trying to keep his head above water, and slapping the water with his hands. They suddenly realized he was drowning, and swam toward him. As they got near him, he yelled at them not to come any closer. He cried out, “Get away! Don’t touch me!” In fear, they kept their distance until he stopped struggling in the water, and began to sink beneath the surface; with gurgling and bubbling.

As he slipped into unconsciousness, the boys approached him and grabbed him as best they could and dragged him back to shore, where he sputtered and revived and finally coughed out the water he had taken in. Later, the boys asked him why he shouted at them to stay away. He said he was afraid if he put his hand on them, he would drag them under the water with him. He knew that a desperate person would reach for almost anything nearby in order to save himself, maybe even his own children, and he didn’t want to do that.

We must be similarly concerned in our society when scientists and desperate patients are tempted to put their hand onto our embryonic children in a bid to alleviate suffering or even to save themselves. Sadly, the president’s stem-cell decision encourages this kind of unethical behavior by an emotional appeal to patient desperation.

The president’s ethical mistake is further compounded by the fact that remarkable and powerful scientific alternatives exist, such as cellular reprogramming on the one hand, or the use of adult or umbilical cord stem cells on the other, neither of which requires ever laying a hand on a human embryo.

His stem-cell decision also manifests a troubling shift toward a more widespread and systemic form of oppression within our society. The president is offering Americans the prospect of using the powers of science to oppress, or more accurately, to suppress the youngest members of the human family to serve the interests of older and more wealthy members.

He is offering Americans the prospect of reducing fellow human beings to cogs and commodities in the assembly line of the medical-industrial complex.

Many Americans, however, seem only vaguely aware of what has transpired in the president’s decision. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas once commented on the way that oppression can subtly arise in our midst: “As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there's a twilight where everything remains seemingly unchanged, and it is in such twilight that we must be aware of change in the air, however slight, lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.”

Some would suggest that perhaps the darkness is already upon us. But a few moments of twilight may still remain, in which Americans can turn back the moral darkness that threatens our society and our future.

**Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.**

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**Nattie’s note reminds us all:**

We can ask for help too

*Dear Jesus, please help me to run faster. Do you think you could do that?*

*By Kathy Cribari Hamer*

Like most five or six-year-old athletes, my granddaughter Natalie’s major athletic concern is soccer field flora.

In addition to noticing grass or weeds, however, Natalie is interested in looking pretty out there. That intuitive description comes from her paternal grandfather, a longtime award-winning coach and athletic director whose true ecstasy is watching his grandchildren’s childhood sports.

Natalie takes the field in pink uniform, pink cleats, French-braided hair with side-by-side pink hairbows and pink cheeks.

After the game, her grandfather, Papa, will give her his standard praise, the same words he says to each of his four grandchildren whose multiple events are our family’s Saturday fare.

“I love watching you play,” he will say, hug them, and beam.

Natalie, like her grandfather, glows happily at her games, which she plays with her aptly-named team, “Ticked Pink.” I laugh inside when they kick off because Nattie always glances at her family in attendance, flashing a smile. She proceeds with the quality I love most about her, the quality she has shown since babyhood: unbridled joy.

Playing the game, Natalie skips a little, sometimes combining skip steps with sideways running that reminds me of sewing machine stitches: right, together, right, together, leaving a long connected mark of new cleat-steps on the recently-mown field.

And, like the other children, Nattie is frequently interrupted by the sight of the grass itself, the clover or dandelions nearby — or the fluffy weeds billowing at a distance, outside the fence that separates soccer from...well, everything else God made.

Like a true kindergartner, Natalie’s attention is easily interrupted by the creations her Father in heaven placed there before he even placed her. So, she steals a glance, looking around at the sky, the flowers, his gifts of spring, his signs of life.

Sometimes Natalie’s consciousness is broken with words: “Run, Natalie!” So, like Forrest Gump, she runs!

One night in early Lent, Natalie wrote a letter to God. It was on the evening after a soccer game at which the coach (Nattie’s own dad) had encouraged her to hustle more — such a bore, such an interruption for a creative, fun-loving child — and he suggested, “practice your running.”

That message stuck with Nattie.

So she took 10 minutes before bedtime, carefully

*Six HAMER, p. 30*
Oils from Chrism Mass represent a symbol for priests of diocese to Recommit to ministry

When Bishop Kevin Vann processed into St. Patrick Cathedral for the celebration of the 2009 Chrism Mass, a young St. Mary of the Assumption parishioner unofficially greeted him, reaching into the aisle to clasp his hand.

The gesture of that handshake, between 12-year-old Brigid Condors and the bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth, seemed to personalize what Bishop Vann called the yearly liturgy: “The Body of Christ in sacred assembly.”

Brigid was one of the parish emissaries who presented holy oils and chrism during the offertory procession. St. Mary of the Assumption parishioners were bearers of the Oil of Catechumens, and representatives from Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth, and Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo, were bearers for the Oil of the Sick and the Sacred Chrism.

“It thrills Brigid to see the bishop,” Brigid’s mother, Pam McGeehe said, explaining the child calls him “ship Vann.”

“I do believe she is his greatest fan! She also loves Father David Bristow (the family’s priest at St. Mary of the Assumption) and ‘The Hope,’ which is her name for the Holy Father.”

In his homily, Bishop Vann said this year’s Chrism Mass brought together four important elements: the diocese’s approaching 40th anniversary celebration, the final months of the Year of St. Paul (June 2008-2009), the approaching Year of the Priesthood (June 2009-2010), and the ‘Assumption of the Virgin Mary for the Year of the Priesthood, 2008-2009), the approachable celebration and together with every Chrism Mass that has been celebrated for nearly 40 years in our diocesan family,” he said.

Looking back at the birth of the Church in North Texas, when French missionaries brought their faith to the area, the bishop said, “We are with all of them today, with the same Lord, to profess the same faith that they did. The blessing of these oils teaches how the Lord lives along with us still, and how he is still present in word and sacrament.

“All these events taken together pull us out of the present moment of our lives to some sense of the timeless and eternity in every eucharistic celebration, and together with every Chrism Mass that has been celebrated for nearly 40 years in our diocesan family,” he said.

This visible moment of solidarity and community stands as an eloquent, timelessness witness to this culture and time that not only is indifferent to God, but tries to push us apart from the reality of the risen Lord,” he said.

The annual Chrism Mass, historically celebrated on Holy Thursday morning, takes place in the Diocese of Fort Worth one week earlier, so that the holy oils may be distributed to every parish in time for the Easter vigil.

The solemn liturgy is the occasion not only for the blessing of the oils, but also for a public gathering of all diocesan priests to renew their commitment to the vows of ministry. The grand procession of clergy is a rare visual experience for the community, beginning with their line-up on a busy Fort Worth sidewalk, and culminating with their gathering around the cathedral altar to concelebrate with the bishop.

Bishop Vann spoke of the priesthood in his homily, quoting Extraordinary Lives, a book that likens the priesthood to the story of Zaccheus, a diminutive tax collector in the Gospel of Luke. Zaccheus climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus as he passed by, the book described, and added, “Every priest is a Zaccheus."

Bishop Vann went on to explain, “In their ministry of preaching and teaching and sanctifying, which the oils remind us of today, priests share their unimpeded view of the Lord that they have after ordination, with all who come their way, so that God may indeed be visible, and known with love, in good times and in bad, in joy and sorrow, in death and in life.”

The Chrism Mass was a broadly supported effort, with representatives from all parts of the diocese. St. Andrew Church’s Adult Choir, directed by Jerry Bierschenk, provided the music and fourth-degree Knights of Columbus from the General Worth Assembly provided an honor guard.

“As we pray these prayers of the Chrism Mass this day,” Bishop Vann concluded, “as we cast our eyes and turn toward Holy Week, may the Lord bless our priests and all gathered here this day. May he bless in fact all of us, in these most sacred days which lie just ahead of us, in which the Lord beckons us, to come, to be, and to walk with him.”

LEFT: Bishop Kevin Vann prays over the sacred oils at the Chrism Mass, assisted on the altar by seminarian Stephen Hauck, a third-year philosophy student at the University of Dallas.

BELOW: All priests of the diocese gathered with the bishop on the cathedral’s altar to renew their commitment to their vows of ministry.

ABOVE: Deacons Simon Tórrez (left) and Rubén Castañeda process from the cathedral with blessed holy oil from this year’s Chrism Mass.

Story and photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

Fred and Mary Lopez, parishioners at St. Patrick Cathedral, help to prepare the holy oils for distribution to parishes throughout the diocese.
Parish leaders attend Why Catholic? launching workshops

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

Evangelization Workshops in English

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The 12th annual celebration of Noche de Gracias, a “night of thanks” fundraising event benefiting Cassata High School in Fort Worth, will be held Tuesday, April 28 at Joe T. Garcia’s restaurant, located at 2201 N. Commerce St. in Fort Worth. A social hour will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner at 7:30 p.m. Joe T. Garcia’s owners, Jody and Lanny Lancarte, will host the event as longtime supporters of the high school.

Cassata High School, founded in 1975 with the name “Cassata Learning Center,” offers small class sizes, a self-paced curriculum, and personalized instruction designed to meet the needs of students seeking an alternative to a traditional high school. The school was named for Bishop John Cassata, the first bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

“This unique educational institution serves far beyond the Catholic community,” Cassata president Sal Espino, said, noting that the school welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds. “[We] have a track record of educating at-risk students,” said Espino, noting that more than 3,500 students have graduated from the school since 1975. “Last year 68 students graduated and are continuing their education at colleges, trade, or technical schools, are gainfully employed, or have enlisted in the military,” added Espino.

Espino described the fundraising event as “an evening of feasting, entertainment, and prize awards in recognition of [our] non-traditional high school, frequently referred to as the ‘high school of hope.’”

Prizes to be won during the evening will include luxury dinners, hotel accommodations, and tickets to an evening at Bass Hall in downtown Fort Worth.

Tables for 10 for corporations or private parties are available at prices ranging from $1,500 to $3,000. To reserve a table, purchase individual tickets, or for more information, call the school’s development office at (817) 926-1745 or e-mail to sflord@cassatahs.org.
Jesus’ Resurrection

shows us the fullness of New Life God has prepared for all who believe

“When the resurrected Jesus appears to the apostles, he imparts to them a profound experience of his glorified, bodily presence,” writes Benedictine Father Dale Launderville, a Scripture scholar. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

Food for Thought

The second reading for the Mass of Easter Day reminds us: “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:3-4).

What comforting words! The sin of Adam still renders all of mankind spiritually dead.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ... For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:4-5, 8).

Not only does God grant us salvation through Christ, he gives us the gift of faith to believe that Jesus is our Messiah!

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the lifeless man never could have responded had Jesus not also given him the power to obey.

So just as Jesus called Lazarus back from death, he likewise calls those who are his own — a gift from his Father before the foundation of time — giving us also the power to respond in faith. Hallelujah!

By Father Dale Launderville, OSB
Catholic News Service

When the resurrected Jesus appears to the apostles, he imparts to them a profound experience of his glorified, bodily presence. This encounter not only gives them courage but also moves them to reflect on who Jesus is.

During his earthly life, Jesus walked with the apostles and shared a wide range of experiences with them. These kinds of human interaction are the privileged places in which God quietly lets us humans know that he is with us.

The apostles were in the unique position of being able to make known the continuity between the earthly and the resurrected Jesus. They are the chosen ones who are to testify by their words and actions that Jesus is still present among them in the Spirit.

The resurrected Jesus’ body is transformed, but still bears the marks of his earthly identity and experience, for he eats and drinks with his apostles.

This reality of Jesus’ ongoing presence in the world is made known by the acts of faith, hope, and love of the apostles.

As Jesus’ resurrected body becomes incarnated in the community of believers, it becomes the primary place in which we acknowledge God’s desire to draw us into the sphere of divine love.

The apostles already saw Jesus’ miraculous healings and the powerful impact of his preaching. But more importantly, they heard his prophecy that he had to suffer, die, and rise from the dead, and now saw it fulfilled.

Their earlier expectation for a triumphant, earthly Messiah who would crush his opponents was transformed into an abiding hope that the resurrected Jesus conquered death and is imparting to them a love that is stronger than death.

This conviction that Jesus has opened a way through death to new life is strengthened by the apostles’ testifying to one another that this reality of the resurrected Jesus is a tangible reality and not simply a figment of their imaginations.

The resurrection of Jesus’ body not only gives hope of a life after death, it also raises the value that we ascribe to the human body.

This body is a privileged place in which we come to know God. God not only challenges us through physical trials but also communicates his love to us through our interactions with others and through our bodily perception of his divine presence.

With Jesus’ resurrection, we learn that our bodies will be raised in a transformed state and will come to deeper communion with God. We do not simply discard our bodies at death but continue to exist with Jesus in a physically transformed way.

Our experience of aging raises questions about who we are and what will become of our bodies. At times, Jesus’ dramatic triumph over death seems almost too good to be true. His resurrected reality seems to be a stumbling block along with his difficult message of loving one’s enemies and his claim that God’s kingdom is at hand and breaking into our lives even now.

The earthly and the resurrected Jesus is a paradoxical figure; he challenges the sufficiency of the judgments of our common sense. His submission to the forces of violence goes contrary to typical ways of human behavior, and so he becomes a stone rejected by those who would build up their lives only with materials they can control.

But the truth of Jesus’ paradoxical way of living is confirmed through his resurrection. The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner (Psalm 118:22).

We join in the apostles’ Easter proclamation by embracing this Jesus who longs to be present with us. The truth of this proclamation becomes more vivid and persuasive as our way of life manifests the presence of the Spirit of Jesus and his Father.

Benedictine Father Launderville is a Scripture scholar at St. John’s University, Collegeville, Minnesota.
Resurrection: Not to be confused with resuscitation

By David Gibson
Catholic News Service

A father told me his child died for a few moments after falling seriously ill and being rushed to the hospital where the child's vital signs were revived. After a recovery period, the child's life journey resumed.

Such accounts no longer are rare. Contemporary medicine sometimes restores life, sometimes extends it. Patients are enabled to continue the life they've known. Was Jesus' resurrection like that? Did life continue as before?

Not exactly.

The early Christians saw Easter as the day of new life. A new creation was born with Jesus' death — and resurrection! The new creation even gained a label: "the eighth day." If a seven-day week characterized our world's original creation, the eighth day signified that time itself now was transformed.

Passionist Father Donald Senior, in a 2008 speech, discussed bodily resurrection — including the resurrection of the dead that all Christians anticipate. The U.S. biblical scholar said St. Paul, addressing the Corinthians, made clear that bodily resurrection should not be "confused with resuscitation." Bodily resurrection "is not some kind of rescue from a near-death experience; it is not more of the same."

Christian faith affirms, Fr. Senior said, that "Jesus, who truly died, who lost his life, was transformed by the power of God and given renewed life, new corporeal, bodily life. "Yes, this still was Jesus, but his 'body-spirit is transformed and has new power.'"

No wonder the early Christians took the resurrection seriously!

Like Christians today, early Christians struggled with Easter's implications — what it meant for Jesus and them.

Easter also would become the premier time of year for baptisms, a development that makes complete sense," notes David Gibson. "Isn't baptism the sacrament of new life in Christ, who died and rose? (CNS photo/Bill Wittman)

Christian faith affirms, Fr. Senior said, that "Jesus, who truly died, who lost his life, was transformed by the power of God and given renewed life, new corporeal, bodily life. "Yes, this still was Jesus, but his 'body-spirit is transformed and has new power.'"

So Easter was to become an annual celebration not solely of what happened "to" Jesus long ago. Easter would celebrate his new life and how it transformed people and their world.

Easter also would become the premier time of year for baptisms, a development that makes complete sense. Isn't baptism the sacrament of new life in Christ, who died and rose?

St. Paul wrote that Christians were incorporated by baptism into Christ's body. Though members of the community differed in ethnicity or talents or wealth, each one was a valued, needed part of Christ's body.

That Christians are joined with Christ's body is a key all-statement to make Christ's life, this suggests, gives baptized Christians vitality.

My wife and I photographed the "old creation" — stunning mountain settings, glistening waterways — when we visited Alaska recently.

The new creation, however, is visible whenever God, neighbors, and enemies are loved. Christ's new life is glimpsed when people sacrifice, live simply, act selflessly, or serve as healing agents in troubled situations.

The new creation's horizons are wide. Participants in Christ's new life, his body's members, are impelled to serve life, transform it, and not give up on it, even in highly difficult circumstances. In the new creation, life often is restored, revitalized — but not just in order to continue as before.

David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years. When he retired as special projects editor at CNS, he was the editor of Origins and the columns and Faith Alive! packages.

Sometimes God sends us a messenger

By Jeff Hedglen
North Texas Catholic

R ecently, while on a retreat, I saw a short movie that begins in a flower shop. An older gentleman is looking at cards and puts them back if they are too expensive. He is looking for a plant too, but tends to look mostly at the small potted ones. He looks worn out and very sad.

I think, well the young man has it figured out. It is so clear that one man is bitter and the other is alive with hope.

Jesus long ago. Easter would celebrate his new life and how it transformed people and their world.

The young man purchases his gifts and tells us about believing in the resurrection?"

The question penetrates my heart and memories of long held belief come rushing back.

I imagine him returning to the cemetery standing at the grave of his dearly loved bride, arms filled with flowers and heart overflowing with hope and love reaching to the heavens.

Alleigha Alleluia!

Jeff Hedglen, is youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth and chief organizer of Camp Fort Worth. He and his wife Monica are active parishioners at St. Bartholomew's.
**Women: First witnesses of the resurrected Jesus**

**By Joseph F. Kelly**

**Catholic News Service**

The Gospel narratives of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead contain accounts of his appearances to several of his followers — those on the road to Emmaus, doubting Thomas. These stories are well-known.

Less well-known, however, is that all four Gospels recount that the initial witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection were all women.

This may surprise some people today, in the ancient world, it would have stunned everyone.

Women played a diminished role in ancient society. They were considered weaker and less intelligent than men. They could not hold public office, nor could they bear witness in court by themselves. Their testimony had validity only if validated by their husbands or other men.

Yet the Gospels affirm that women were the first witnesses to the resurrection.

This leads to two other points about women in the Gospels:

— First, the Gospels speak of the Twelve Apostles, but they also speak generally of “disciples” whose ranks included women. These women played a great role in supporting Jesus and the apostles.

The Gospel of Luke tells us, for example, that women “provided for them out of their own resources,” helped pay for the lodging and food that a group constantly on the move would need.

— The second and far more important point about women in the Gospels is that Jesus rose above the prejudices of his day, prejudices shared even by those closest to him. In his account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, the evangelist John tells us that the apostles “were amazed that he was talking with a woman!” But to Jesus, all people were equal.

Luke’s Gospel also emphasizes the role that Jesus’ mother Mary played in the economy of salvation when she accepts the angel’s announcement that she was to be the mother of the Lord. As such, a woman acted decisively when Jesus began his salvific mission to humanity, and the evangelists recount how several women acted decisively when Jesus completed his salvific mission, which he would soon turn over to his church.

The four Gospel accounts do not agree exactly on all the details, but the combined accounts are of pious Jewish women who want to anoint Jesus’ body, a ritual honoring the deceased. But instead of finding a closed tomb, they encounter an empty tomb and a heavenly being who informs them that Jesus has risen from the dead and that they should inform his other disciples.

Women were the first ones commissioned to accept and report the good news of Christ’s resurrection!

Consider Mary Magdalene in John’s Gospel. Mary encounters Jesus but does not recognize him; she thinks he is a gardener.

This follows a central theme of John’s Gospel: People like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, for example, do not initially understand Jesus, but in faith they come to know who he really is.

Thus Mary Magdalene represents all believers for whom accepting the risen Christ is a challenge. But God’s gift of faith enables us to embrace that challenge.

Joseph Kelly chairs the Department of Religious Studies at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

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**Easter’s call to those Easter Catholics**

**By Dan Morris**

**Catholic News Service**

The Catholic community has long been a bit conflicted about what they call Easter and Christmas Catholics. One school of thought seems to say, “Nice to see you, but where are you the rest of the year?”

Another school appears more hopeful and charitable: “Nice to see you at Easter Mass. We hope to see you again next week, and the week after that, and the week after that.”

Still, a soft condemnation or judgmental attitude colors the greeting. Unspoken is “You are less than we, if you don’t.”

A lot of us find ourselves in both schools, say many parish leaders, notably pastors and others who are frontline evangelizers. They tell stories of hurt, disenfranchised, or poorly catechized Catholics who have found their way back to full participation in the life of the church, for example, as the Easter liturgy’s light of love and hope illuminates their faith anew.

The keyholes to those moments are often associated with tangibles such as a homily, a children’s choir, a warm and sincere greeting, a caring remark. The conduits to grace are mysterious and myriad, say pastors, catechists, and others.

They consistently underscore that the potential impact of an Easter or Christmas homily cannot be overstated.

The keyholes to those moments are often associated with tangibles such as a homily, a children’s choir, a warm and sincere greeting, a caring remark. The conduits to grace are mysterious and myriad, say pastors, catechists, and others.

They consistently underscore that the potential impact of an Easter or Christmas homily cannot be overstated.

Now-retired Father Miles Riley of the San Francisco Archdiocese recalls vividly an Easter homily he delivered many years ago, before the advent of the cell phone.

“I was casting about for some modern symbol as a reminder of the risen Christ,” he said. “I came up with a telephone. A radio station engineer I know rigged the phone so that it would ring when I turned on a switch in the pulpit.”

“I set it up by asking: ‘Wouldn’t it be great if the risen Lord could actually contact us, talk to us, even call us on the phone?’”

Father Miles smiled. “And then the ‘God phone’ begins to ring, and I ask the congregation, ‘Should I answer it?’”

“And, of course, all the kids are cheering, ‘Answer the phone, answer the phone!’ And, eventually, I do.”

“And in the hushed silence,” the priest continued, “I say, ‘Hello, Jesus, I hope you’re not calling from Salt Lake City.’ And then Jesus and I proceed to have a great 10-minute conversation about everything from baseball to church-going.”

He shakes his head. “I’m not kidding, people remember that sermon now 30 to 40 years later, and tell me that the humor and hope they experienced then renewed their faith in the oh-so-human church Jesus established 2,000 years ago.”

When he recalls the impact of that homily, Fr. Riley said, he often leaves out a touching postscript. A little girl of 7 or 8 came up to him after that Easter liturgy and asked, “Father, what did Jesus sound like?”

“She caught me completely off guard,” he laughed. “I stammered and then replied, ‘Well, he sounded Jewish’ which completely befuddled the little child, but it was the only answer I could come up with!”

Dan Morris is a veteran Catholic journalist, whose last stint as a diocesan editor was with **CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO**, newspaper of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He has also had two long runs as a humor columnist for Catholic News Service, each column as a different persona. Morris currently resides from Anacortes, Washington.
The waiting and enduring cramped living gutted and refurbished into a newer momentary housing while their beloved home is wait. These hardy souls are living in temporary quarters, working in solidarity with the poor in Norfolk, Nebraska, are about to finish (8:6).

By Sheila E. McGinn
Catholic News Service

“Alleluia, Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia!”

This pausal acclamation of the ever-ancient, ever-new mystery of the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ derives from the earliest Easter proclamation. The heart of the Christian faith, this resurrection message forms the basis for the earliest and most fundamental of Christian creedal statements: “Jesus is Lord.”

Without the resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth would have been merely one more Jew killed by gentile rulers; Christianity would never have existed.

Christ’s resurrection changed everything.

Through the resurrection, God manifested to the entire world that Jesus is the Christ, the goal for which creation groans in labor and toward which the universe is being drawn enticingly, inelegantly, until it reaches its ultimate fulfillment in God.

Many of my students focus on Jesus’ death and more or less ignore the resurrection — his or ours. When reading the First Letter to the Corinthians, we often find that the Corinthians have redefined “resurrection” exactly as did that early church, spiritualizing a very “earthly” claim about the transformation of human life.

St. Paul corrects that view, emphasizing that Christ’s resurrection is a bodily event.

“Resurrection” does not mean afterlife as they were walking with the work crew and our Savior’s voice.

When we recall that, like Lazarus, we were dead spiritually, in need of God’s mercy when we were in the tomb. Excitement builds when the work crew is almost done, but the community learned to wear hard hats over veils when visiting the renovation site. I chuckled at this sight one day as they were walking with the work crew down dusty, gutted hallways, wires hanging everywhere.

One elderly sister smiled and said to me very softly, “It will be so wonderful, you know, to finally go home.”

I paused a moment to ponder what she meant. She betrayed longing — even a hint of desperation.

Another sister who was placed in a nursing home during the renovation greeted every visitor with, “Is it ready yet?”

I understood that the sisters’ time of freedom has come around Easter, when we recall that, like Lazarus, we were dead spiritually, in need of God’s mercy and our Savior’s voice. It is to jump from the (rather unusual) type of misunderstanding arises. How easy it is to jump from the (rather unusual) notion of a radically transformed human life to the (nearly ubiquitous) notion of an afterlife.

Many believe in the immortality of the soul for 400 years before Paul came to Corinth; the death of the body meant the escape of the soul to the spirit world, untainted by corporeal realities.

Belief in a disembodied, spiritual afterlife was the logical consequence of their profoundly negative view of the material world. Which, of course, is why the confutation of the resurrection proclamation with a disembodied afterlife of the soul is a profoundly anti-Christian move: “For 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).

Resurrection is the profound mystery of the perfection of all life — human life, yes, but as part of the entire cosmos.

The material world is God’s creation and is fundamentally good. Resurrection is not an escape from embodied life, but rather its ultimate affirmation. Resurrection is the reality of a truly human life, body and soul, transformed and restored to the fullness of the divine image in Christ.

Think about that the next time you are saying the creed.

Sheila McGinn is professor of biblical studies and early Christianity at John Carroll University in Cleveland.
North Texas Catholic to offer a look backwards in series celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Diocese

By Jeff Hensley

Remembering the past and anticipating the future are natural parts of any anniversary celebration, and the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the 28-county Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth will be no different.

In this issue of the North Texas Catholic, we will begin to look back on significant events and institutions and persons in the life of our diocese.

Bishop Kevin Vann, in announcing the commemoration said, “It is my hope that in our 40th year as a diocese, we can deepen our commitment to live more fully in spiritual union with our Savior and with one another, as our call to “communion” urges us.” (Commanio refers to what is the source, the means, and the goal of the Church’s life: The Trinitarian communion that graciously all drew into creation into its loving embrace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the Spirit keeps perennially present in the communion and its universal mission.

In that spirit, the bishop announced that the Why Catholic? program with its examination of our spiritual roots in the teachings of the Church and sacred Scripture, will serve as a cornerstone of the diocese’s 40th anniversary celebration. Part of remembering and growing in communion is gathering in small groups within our parishes and specifically bringing to mind what it is that makes us unique, makes us who we are, gives us our identity as Catholics, part of the Communion of Saints, the one, holy, and apostolic Catholic Church.

When the diocese was established, being separated from the former Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth in 1969, and Bishop John J. Cassata was announced as the first bishop of the new diocese, it brought to birth a local church that counted a population of only 67,000 Catholics, around 5 percent of the population of the area. Catholics were a distinct minority. And they came together around their new bishop, a parish priest for 35 years in Houston before he was named an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth by Pope Paul VI.

Joining him to serve the Catholics of this frontier diocese — which would, during its first decades, still receive grants in aid from the Catholic Extension Society, as an area with a low and underserved, Catholic population — were the priests already in place in the parishes of the 28 counties, but also many young priests and religious.

One of the recently promulgated church documents of the Second Vatican Council.

The diocese, as today, was a varied mix of rural, urban, and suburban parishes. Some, like St. Patrick Cathedral, and St. Mary’s in Gainesville, and Sacred Heart in Muenster had rich histories that stretched back well into the 19th century. St. Patrick was founded in 1876, St. Mary’s, in 1879, and Sacred Heart, in 1889.

Our Mother of Mercy was, as it still is, the only historically black Catholic Church, and if Mass was offered in Spanish, it was mostly likely in a parish that served only the Spanish-speaking.

St. Joseph Hospital was a thriving entity. Its emergency room, maternity and cardiac care, and the general quality of its care, were among the best in the city of Fort Worth. It was a flagship institution of the Catholics in the city.

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur had already contributed to the founding of the University of Dallas in Irving, of the Dallas Institute of Human Sciences, and the Diocese of Fort Worth, folding the college portion of the Our Lady of Victory Academy and College on Hemp- hill Street in Fort Worth into the new co-ed institution, which received the order in 1975.

Many things have changed since the founding of the diocese: Catholics were worshipping in English and Spanish in 1969, but seldom in the same churches. There were few Vietnamese in the area and no Vietnamese parishes. Now there are five Vietnamese churches in our diocese.

The mission of St. Joseph Hospital serving the least among us, those most neglected in the provision of medical care — is now carried forward by the St. Joseph Health Care Trust, which engages in preventive care and provision of medical services, funded largely by the endowment of the former St. Joseph Hospital.

But some things remain constant. Catholics still believe the Eucharist, as the Body of Christ, joins us all in a mystical union of all races, ages, ethnic groups, and incomes. Though the church has grown from 67,000 Catholics to near 550,000, and the diocesan staff has gone from Bishop Cassata and a secretary in the basement of the St. Patrick Cathedral rectory to a full diocesan staff in the Catholic Center, we still seek to know, love, and serve God, to show the face of Jesus to the world by our worship, our words, and our actions.

There are no strangers in the Church: All are called to belong to the Church; all are included in her, and all are welcome.

That doesn’t mean there is no friction, that there are no mistakes made, that we always get along. But that is the purpose of redemption, and growing in our sense of unity.

Learning to live with the differences among us, is the great purpose of growing in Communion.

FROM PAGE 1

cerebral palsy was caused by swelling saline solution when she was subjected to a saline injection abortion. She breathed in the salt water solution in the womb, depriving her brain of oxygen for 17 hours. Doctors believed she would never be able to raise herself to a seated position, much less walk. Progress was slow, but therapy and prayer brought her to be able to walk with braces at age 4. In April 2005 she completed her first marathon.

“To the young people I say... we live in a age where we are being taught that every decision we make is ours alone, and it does not affect others,” she said. “I hear the mark of someone else’s decision and gladly! Make great decisions because you are affecting everyone around you.”

Lisa Garcia, in a trembling voice, told the audience about her own sacrifice and the difficulty of putting her daughter, Gabriela Marisol, up for adoption.

She said she is happy and herself to have chosen adoption for Gabriele Marisol, up for adoption.

She said she is happy and herself to have chosen adoption for her baby,” Garcia said about “I did it for her. I feel proud of

’

Bishop Farrell, in an interview, reiterated that the young people were the most important guests at this dinner.

“They are our hope for the future. We need to prepare them. It is very important that they get involved,” he said. “We need to teach them that they have to be a part of what is going to define the future of our nation.”

Several other awards also were handed out during the evening. Proceeds from the dinner will benefit the Catholic Pro-Life Committee and its nine ministries.

Maria del Carmen Uceda and Jesus Gras are free-lance writers for Texas Catholic.

There are no strangers in the Church, there are no outsiders in the Church, all are included in her, and all are welcome.

A Snapshot of the Diocese

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth was established August 9, 1969, after being a part of the Diocese of Dallas for almost 80 years.

On October 21, 1969, Bishop John J. Cassata, a native of Galveston, was installed as the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. From 1969, when the Diocese of Fort Worth was established, to 1986 the Catholic population in the diocese increased from 67,000 to 120,000.

Bishop John Paul II named Joseph P. Delaney the second bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. He was installed on September 13, 1981. During his tenure, new Catholic elementary schools opened. Today, there are 18 Catholic elementary schools, and 4 Catholic high schools.

The diocese has 88 parishes throughout the 28-county region served by 97 priests.

Stations...

FROM PAGE 1

ask God to help us to remain faithful to a holy way of life and to guide us to the inheritance that he has promised,” Sanchez says. All are invited to join Bishop Vann in the procession, which recounts the torture and crucifixion of Jesus.

The liturgy will take place only a few blocks from St. Patrick Cathedral, and Bishop Vann will lead a Good Friday service. St. Patrick’s is located at 1206 Throckmorton St.

The Good Friday service, known as the “Veneration of the Cross” recalls the day that Christ suffered, was crucified, and died on the cross, an observance that dates to the early years of the Christian faith. No Mass is celebrated on Good Friday.

In the Seventh Century, the Church in Rome adopted the practice of Adoration of the Cross from the Church in Jerusalem where a fragment of wood believed to be the Lord’s cross had been venerated every year on Good Friday since the Fourth Century.

Adoration, or veneration of an image or representa- tion of Christ’s cross, does not mean that Catholics actu- ally adore the material image, but rather what it represents.

Bishop Vann will celebrate the risen Lord with an Easter Vigil Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral at 8:30 p.m., Saturday, April 11.
Reaction to Notre Dame’s choice of Obama for commencement continues

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Bishops from across the country continued to express their disapproval of the University of Notre Dame’s choice of President Barack Obama as the May 17 commencement speaker.

Their comments, in publicly released letters to Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the Indiana university, have used words such as “travesty,” “disappointment” and “scandal” that Obama would not only address graduates but would also be on campus for graduation in protest of Obama’s policies regarding life issues.

The Associated Press reported that less than a week after the university announced its commencement speaker Notre Dame’s student newspaper, the Observer, that “on-site demonstrations would be counterproductive” and urged those against Obama’s presence at the school to pray the Rosary in Campus Center during the commencement.

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

ROME — The head of the Holy Cross religious order that founded the University of Notre Dame has written to U.S. President Barack Obama and asked him to rethink his positions on abortion and other life issues.

U.S. Father Hugh W. Cleary, Holy Cross superior general in Rome, said that when Obama receives an honorary degree from the Indiana university and delivers the commencement address in May, he should take to heart the objections of Catholics who have been scandalized by the invitation.

Father Cleary asked the president to use the occasion “to give your conscience a fresh opportunity to be formed anew in a holy awe and reverence before human life in every form at every stage — from conception to natural death.”

The 13-page letter, dated March 22, was made available to Catholic News Service in Rome. Father Cleary also prepared an abridged version of the text as an “open letter” to the president, which was expected to be published on the Web site of America magazine.

Father Cleary’s letter began by congratulating Obama on being awarded an honorary doctorate from Notre Dame, and said the university was honored to have him deliver the commencement address.

The visit should be a “teachable moment” for all involved, Father Cleary said.

He asked the president to take advantage of the occasion to “rethink, through prayerful wrestling with your own conscience, your stated positions on the vital ‘life issues’ of our day, particularly in regard to abortion, embryonic forms of stem-cell research and your position on the Freedom of Choice Act.”

Father Cleary repeatedly quoted Obama’s words at the National Prayer Breakfast in February: “There is no God who condones taking the life of an innocent human being.”

One example was slavery, justified by denying that a black human being of African descent was fully human, he said.

Father Cleary noted that many U.S. Catholics today feel their beliefs are dismissed without the serious attention they deserve. Catholics recognize themselves in a pluralistic society, he said, but also believe they have something vital to say about life issues.

“We want to be taken seriously. We insist on taking ourselves seriously; that is why there has been so much protest and turmoil in regard to your presence at Notre Dame,” he wrote.

He suggested that at his Notre Dame appearance Obama speak about how Catholics “can be taken seriously for our faith convictions without being dismissed offhandedly and shunted; it is too offensive to be ignored, it is unacceptable.”

Father Cleary said in his letter that he had been deluged with angry e-mails regarding Notre Dame’s invitation to the president. He explained that he has no authority over the decision of the university, which is directed by a board of fellows and a board of trustees.

Priests and brothers of the Holy Cross order continue to serve at the university, and the university’s president — at present, Father John J. Jenkins — is always a Holy Cross priest.
By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON—Archbishop of Washington is following the lead of local prelates regarding the reception of Communion by Catholic elected officials who serve in Washington as representatives of other parts of the nation, this dialogue and any decisions would take place within their home diocese," he wrote.

In the EWTN interview, Archbishop Naumann said he felt it was best to "put the burden" on Sebelius not to present herself for Communion rather than for the protection of the conscience rights of health workers. (CNS photo/Christopher Neukenet, John Carroll Society)

In a luncheon talk following the March 22 Rose Mass in Bethesda, Maryland, Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl holds up a copy of a bill in Connecticut that would have taken financial control of parishes away from bishops and pastors. He said religious freedom is also at the heart of efforts to rescind protection of the conscience rights of health workers. (CNS photo/Christopher Neukenet, John Carroll Society)

North Dakota bishop praises schools, parishes for flood preparations
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Days before the predicted rise of North Dakota’s Red River, Bishop Samuel J. Aquila of Fargo said he was already impressed by how Catholics in the diocese were helping people prepare for expected flooding. When Fargo’s Veteran Affairs Medical Center evacuated March 24, the Cathedral of St. Mary of Fargo provided vans to take patients to their temporary quarters in St. Paul, Minnesota. Students from Fargo’s diocesan Catholic schools were among teams of volunteers who spent days sandbagging around the city to prevent flood damage, and Fargo’s Catholic Charities employees were preparing for potential food and shelter needs, the bishop told Catholic News Service in a March 26 phone interview. "There is a tremendous spirit among the people here," he said, adding that "people are watching out for one another" even while waiting to see how extensive the damage could be. "The unknown is always unsettling, but at the same time there is a very real preparedness among the people and the city has done a great job in reaching out to people," he said. The bishop noted that the "most important thing of course is prayers and asking for God’s protection at this time.

Bishop won’t attend pro-life banquet with GOP’s Steele as speaker
EVANSVILLE, Ind. (CNS) — Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger of Evansville said he will not attend an April right-to-life dinner where Michael Steele, chairman of the Republican National Committee, is scheduled to speak because he objects to comments the GOP leader made about abortion. The bishop’s decision followed a widely circulated March GO magazine interview in which Steele, a Catholic, was asked if he thinks women have the right to choose abortion. He answered, “Yeah. I mean, again, I think that’s an individual choice.” Following publication of the interview, Steele issued a statement, saying “I am pro-life, always have been, always will be.” He went on to say that “the Republican Party is and will continue to be the party of life.” He said he supports the Republican platform that calls for a Human Life Amendment. After speaking with Steele on the phone March 20, and after examining the statement issued by Steele after the GO interview, Bishop Gettelfinger wrote a letter to the head of the organization sponsoring the dinner that his "early decision not to attend still stands.” He said Steele’s answer seemed to emanate “from a political stance, not a principled one.”

Media effort draws 92,000 inactive Catholics back home to church
PHOENIX (CNS) — Maybe TV isn’t so bad after all. An estimated 92,000 inactive Catholics in the Phoenix Diocese have come back to the church in the last year thanks in large part to a groundbreaking television advertising campaign called Catholics Come Home. The promotional spots featured people and locations from around the Phoenix Diocese to promote the church during prime-time television. The cornerstone of the campaign, the Catholics Come Home Web site, addresses often misunderstood aspects of the faith. “For those who had fallen away from the practice of their faith, it let them know that we want them to come home,” Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted said. The commercials, which ran during Lent in 2008, detail the good works of the Catholic Church throughout history. They also offer real-life testimonials of local fallen-away Catholics explaining what turned them away and what drew them back.

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People pray near candles on the fourth anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II at the Vatican April 2. The candles form the initials of the late pontiff. (CNS photo/ Emanuela De Meo, Catholic Press Photo)

Torch of faith, hope was Pope John Paul’s legacy, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The legacy Pope John Paul II left to the church, and especially to its younger members, was a torch of faith and hope to lead them and the world through the darkness, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“Torch of faith and hope,” Pope Benedict called the pope who died April 2. During his homily, Pope Benedict stopped to pray in the grotto of St. Peter’s Basilica, where they all knelt and prayed at the tomb of Pope John Paul II.

During his homily, Pope Benedict said the torch of faith and hope was what Pope John Paul “left us as a heritage. He consigned it to me, as his successor, and this evening I pass it on once again to you, the successor, and this evening I pass it on once again to you, the young people of Rome, so that you would continue to be sentinels of the morning, vigilant and joyful.”

“Torch of faith, hope was Pope John Paul’s legacy, pope says

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Throughout his life Pope John Paul “did not hesitate using all his energy to spread the light (of Christ) everywhere,” the pope said. “He was not willing to compromise when it came to proclaiming and defending Christ’s truth. He never tired of spreading his love,” he said.

The truthfulness of Pope John Paul II

Paul’s life and ministry, he said, is seen in the faces of the young men and women who crowded into St. Peter’s Basilica for the anniversary Mass.

“How many vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, how many young families committed to living the Gospel ideal and aiming for holiness are tied to the witness and preaching of my venerated predecessor,” the pope said.

“How many young men and women converted or persevered in their Christian journey thanks to his prayers, his encouragement, his support, and his example,” Pope Benedict said.

“At the hour of his agony and death, this new generation wanted to show him they understood his teaching by gathering silently in prayer in St. Peter’s Square and many other places throughout the world,” the pope said.

While Pope Benedict did not make any mention of the process to beatify and canonize Pope John Paul II, the pope did end his homily by praying that the late pope “never ceases to accompany us and intercede for us from heaven.”

After praying in the grotto and before leaving St. Peter’s, Pope Benedict stopped to greet Angelo Gugel, Pope John Paul II’s Vatican valet, and the Handmaid of the Sacred Heart Sisters from Poland who ran the papal apartment and cared for Pope John Paul during his final illness.

The truthfulness of Pope John Paul II
By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY — Working in areas of conflict and misery, the church has an important duty to be an instrument of peace and reconciliation, Pope Benedict XVI said.

But countries also must recognize the right of their citizens to share in their nation’s wealth, if there is to be truly lasting peace, he added.

The pope used his April 1 general audience in St. Peter’s Square to review his March 17-23 visit to Cameroon and Angola.

Even though his first papal trip to the African continent was limited to two nations, the pope said he “ideally wanted to embrace all of the people of Africa and bless them in the name of the Lord.”

Today, the church is accompanying a new Africa, which is working “to strengthen its political independence and national identity in a globalized world,” he said.

“Being in the midst of numerous and dramatic conflicts that unfortunately still torment different regions of the continent, the church knows that it must be a sign and instrument of unity and reconciliation by putting into practice the teachings of the Gospel so that all of Africa may together build a future of justice, solidarity, and peace,” he said.

Angola is one country that has just emerged from a long civil war and is in the process of rebuilding and healing divisions, said the pope.

“But how can this reconciliation and reconstruction be made authentic, if they come at the expense of the poorest who have the same right all people do to share in the resources of their nation?” he asked.

For this reason his apostolic voyage to Africa was also meant to be a sign of encouragement for those promoting the common good in society, he said.

“All is lost with war; everything can be revived with peace. But tremendous moral stamina is needed to rebuild a nation and here, once again, the role of the church ends up being important as it is called to educate by working thoroughly in renewing and forming consciences,” he said.

Only Christ can truly transform people and society, Pope Benedict said; “therefore, returning to God, converting oneself to Christ means moving forward toward the fullness of life.”

At the end of his general audience talk, the pope met with two Italian nuns who had been held captive for more than 100 days in Kenya.

Sister Caterina Giraudo, 67, and Sister Maria Teresa Oliviero, 61, were seized by armed men Nov. 10 in northeastern Kenya near the border with Somalia and were freed unharmed Feb. 18.

Pope Benedict had appealed twice for their release.

Cardinal Severino Poletto of Turin, who accompanied the sisters when they greeted the pope, thanked the pope for his appeals.

The nuns are from Cuneo, near Turin, and are members of the Contemplative Missionary Movement of Father Charles de Foucauld. They have both served in Kenya since the early 1970s.
Like Simon we can help carry others’ crosses

By Jeff Hedglen

S


ing the unpleasant task. So he reached down and picked up the heavy, bloody cross and began to walk with Jesus to his destiny.

I have often wondered what was going on in Simon’s mind when he was pulled from the crowd. He was just trying to partake in the prescribed Passover celebration when all of a sudden he became a part of the sacrifice of a different Lamb.

It is no accident that the road tradition says Jesus walked on his journey to Golgotha is called the Via Dolorosa. The street name when translated means the “way of suffering.” It is almost impossible to imagine what it must have been like to walk next to the Lord while he suffered. Though it is very different, I suppose we all gain a bit of insight into this when we walk the way of suffering with our friends.

When we help friends carry the crosses in their lives, we in our own way play the part of Simon the Cyrenian. Usually we do little except walk beside them, listening and praying, sitting and talking. Sometimes it doesn’t feel like we are doing much. The times I have been allowed to share another’s suffering I am always struck by the privilege it is to be allowed into such an intimate and raw time in their life. As difficult as it was for Simon to walk the way of the cross with Jesus or for us to journey with a friend through their troubles, there is also, underlying the pain and suffering, a promise of hope.

We must remember, Jesus walked the way of suffering not the place of suffering. Suffering is not a stationary experience. It is not a place to put down roots and grow old in; it is an experience to journey through. The actual destination is hope and redemption.

When we walk the way of suffering with our friends and family, we enter into the Passion in a very real way. Thus it is important for us to remember and encourage the belief that, even when all that can be seen is the pain, the hurt, the confusion, the cross, beyond these things hope and redemption are waiting.

Easter is certainly a day to celebrate Jesus’ triumph over the grave, but it is also a day of significance for all who are going through a hard time in life. Jesus is not unaware of our trouble. In fact in John’s Gospel he says “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world” (John 16:33).

The hard part comes in realizing that for most of us we have to wait longer than from Friday to Sunday to experience our Easter. For this reason it is vital that we take our place alongside our friends and walk with them on their Via Dolorosa.

The continued onslaught of suffering can cause anyone to fall, just like Jesus under the weight of his cross. Alone we can only get up so many times, but with the help of friends, we can make it through the way of suffering all the way to Kingdom come.

Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal organizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at jeff@stbartsfw.org.
¡La Resurrección del Señor!

Estimados amigos en el Señor Resucitado,

D e nuevo, con gran alegría y fe, nuestra Iglesia local se une con los seguidores de Cristo alrededor del mundo para celebrar la triunfante Resurrección de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo, el misterio central y fundamental de nuestra fe. Como nos dice San Pablo en Romanos 6:9,

Sabemos que Cristo, después de resucitar, no muere más, porque la muerte ya no tiene poder sobre él.

¿Porqué es que San Pablo nos da esta enseñanza en su Carta a los Romanos? ¿Porqué Cristo tiene el PODER DE LA VIDA? ¡Los crios pasculares de cada vigilia pascual a través de la Diócesis de Fort Worth son luces que le proclaman al mundo que nuestro Señor Jesucristo, la luz del mundo, está vivo! Él tiene el poder de la vida y debido a esto, la tumba está vacía! El significado y el verdadero sentido de poder es a menudo difícil de entender y de vivir en el mundo de hoy. Por ejemplo, muchos creen que el dinero es poder, mientras que aquellos en el ambiente de la política creen que poder viene del número de sus adherentes o del ejercer autoridad sobre otros.

Mientras que todos estos ejemplos pueden ser verdad en manera limitada, deben ser considerados a la luz del poder de la vida manifestada en nuestro Señor Resucitado en su victoria sobre el pecado y la muerte misma. Jesucristo es en verdad la resurrección y la vida como Él dijo de sí mismo. Pascua (o más correctamente la Pascua) es nuestra celebración de la resurrección de Cristo, algo que se preanunció en el Antiguo Testamento, “...y el Señor resucitará a todos el mismo día, a los hombres de todas las razones atemorizados de las mujeres que el ángel confortó los corazones atemorizados de las mujeres en la mañana de Pascua, se dirigen a todos: «No tengáis miedo...No estás aquí. Ha resucitado» (Mt 28,5-6). Jesús ha resucitado y nos da la paz; Él mismo es la Paz. Por eso la Iglesia repite con firmeza: «Cristo ha resucitado – CRISTÓS ANESTI». Que la humanidad del tercer milenio no tenga miedo de abrirse el corazón. Su Evangelio sacrífiicamente el arnés de paz y de felicidad que habita en todo corazón humano. Cristo ahora está vivo y camino con nosotros.

Este “inmenso misterio de amor” debe ser reflejado en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas: nuestras relaciones, nuestro hablar, y la manera en cómo nos tratamos en el Cuerpo de Cristo y como tratamos a todos los que lleguen a nosotros. El testimonio del Señor Resucitado es evidente en nuestras vidas y por la manera en que vivimos. Si Cristo no ha resucitado, entonces “somos los más absurdos de hombres” nos dice San Pablo en otro lugar.

Gracias a todos en nuestra Diócesis y parroquias que han trabajado tan fuertes durante los días cuarensiales, el Triduo, la recepción de los sacramentos pascual, especialmente nuestros sacerdotes de parroquia, catequistas, profesores, y directores de RICA.

Un viaje seguro les deseo a todos que viajen durante esta época. ¡Pido sus oraciones y felicitaciones por mi buen amigo el Arzobispo Dolan, que será instalado como Arzobispo de Nueva York el 15 de abril y para mis padres que están celebrando su 59 aniversario de boda el 15 de abril de 2007. ¡Pido sus oraciones y felicitaciones para mí! Es de estos términos griegos que nos “incorpora” a Él, es nuestra resurrección. La vida que ha preservado el profeta Ezequiel: «Yo mismo abriré vuestros sepulcros, y os haré salir de vuestros sepulcros, pueblo mío, y os traeré a la tierra de Israel» (Ez 37,12).

Estas palabras proféticas adquieren un valor singular en el día de Pascua, porque hoy se cumple la promesa del Creador, hoy, también en esta época nuestra marcada por la iniquidad y la incertidumbre, revivimos el acontecimiento de la resurrección, que ha cambiado el rostro de nuestra vida, ha cambiado la historia de la humanidad. Cuentos permanecen todavía bajo las cadenas del sufrimiento y la muerte, aguardan, a veces de modo inconsciente, la esperanza de Cristo resucitado.

Hay que ser importante recordar que éste, poder de la vida, viene solamente de Dios y que está solamente en sus manos. Nadie más que Dios tiene este poder de la vida, y cualquiera esfuerzo de tomar el poder de la vida en nuestras propias manos da lugar a “jugar a Dios” con las malévolas consecuencias que lo acompaña. Promover y defender la vida es en su sentido más estricto el promover el mensaje de Pascua de respecto por la soberanía de Dios sobre toda la vida. Muchas veces nuestros idiomas no tienen la exactitud ni la precisión de los idiomas bíblicos. Esto es ciertamente verdad para el uso de la palabra “poder”. Por ejemplo, mientras que San Pablo utiliza varias palabras para hablarlos de poder, sus términos griegos preferidos son dos: dynamis y energéia. Es de estos términos griegos que conseguimos palabras como dinámico y energía, palabras que nos ofrecen un significado muy profundo, especialmente cuando son utilizadas para referirse al poder de la cruz y de la resurrección de Cristo, algo que se comparte con cada miembro del Cuerpo de Cristo.

Cristo Resucitado también nos ofrece una perspectiva única con respecto al verdadero poder de la vida. Él nos demuestra que este poder de la vida nace de la debilidad expresada por su humilde muerte en la cruz el Viernes Santo. Cristo es un ejemplo para todos nosotros de la conexión entre el poder y la humildad.

Monseñor Kevin W. Vann
Obispo de Fort Worth
**Líderes de parroquias asisten a talleres de ¿Por qué ser católico?**

Por Nicki Prevou
Asistente editorial

Amenazantes tormentas eléctricas y fuertes lluvias no lograron abatir el entusiasmo de los participantes de la reunión de miércoles, la noche del 11 de marzo, en la iglesia de Santa Andréa, al suroeste de Fort Worth. Más de 150 católicos se reunieron en equipos que representaban paí ses, personal, y líderes de voluntarios de todas las parroquias de la diócesis, para uno de seis “talleres de lanzamiento” en inglés, comenzando en marzo. Esto forma parte del proceso de “¿Por qué ser católico?: un viaje a través del catolicismo.”

RENEW International, una organización católica radicada en Newark, New Jersey, presenta el proceso de “¿Por qué ser católico”, ahora en planificación dentro de la diócesis de Fort Worth, como un proceso en el cual adultos explorarán la riqueza de su fe católica y la aplicarán a sus vidas diarias, como un amplio Catecismo de la iglesia católica, El catecismo católico para adultos de los Estados Unidos, y las escrituras sagradas, el Padre Carmen Mele, OP, coordinador diocesano del programa “¿Por qué ser católico?, lo describe como “un dinámico programa de formación de la fe para adultos, con énfasis en la renovación de la vida parroquial”.

Las hermanas Marie Cooper, SJC, y Patricia Thomas, OP, de RENEW International, cumplieron con su función de presentadoras en los talleres de lanzamiento de marzo. El propósito de estos talleres fue ayudar a los pastores de las parroquias a implementar el programa “¿Por qué ser católico?”, ofreciendo sugerencias prácticas para invitar una participación máxima en toda parroquia y compartir recursos efectivos sobre el liderazgo de sesiones.

Cuenta y ocho reuniones, propuestas durante un periodo de cuatro años, exploran los cuatro fundamentos del catecismo de la iglesia católica y profundizan la información, ofreciendo un conocimiento a fondo para llegar más cerca de las creencias, los sacramentos, la moralidad y la oración. Las sesiones serán ofrecidas tanto en español como en inglés en las parroquias a través de la diócesis.

“Se que aproximadamente hace [15] años, el programa de RENEW existía en esta diócesis”, comentó la hermana Thomas mientras daba la bienvenida a los participantes de los talleres el 11 de marzo. “A través de los años, RENEW ha cambiado un poco, pero con el mismo objetivo: educar al en el valor de las comunidades pequeñas, y en la participación de la fe dentro de estas comunidades, permanece. La pequeña comunidad cristiana”, añadió, “sigue siendo el cuerpo y alma de este proceso”.

Participantes de los talleres escucharon intensamente la información proporcionada en la primera parte de la noche. Luego, tuvieron oportunidad de decidir en sesiones de prácticas sobre el aprendizaje de la fe compartida. “Es verdaderamente emocionante estar aquí y tomar parte de este esfuerzo para revitalizar nuestra fe católica en el condado de Wise”, dijo Víctor González, un líder de equipo representando la Iglesia de San Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist). “St. John estuvo involucrado en RCIA por bastante tiempo y de veras disfruto de este ministerio, razón por la cual decidí participar ¿Por qué ser católico?”, comentó el padre Mele.

El padre Mele observó cómo el proceso de “¿Por qué ser católico?” es algo opuesto para todas las parroquias. “En 2005, 37 por ciento de católicos pensaba que se podría ser ‘buen católico’ sin creer en la presencia verdadera de Cristo en la Eucaristía y el 67 por ciento asumía que podría ser ‘buen católico’, aún cuando su matrimonio no estaba consagrado por la iglesia. Obviamente, hay tanto un compromiso retrasado como una confusión cada vez mayor dentro de todo católico en los Estados Unidos hoy en día”.

El aspecto más importante del proceso, sin embargo, es la oportunidad de “aumentar el espíritu de evangelización y dar a los feligreses una oportunidad de crecer con una formación sólida en la fe”, dijo el padre Mele.

Finalmente, añadió, ”Nuestra meta es el desarrollo de la vida espiritual de los feligreses, aumentando su comprensión de la fe y el catecismo de la iglesia católica”. Traducido por Ana M. Fores
En África el Papa dice que el Evangelio es la respuesta a problemas del continente

YAOUNDE, Camerún (CNS) — Llegando a África el Papa Benedicto XVI dijo que el mensaje de esperanza y reconciliación de la iglesia es dolorosamente necesario para un continente que sufre desproporcionalmente de pobreza, conflicto y enfermedad.

En una ceremonia de bienvenida el 17 de marzo en Yaounde, el Papa dijo que estaba haciendo su primera visita a África para responder a los muchos hombres y mujeres que “anhelan escuchar una palabra de esperanza y confort”.

En la lucha de los africanos contra la injusticia, dijo, la iglesia es su aliado natural. “Ante el sufrimiento o la violencia, la pobreza o el hambre, la corrupción o el abuso de poder, un cristiano nunca puede mantenerse silencioso”, dijo el Papa.

El pontífice de 81 años de edad estaba parado en una plataforma en el aeropuerto de Yaounde al lado del presidente camerunés Paul Biya, quien dio la bienvenida al Papa en una tarde caliente y húmeda. Grupos de niños escolares cantaban y vitoreaban, ondeando banderas de papel con los colores del Vaticano.

El Papa dijo que vino a África como pastor, no como político, a un continente donde el mensaje salvador del Evangelio necesita ser “proclamado alta y claramente”. El encuentro con el cristianismo, dijo, puede transformar situaciones de sufrimiento o injusticia.

Citió los conflictos regionales en África que han dejado miles de desamparados, destituidos y huérfanos, así como el contrabando humano que se ha convertido en una nueva forma de esclavitud, especialmente para mujeres y niños.

“En tiempos de crisis global por escasez de alimentos, tumulto financiero y patrones preocupantes de cambio climático, África sufre desproporcionalmente: más y más personas están cayendo en la pobreza, la desnutrición y mujeres que “anhelan escuchar una palabra de esperanza y confort”, dijo el Papa.

“En vez de amarga rivalidad étnica o interreligiosa, la iglesia ofrece la rectitud y la paz de la “civilización del amor”, dijo. El Papa describió Camerún como una “tierra de vida”, señalando que el país ha aceptado refugiados de países vecinos y ha intentado resolver disputas fronterizas con diplomacia paciente.”

Camerún es también una “tierra de vida, con un gobierno que habla abiertamente en defensa de los derechos de los que están por nacer”, el Papa dijo.
By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A pair of reports released in March lay out some of the data behind efforts seeking changes in immigration policies, long before Congress gets around to considering another comprehensive immigration bill.

Their timing comes as religious leaders and advocates for immigrants in Congress and elsewhere are lobbying the Obama administration to end workplace raids and make changes in policies for deciding who is locked up and who is allowed to wait at home while their immigration cases are adjudicated.

Almost a year ago, St. Bridget’s Catholic Church in Postville, Iowa, became a temporary home or at least a soup kitchen for hundreds of children, most of them U.S. citizens, whose parents had been arrested in an immigration raid at the town’s Agriprocessors meatpacking plant.

The alternative chosen by some was to keep the family together and bring spouses and children born and raised in the U.S. to live in Guatemala, Mexico, or El Salvador, where everything would be unfamiliar and life more difficult.

In one report on aspects of the country’s immigration muddle, the Urban Institute and a Minnesota-based law firm related dozens of stories of what are known as “mixed status” families, with one or more members subject to deportation, while others have legal residency or U.S. citizenship.

Severing a Lifeline: The Neglect of Children in America’s Immigration Enforcement described the chaos that some families encountered after a wage earner was arrested during large immigration raids in the last few years in Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Massachusetts.

It told of a second-grade student in Worthington, Minnesota, who returned from school to find his 2-year-old brother alone. The boys’ parents had been arrested in an immigration raid at a Swift & Co. plant and were unable to make provisions for someone to care for the children. The boy took care of his brother alone for a week until their grandmother was able to take over caring for the two children, both U.S. citizens.

The report said that when “Miguel” returned to school his teacher told investigators from the Dorsey & Whitney law firm, which represents many immigrants, that the previously happy child had become “absolutely catatonic.” His attendance became spotty at best. His grades plummeted. At the end of the school year Miguel was not able to advance to the third grade with the rest of his class.

The Pew Hispanic Center estimates the population of about 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. includes the parents of about 3.1 million U.S. citizen children. The Urban Institute estimates that for every two adults arrested for suspected immigration violations, one U.S.-born child is affected.

Severing a Lifeline also described home raids in Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, and New York where sometimes dozens of heavily armed immigration agents identified themselves as “police” and swooped into homes. In the typically early-morning incidents cited, officers questioned, handcuffed, and detained whoever happened to be in the home, including minors, even when the individual for whom they had a warrant was not present.

The report recommended immediate changes to policies such as the standards used to determine the best interests of citizen children with a parent facing deportation and how home raids are conducted when children are present.

Meanwhile, a report by Amnesty International USA, Jail Without Justice: Immigration Detention in the USA, looks at immigration detention practices. It notes that the number of immigrants in detention tripled from 10,000 in 1996 to more than 30,000 in 2008.

At a cost of about $95 per person per day, the majority are held in state and county jails operating under contract to the U.S. government. Their length of detention can range from a few days to years, and 84 percent of immigration detainees are unable to arrange for an attorney to represent them, noted the report.

Because immigration law violations are civil offenses, people facing immigration charges are not entitled to legal representation regardless of ability to pay, as they would be in criminal courts.

Amnesty’s recommendations included legislative remedies as well as policy changes, such as ensuring that affordable alternatives to detention are always considered, particularly for families with children.

Amnesty also urged the U.S. government to adopt human rights standards for all jails and detention centers being used for immigration detainees.

Family situations like those detailed in the reports are the focus of a series of interfaith prayer services being held around the country this spring, co-sponsored by local religious leaders and promoted by Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-III.

At such a service March 21, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George called on President Barack Obama to stop raids and deportations that break up families.

A comprehensive legislative approach to immigration problems could come up in Congress later this year. Advocates for comprehensive reform have been working with congressional staff to draft legislation that could be introduced as soon as late summer.

Obama told the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and an audience in California in March that he would support a comprehensive reform bill. He told the caucus he would host a White House summit on immigration this spring.

On March 24 Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced a sweeping approach to cracking down on increasingly violent international drug trafficking, which has begun to move north across the Mexican border area.

The plan involves various enforcement agencies, many of which currently focus at least in part on illegal immigration. Specifics, such as whether the focus on drugs would mean fewer resources devoted to immigration violations, have not been announced.
Pope challenges Africans to examine lives in light of the Gospel

FROM PAGE 32

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 13

composing a note. “Dear God, please help me to run faster. Do you think you could do that?”

Natalie left the note on her bedside table, an accidental gift to all her family. I think, because it spoke, not of soccer, but of faith.

Later, we laughed together at the innocence, the ability to let go to her heavenly Father, who, yes, assuredly can intervene to improve running skills.

Then, quietly, individually, each of us remembered, “He can help us too.” We smiled with reinforced childhood wisdom.

Watching our parish’s Passion Play this year, Natalie and Sam both cried. Their tears were not complaining tears of fatigue or hunger, as astute parents recognize. They were tears of pure grief, quite the opposite of the happiness they both display at Saturday morning soccer.

“They cried as Jesus carried his cross,” their mother Meredith told me, “because they understood what it was about.”

The play, whose cast is eighth graders, is a somber and tender reenactment, with dramatic vocal accompaniment from the parish’s adult choir. Yearly the church echoes with the parish’s adult choir.

Yearly the church echoes with the parish’s adult choir. In effect, he presented the church as the only institution capable of bringing Africans together in a way that goes beyond political or economic expediency. Indeed, he called Cameroon a “land of hope” for Africa.

The reason is that he knows local African church leaders are already at the top of the corruption charts of human rights organizations.

In Cameroon, for example, a year ago Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi of Douala took the unprecedented step of publicly opposing President Paul Biya’s constitutional meddling that allowed the president to serve yet another seven-year term — a position the cardinal reiterated during the pope’s visit.

Significantly, the pope treated corruption not as a problem to be eliminated in return for foreign aid, but as a practice incompatible with the demands of the Gospel. He added, however, that Africa deserves a similar change in attitude from the developed world — not “more programs and protocols” but “conversion of hearts to sincere solidarity.”

His visit to the sick in Camero more than comes from early spring allergies! His visit to the sick in Cameroon illustrated that the church must invest its resources in love and care for the needy, but with a special focus: Human suffering can only make sense in light of Christ’s crucifixion and his “final victory” over death, he said.

Even the pope’s defense of women’s rights in Africa was very much a “Benedict” approach, based not on human rights declarations but on the biblical account of creation.

Here, too, his point that men and women have “complementary” roles will no doubt find critics.

The pope’s method in Africa was not to lay down the law but to lay down a challenge, asking people to examine their own lives and their relationships in the light of the Gospel. He believes that Christianity is a perfect fit for Africa but that, in view of cultural trends, it won’t necessarily be an easy fit.

Turtle given by Pygmies to pope will stay in Africa

LUANDA, Angola (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI and Vatican aides decided that the live turtle given to the pope by a group of Pygmies from Cameroon should stay in Africa. Although Vatican officials initially spoke about finding a home for the turtle in the Vatican Gardens, in the end they asked staff members of the Vatican Embassy in Luanda to find it a proper home, said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman.

A group of 15 Pygmies from the Baka ethnic group came to the pope’s residence at the apostolic nunciature in Yaounde, Cameroon, March 20 as the pontiff was preparing to leave for Angola. They built a ceremonial hut out of leaves in the garden of the residence, and the pope came out to greet them. The Pygmies, including grandparents, parents and children, sang songs and danced to the beat of drums, then gave the pope three gifts: a basket, a cloth mat and the turtle, which is a symbol of wisdom in Cameroon. The Baka Pygmies inhabit rain forests in southern Cameroon. A hunting and gathering people, they number fewer than 30,000.

Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. Last May, her column received the second place award for best family life columns by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto. In 2005, Kathy’s column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.
DIVORCE AND BEYOND
St. Andrew Church will host a “Divorce and Beyond” program Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. April 16 through June 4 at its parish center, 4100 White Rd., Fort Worth. The cost for registration is $15, and includes the cost of books and supplies which will be available at the first session. For more information or to register, call Alice Curran at (817) 827-5383 or Delphine Exman at (817) 292-1453.

GWBS DISEMNEMENT WEEKEND
The Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Retreat Centers in Austin, Texas, are offering an eight-day retreat for single Catholic women from high school seniors through women age 50 who are able to commit to spending the entire weekend at the retreat. The retreat includes lodging, meals, & spiritual direction. For information, please visit the Web site at www.gwbs.org, or contact Ruth Koster at (512) 751-7711 or e-mail labovski@yahoo.com.

OLG TEACHERS
Our Lady of Grace Catholic High School in Roanoke, TX is seeking the following positions: Math, Science, Theater, and Speech. Please e-mail olgghs0808@gmail.com or call (817) 833-6516.

ASST DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
The Diocese of Fort Worth seeks a full-time Assistant Director of Finance & Administrative Services at the Diocesan Center. Principal duties will include managing the day-to-day relationship between the Diocese and other diocesan entities and the finance/accounting function of the Central Office and Diocesan Office. Preferred candidates will have a Bachelor’s degree or higher in Accounting, and a minimum of 5 years experience in Finance or Administration. Competitive salary commensurate with skills and experience. Please visit www.fwdioc.org to apply. Contact: (817) 560-2452extension 102 or e-mail at assistantdirector@fwdioc.org.

GOLF TOURNAMENT
Our Mother of Mercy School’s fourth annual “Golf Networking Event” will be held at Squeak Creek Golf Course April 18 at 1000 Ranch House Rd. in Willow Park. All are invited to participate as players or sponsors. For more information, contact tournament co- chairs Howard Rattliff at rathliff@byahoo.com, or Kim McFarland at kmcfarland@byahoo.com, or go to the Web site www.tournweb.com. omm@2009 to register.

GOLF TOURNAMENT
Divine Mercy Sunday celebrations will be held April 19 at various parishes in the diocese, including Our Lady of Mercy Church at 107 Crestedge Dr. in Hillsboro, St. Ambrose Church in Arlington, St. John the Apostle Church at 7314 Greenville Dr. in North Richland Hills, and Our Lady of Mercy Church at 2800 Pennsylvania Ave. in Denton.

THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE
St. Vincent de Paul Church will host a free pre-screening of “The Human Experience,” documentary about two brothers who travel the world to find out what it means to be human, at 7:30 p.m. Friday April 24, and Saturday, April 25 at 5181 Pleasant View Court, Fort Worth. Doors will open at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Chasence Ruth-Kilgore, director of Family Ministry at cruth-kilgore@fwdioc.org.

ST. PAUL MISSION
St. Paul the Apostle Church in the River Oaks area of Fort Worth, will host a parish mission April 24-28, with Passionist Father Cedric Pigeon, CP, giving talks at 7 p.m., with the topics “Happiness on Sunday,” “Change is Possible” on Monday; “The Holy Spirit and Passion” on Tuesday. St. Paul is located at River Oaks, 5550 Black Oak Ln., in Fort Worth. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 738-9925.

YOUTH MISSION 2009-2010 Retreat, led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal of the Boy Scouts of America Fifth District at Naquin Catholic High School at 4501 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. This retreat is for youth and young adults between the ages of 13 and 30. Housing will not be provided. Registration is $50. For more information, call (817) 560-2452ext. 102 or e-mail at youthmission@fwdioc.org.

DEAF MINISTRY
The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a court reporter to help with CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation) services. The purpose of the Deaf Ministry is to promote respect for all forms of life. To receive an application, call the attention of Mark Simeroth, Director of Human Resources: Application due date is May 1, 2009. Qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview.

DEADLINE
The Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas seeks a full-time football coach (stipend only position). Requires close collaboration with staff and parents to administer a successful football program and a strong project management skills; excellence in crisis management; and a background in college recruiting. Applicant must have a Bachelor’s degree or higher in Education or related field, 2-5 years experience coordinating and assisting in the preparation of a high school football program, and evidence of success with student recruitment and development. For a full job description and application, visit www.fwdioc.org or fax to 817-244-8839, to the attention of Mark Simeroth, Director of Human Resources. Application due date is May 1, 2009. Qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview.

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ADVERTISE IN THE NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC
(817) 560-3300

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP
The St. Augustine Men’s Purify Group, a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment that meets the first Wednesday of every month. After Mass, the group will enjoy lunch and spend time in prayer. For more information, call Martin Scott at 817-528-0415.

FINANCIAL COACHES
Looking for 20 finance coaches for revolutionary new home business. For info call 817-244-6737.

RACHEL MINISTRIES
Rachel Ministries, a program that offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment for women that are trying to break free from past, present, and future addictions, is expanding its outreach to the women that are trying to break free from past, present, and future addictions. Activities will include three-legged races, kickball, a live DJ, bingo, dominos, a Wii tournament, card games, and other activities. Prizes will be awarded to the OMW School class with the most classmates in attendance. The event will be a carnival, with a 1:45 p.m. neon party. The cost of this event is $5 for adults, $2 for children. For more information, contact Tara Hanks at (817) 568-9640 or call the rectory at (817) 335-1695.

FITNESS COACHES
Are you a professional Catholic, male who has been laid off or is looking for a new career opportunity? The Knights of Columbus, Fr. Bill Reichek Council #14172, is seeking a fitness coach for a part-time position. The position involves working one evening per week at Holy Family Church. The candidate must have a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree or equivalent sales/business experience; however, all Catholics eligible for membership in the KofC are encouraged to apply. It is not necessary to already have membership with the KofC. Initial candidates will be contacted for an interview. To obtain Knights of Columbus membership requirements, please visit www.kofc.org. The position provides the following benefits: Unlimited earning potential; health, dental, and vision insurance; Quality Life Production Commission, 100% Paid Pension, 401K, Aetna FPO/MMO, Health Advantage Dental Benefits, Disability, Life Insurance, and Paid Continuing Education. For consideration, please forward résumé, along with pay requirements and/or salary expectations to: R. Reichek, 3519 N. Collins, Dallas, TX 75219. Interviews will be conducted as soon as possible. Questions or for more information, please call Martin Scott at 817-528-0415 or may you fax it 804–377–9117 or mail to Knights of Columbus, Regan Ave. Room 213, Dallas, TX 75219. Interviews for qualified candidates will be held soon. If you have questions or wish to apply, please call me at 817.265.2967 or 752.998.2803.

OMM PICNIC IN THE PARK
Our Mother of Mercy’s 50th anniversary will be celebrated with a “Picnic in the Park” 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, April 19 at Hilsdale Park in Roanoke, Texas. OMM School classes and classrooms are invited to attend. Activities will include three-legged races, kickball, a live DJ, bingo, dominos, a Wii tournament, card games, and other activities. Prizes will be awarded to the OMM School class with the most classmates in attendance. The event will be a carnival, with a 1:45 p.m. neon party. The cost of this event is $5 for adults, $2 for children. For more information, contact Tara Hanks at (817) 568-9640 or call the rectory at (817) 335-1695.

FITNESS COACHES
Looking for 20 fitness coaches for revolutionary new home business. For info call 817-244-6737.
On his Africa trip, Pope Benedict doesn’t point a finger, but just as in the West, he challenges attitudes and cultural trends, while proclaiming

‘The Lord Jesus is the one mediator and redeemer’

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service
LUANDA, Angola

Pope Benedict XVI’s in-flight statement opposing condom distribution in AIDS prevention drew sharp criticism and was seen by many as a distraction from his main message in Africa.

But a closer look reveals that very little of what the pope had to say during his March 17-23 African journey was easy or accommodating. On issues ranging from abortion to corruption, from women’s rights to economic development, he preached the Gospel in a way that took issue with common practices and prevailing attitudes.

His conviction, expressed on his first day in Cameroon, is that Christianity is the answer — the only real answer — to the chronic problems plaguing Africa. His fear is that Africa, caught up in economic and cultural globalization, will follow the secularized West and lose touch with its own best values.

Condom campaigns are, to Pope Benedict, a small but very real part of this threat. But his concern extends to virtually every area of social, economic, and political life.

“At a time when so many people have no qualms about trying to impose the tyranny of materialism, with scant concern for the most deprived, you must begin with a radical conversion to Christ that redirects every aspect of life. “The Gospel teaches us that reconciliation, true reconciliation, can only be the fruit of conversion, a change of heart, a new way of thinking. It teaches us that only the power of God’s love can change our hearts,” he said at an outdoor Mass in Angola.

The pope kept reminding listeners that, in his view, inside and outside Africa the “dominant societal culture is not helping you live by Jesus’ words or to practice the self-giving to which he calls you,” he said. In fact, he said, today’s “individualistic and hedonistic” values prevent young people from reaching maturity. At his Mass the next day, the pope continued in the same vein, saying that “living by the truth” was not easy in the face of the “hardened attitudes” of selfishness that dominate much of contemporary social relations.

Abortion was very much on the pope’s mind in Africa. His first speech on the continent reminded Africans of their traditional values and said the church was the institution best able to preserve and purify them — unlike agencies that want to impose “cultural models that ignore the rights of the unborn.”

In a speech to foreign diplomats, he laid down a direct challenge to international organizations that, in his words, were undermining society’s foundations by promoting abortion as a form of reproductive health care. The working document for next October’s Synod, P. 30

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Ruben Aguirre made good use of his final years with BNSF, growing closer to God and his church, preparing to serve as a deacon here in his home diocese while working in East Texas.

The Chrism Mass expresses the unity of the local church. Representatives of each parish gather as the bishop blesses and distributes the sacramental oils to be used for the year.

Jesus rose to new life, not his old life in his old body. His resurrection sanctified the human body, while showing his followers what awaits them eternally. Read about that new life, 16-19

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