**On Easter, pope reminds faithful that Christ took on humanity’s pains, trials out of love**

By Carol Glatz  
**VATICAN CITY (CNS) —** In his Easter message, Pope Benedict XVI lamented the countless wars, disasters, and horrors ravaging the world, including “the continual slaughter” in Iraq and the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan.

“Natural calamities and human tragedies that cause innumerable victims and enormous material destruction are not lacking” in the world, he said in his April 8 message, broadcast to millions of people in more than 65 countries.

The pope highlighted his concern for all those suffering from exploitation, hunger, disease, terrorism, kidnappings, and the “violence which some people attempt to justify in the name of religion.”

While there were “some signs of hope in dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, nothing positive comes from Iraq, torn apart by continual slaughter as the civil population flees,” he said.

The political crisis in Lebanon, instability in Afghanistan, chaos in Somalia, and economic collapse in Zimbabwe, and the “catastrophic, and sadly to say underestimated, humanitarian situation” in Darfur were some of the other places the pope listed as needing attention.

With all the suffering, evil, and injustice plaguing the world, it is possible one’s faith in God might be put to the test, just as the apostles’ faith in Jesus had been shaken “by the scandal of the cross,” the pope said.

But such doubts, fears, and disappointments help “purify all false concepts of God” and guide people “to discover his true face,” the pope said.

Instead of being a sign of apparent failure, Jesus’ passion and the pope said.

See In Easter..., p. 13

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**Justice Walk — Reenacting Christ’s Passion through the Stations of the Cross, youth from St. Matthew Parish in Arlington lead pilgrims on the Walk for Justice, passing the Tarrant County Courthouse in downtown Fort Worth April 6.**

The annual Good Friday event, sponsored by the diocesan offices of Peace and Justice and Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis, brings Catholic social teaching into public view, as the Stations of the Cross are blended with teachings on contemporary social justice issues.

(Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

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**Diocesan Walk for Justice puts public spotlight on social injustices**

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
**Correspondent**

Every Good Friday, organizers of the Walk for Justice in downtown Fort Worth commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus by pairing the Way of the Cross with injustices occurring in today’s society.

The fourth Station of the Cross, “Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother,” was the perfect setting for Lois Robinson’s impassioned plea against executing the mentally ill. In January 2000, her son, Larry, was put to death by the state of Texas after living with untreated paranoid schizophrenia for years.

“One-third of the people on death row are mentally impaired,” said the grieving mother, as she addressed 200 Walk for Justice participants from the steps of the Tarrant County Courthouse.

After receiving an honorable discharge from the military, Larry Robinson was denied long-term care by a veteran’s hospital, mental health agency, and a private medical center because “he was not violent and they needed the bed,” his mother remembers. A short time later, the Burleson resident killed five people and spent the next 17 years on death row before receiving the lethal injection that stopped his heart.

“And they’re still executing the mentally ill,” Robinson emblazoned on a sign in front of the Tarrant County Courthouse.

SEE JUSTICE WALK..., p. 7

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**Bishops’ pro-life official laments Senate move to fund human embryo research**

By Jerry Filteau  
**WASHINGTON (CNS) —** An official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops criticized the U.S. Senate’s “fixation on destructive research” after the Senate passed a bill that would provide federal funding for stem-cell research involving the destruction of human embryos.

“Many members of Congress remain dazzled by irresponsibly hyped promises of ‘miracle cures’ from the destruction of human embryos, although experts in the field increasingly admit that treatments from this avenue may be decades away,” said Richard M. Doerflinger, deputy director of the USCCB’s Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

Doerflinger made his comments late April 11 following an evening vote in which the Senate approved S. 5, a bill permitting destruction of human embryos in federally funded stem-cell research, by a 63-34 margin.

Should S. 5 become law, “millions of taxpayers would be forced to promote attacks on innocent human life in the name of scientific progress,” he said.

Since President George W. Bush has promised to veto the legislation, however, and its backers do not have enough votes for an override in the House or the Senate, “we expect that this terrible burden will not be placed on taxpayers,” Doerflinger said.

SEE VOTES..., p. 8

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**VIRGINIA TECH MEMORIAL —** Virginia Tech students kneel in front of a memorial during a candlelight vigil in the wake of the shootings at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 17. Cho Seung-Hui, a South Korean student from northern Virginia, was identified as the gunman who killed at least 32 people April 16 at the university before taking his own life.

(CNS photo/Paul Haring)
Bishop Vann encourages us to follow St. Thomas’ example: to surrender to the ‘I BELIEVE’ of Faith

Dear Friends in the Diocese of Fort Worth,

We are now in the Easter season of fifty days, a time in which the Church asks us to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, and to meet him in our daily lives.

Perhaps a key Gospel for these days is the Gospel of the second Sunday of Easter, which is the account of the disciples encountering the Risen Lord on the “evening of the first day of the week.” This is also the time when St. Thomas was not present. He refused to believe until he had seen the Risen Lord. And so, the Risen Lord offered him just that opportunity a week later! In our liturgical calendar, this account is found in the Second Sunday of Easter.

The words of the Risen Christ to St. Thomas are important words, not only for St. Thomas, but for us, as well:

“...Do not believe, but believe... Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” — John 20:27-29

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, spoke September 12, 2006, on the joys and blessings of believing when he reminded us through his homily at Regensburg:

“They who believe are never alone...Faith brings us together and gives us a reason to celebrate. It gives us joy in God, joy in his creation, joy in being together.”

We, like St. Thomas, can struggle with our Faith. We certainly can have our moments of doubt. But like St. Thomas, we are called ultimately to surrender, and not to be unbelieving, but to believe.

St. Thomas are important words, not only for St. Thomas, but for us, as well:

We, like St. Thomas, can struggle with our Faith. We certainly can have our moments of doubt. But like St. Thomas, we are called ultimately to surrender, and not to be unbelieving, but to believe.

All of us are called ultimately to believe. We are called to believe in Christ, not only the words of Jesus, but also our Easter faith statements, when we say “I BELIEVE” in the Creed. We are called ultimately to believe, to commit ourselves to the faith we profess, and to lead our lives according to the teaching of Christ.

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Supreme Court upholds Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Supreme Court upheld the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act by a 5-4 vote April 18.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing the majority opinion in Gonzales v. Carhart, said the law’s opponents “have not demonstrated that the act would be unconstitutional in a large fraction of relevant cases.”

Also voting in the majority were Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas.

Voting in the minority were Justices Paul Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter, and John Paul Stevens.

In her dissenting opinion, Ginsburg said the decision “tolerates, indeed applauds, federal intervention to ban nationwide a procedure found necessary and proper in certain cases by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.” She added the decision “refuses to take ... seriously” previous Supreme Court decisions on abortion.

Six federal courts had ruled the act unconstitutionally restricted a woman’s legal right to an abortion. In October the Supreme Court accepted cases from California and Nebraska, appeals of two lower court rulings that found the ban to be unconstitutional. The court conducted oral arguments in November.

In what the law calls partial-birth abortion, also referred to as an “intact dilation and extraction,” a live fetus is partially delivered and an incision is made at the base of the skull, through which the brain is removed, and then the dead body is delivered the rest of the way.

In the 1990s, Congress had twice passed a ban on partial-birth abortions. Both times the bills were vetoed by President Bill Clinton.

In 2000, the Supreme Court struck down a Nebraska ban on partial-birth abortions.

In 2003, Congress again passed a ban on partial-birth abortions, and the bill was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

Abortion opponents demonstrate in front of the U.S. Supreme Court last November.

In a 5-4 ruling April 18 the Supreme Court upheld the federal law banning the procedure known as partial-birth abortion. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)
Progress in Catholic-Methodist dialogues to be focus of ecumenical gathering May 6

Parish Interfaith and Ecumenical Representatives (PIERs) of the Fort Worth Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission will meet Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m. in the Community Life Center at St. Philip the Apostle Parish, 1897 West Main Street in Lewisville. All interested Christians are invited to attend and to participate in discussion about the progress made within the past year in the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches’ dialogues.

The featured speaker at the gathering will be Kenneth Loyer, a doctoral candidate at Southern Methodist University, who attended the signing of the Methodist Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (IDDD), in Seoul, South Korea, in July 2006.

On that occasion, representatives of the Catholic Church and of the Lutheran World Federation joined Methodist officials in signing a common affirmation which welcomed the Methodist association with the JDDJ and pledged a continuing commitment to the work of deepening a common understanding of justification in theological study, teaching, and preaching.

Loyer will discuss the July 2006 event and will also offer information about the statement “The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church,” which is currently, according to the Vatican Web site, “the work of a dialogue commission and not an official statement of the Catholic Church or the WMC.”

The Vatican Web site notes that “in complementary ways ... both texts bring to fruition years of patient and persevering dialogue; and both mark a starting point for subsequent reflection, helping to set the agenda for further steps and initiatives in Methodist-Catholic relations.”

PIERs, according to a recent press release from the Fort Worth Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission, are appointed by their pastors to interface with the commission to convey to parish members the progress of the church in church unity and understanding. Twenty-eight parishes have PIER appointees; the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission meets with the appointees twice each year to inform and update them on areas of special interest.

For more information, contact Kathleen Easler at (817) 430-2454.

Vocation awareness — Priestly vocations are rebounding in Texas

I recently had the privilege of gathering with the vocation directors of Region X, which includes the dioceses of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

While I am new to the position of vocation director, I already know the majority of the vocation directors who represent the 15 dioceses of Texas. Five of us are recent alumni of Assumption Seminary in San Antonio. While in the seminary, I met three more current vocation directors who attended St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston. As a group, we are upbeat at the current trend in vocations in Region X.

Most of the dioceses in Texas are beginning to see an increase in the number of men entering the seminary. Just 10 years ago only the Galveston-Houston Diocese had more than 20 seminarians. Today six dioceses have more than 20 seminarians, including Fort Worth. I believe this is only the beginning of a great trend. Why the increase in vocations?

There are numerous factors to be considered, but a few are key. Fifty years ago, the priesthood was an attractive career choice in committing ourselves to the full-time ministry of Christ and the Church remain, but not least, the church is often no longer the center of life for the Church or the WMC.”

The Catholic Church has struggled to adapt to these changes. Yes, we are lagging in some ways, but we are catching up. One of the greatest changes is to the position of vocation director. Each diocese today needs to have an active, full-time vocation director, supported by a team of priests, in order to successfully promote vocations to the religious life. The dioceses in Texas that have not shown an increase in seminarians have not dedicated one of their priests to the full-time ministry of promoting vocations. Too often a priest is assigned as pastor of a parish and then assigned as vocation director on top of an already overloaded schedule.

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There are numerous factors to be considered, but a few are key. Fifty years ago, the priesthood was an attractive career choice in committing ourselves to the full-time ministry of Christ and the Church. They still see their priests, sisters, and brothers as faithful spiritual leaders. Many are highly educated but know little about their faith or religion. As priests, we are still teaching, but now it is more by example. Through our choice in committing ourselves in marriage to the Church, we have chosen to reject a world that denigrates everyone, scorns the sacred, and leaves everyone empty. We looked for more and have found it in Christ and his Church. We are on the rebound!

Vocations to the religious life in Texas are on the rise; don’t miss out. If you think God is calling you or someone you know to the religious life or priesthood, drop me a line at kwalterscheid@fwidioc.org.

A GriefShare seminar will be presented at St. Paul the Apostle Church, 5508 Black Oak Lane in River Oaks, on consecutive Monday evenings, April 30 through July 23, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. GriefShare, a ministry to people grieving the loss of a family member or friend, emphasizes a biblical approach to grief recovery.

Deacon Ron Aziere, GriefShare coordinator, announced that that the seminar, which has been held before at St. Paul’s, will offer new workbooks and video presentations.

“No one should ever suffer losing a loved one alone, and we are here to listen and help you to recover,” says Deacon Aziere. There is no cost for participation. For more details, call (817) 738-9925 or (817) 626-9545.

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations, is shown walking into the mindset of the vocation director must have an ongoing personal relationship with the men who are discerning whether they have a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. It is my goal to make that connection, even though it has been challenging because of the geographical dispersion of the men considering the religious life. It has definitely been a challenge for me personally, but the rewards have been great every step of the way.

Yes, the Church is taking steps to adapt to a new world. As we grow, we must take advantage of the positive attitudes of the faithful. Yes, people are suffering spiritually, but through their baptism they are still drawn to Christ and the Church. They still see their priests, sisters, and brothers as faithful spiritual leaders. Many are highly educated but know little about their faith or religion. As priests, we are still teaching, but now it is more by example. Through our choice in committing ourselves in marriage to the Church, we have chosen to reject a world that denigrates everyone, scorns the sacred, and leaves everyone empty. We looked for more and have found it in Christ and his Church. We are on the rebound!

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Single young adults invited to consider religious vocation at VAP weekend

The Vocation Awareness Program (VAP) offers single young adults the opportunity to participate in a weekend of vocational discernment and reflection. The weekend will include presentations on the process of discerning a religious vocation, panel discussions on the life styles of clergy and religious men and women, question and answer sessions, and the opportunity for private conversations with the priests, sisters, and brothers who serve as leaders during the weekend. There is no charge for the program, which includes accommodations in private rooms and meals at the seminary.

For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 366-0439, or by e-mail at kwalterscheid@fdwoc.org.

Sisters of St. Mary invite women to ‘Come and See’ May 6

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur will host a house of formation and Come and See program Sunday, May 6, at OLV Center, 909 West Shaw Street in South Fort Worth. Single women ages 18 to 65, are invited to attend and to learn more about life as a religious sister. The day will begin with Mass in the convent chapel, followed by dinner with the sisters, a presentation, and time for sharing.

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in Fort Worth are part of a national trend of having young women seriously considering — and increasing — life as a religious sister, according to information from the congregation. The sisters have noted an increase in the number of inquirers over the past five years, the information states. Three women, as pre-candidates, are in the initial stage of membership, and four sisters are discerning transition into the congregation.

For those persons interested in a more extended visit with the sisters, inquiries are welcome about “A Come and See Weekend,” May 6-7. For more information, contact Sister Margaret Miller, MSSN, at (817) 413-4760 or email her at cmillerm@namur.org.

Immaculate Conception Parish to host parish mission May 14-16

Sisters of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ will present a parish mission, “Deep Conversion, Deep Prayer,” at Immaculate Conception Church, 2255 North Bonnie Brae Street in Denton, May 14-16.

Organizers call the mission “an inspiring opportunity to deepen, renew, or experience our walk with the Lord.” The Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, based within the diocese of Amarillo, is a contemplative community of Franciscan and charismatic vowed women religious.

The parish mission sessions will be held on consecutive evenings, for more information about times and mission activities will be announced. For more information about the sisters, visit the congregation’s Web site at www.dljc.org. For more information about the mission, contact the parish at (940) 565-1770.

Walk for Life benefiting Pregnancy Help Center set for May 12

The Pregnancy Help Center, which offers life-affirming pregnancy ministry in Wichita Falls and in Vernon, will host its sixth annual Walk for Life Saturday, May 12, at locations Lucy Park’s Circle Trail in Wichita Falls and the Vernon High School Stadium in Vernon. Registration and a free t-shirt will begin at 8 a.m., and the Walk for Life will start at 10 a.m. The goal of the Walk for Life, according to the executive director, is “to raise funds and friends for the ministry of the Pregnancy Help Center, educate community members about the center and its outreachs, and make a positive life-affirming statement to our community.” A strong Catholic presence is expected at the event.

Highlights of the day will include face painting, balloons, and a moon bounce. The first 250 entrants and sponsored walker prizes will be awarded. To walk will take place rain or shine. For more information, visit online at www.walkforlife-wfpregnancyhelpcenter.org.

Rachel’s Vineyard retreat, June 1-3, to offer post-abortion healing

A Rachel’s Vineyard retreat, designed to offer healing for women and men struggling with the psychological and spiritual pain of abortion, will be held June 1-3 in Fort Worth.

Rachel’s Vineyard retreats offer a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion after math. The retreat team provides the confidential support needed to help participants work through feelings of anger, guilt, and grief, so that they may be open to experiencing the healing love and forgiveness of God. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and former participants in the abortion industry — anyone who has more information — are welcome to attend.

For more information or to register, call the Catholic Renewal Center at (817) 601-4091 or e-mail the Fort Worth/Dallas Rachel’s Vineyard outreach team at dfwbe@hotmail.com.

Calix support group meets monthly at Holy Family

Calix, a monthly support meet- ing for Catholics who are alcolholic or struggling with drug addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at Holy Family Church, 5435 Windward in West Fort Worth. The next meeting will be held May 5, beginning at 10 a.m. at the church.

Calix meetings focus on enhancing spiritual growth through sharing, Encouragement, discussion, and fellowship with others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery. Each year the Family Life Office assists parishes by providing marriage preparation programs for over 100 couples.

Presenter couples needed for marriage preparation programs

The diocese’s Family Life Office is seeking married couples in good (not perfect) marriages to share their experience of married life with other couples who are preparing for marriage. Each year the Family Life Office assists parishes by providing marriage preparation programs for over 60 couples.

Presenter couples speaking English and/or Spanish are needed. Couples with busy schedules who can commit to one or two sessions per year would be of great help.

To volunteer or for more information, call Deacon Dick Doak, director of the Family Life Office, at (817) 560-2452 ext. 304.
San Mateo Catholic Men's Club to host golfing event May 14

The Catholic Men’s Club of San Mateo Mission in Fort Worth will sponsor its 10th annual golf tournament Monday, May 14, at Squaw Creek Golf Club, 1695 Ranch House Road in Aledo.

The tournament will begin with a shotgun start at noon. Prizes will be awarded for the top three teams and for player closest to the pin and the player with the longest drive. Drinks will be provided during the tournament, and a dinner following the tournament will be catered by R.J. Rivera Catering.

All proceeds will go “come out for a day filled with fun, food, drinks, golf, and [the] knowledge that you are helping our youth to further their education,” states an event press release.

The cost is $55 per person or $260 for a team. Benefactors may sponsor a hole for $100. To register, contact Emerico Perez at (817) 715-0289 or e-mail to er Perez@yel snow.edu.

Diocesan Singles Council announces date for annual family picnic April 29

Subiaco Academy, a Catholic college preparatory boarding and day school for young men in grades 9-12, will host a Discovery Sunday for parents and prospective students, April 29 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Those visiting will have the opportunity to meet members of the administration and faculty, tour the campus, and take a guided tour of the campus. Interested students may also take the preliminary placement exam.

Established in 1887 by the Benedictine priests and brothers of Subiaco Abbey, the academy, located in the scenic hills near Fort Smith, offers a challenging program in academics, the arts, athletics, and various activities.

Anyone interested in learning more about Subiaco Academy is invited to participate in the Discovery Sunday. For more information, contact the Subiaco admission office at (800) 364-7824; e-mail to admissions@subi.org; or visit online at www.subi.org.

Young adults invited to participate in ‘Adventure’ retreat May 17-20

“The Adventure. An Ignatian Experience,” a retreat program based on St. Ignatius’ The Spiritual Exercises, will be offered May 17-20 for participants between the ages of 19 and 25. The retreat will take place at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 N. Shady Shores, Lake Dallas.

The Spiritual Exercises, according to a retreat flyer, “can be successfully made at almost any stage, but they are especially designed for that period, hold time in your life when virtually all life-determining options, and life-determining mistakes, are made.”

The spiritual adventure will be held “in the safety of a private retreat house, in the heart of nature, and is described as an ‘identity-defining experience.’”

The cost is $55. For more information or to register, call Montserrat at (903) 321-6620 or e-mail to Carol Adele at montcarol@centurytel.net. Questions may be directed to Father Nathan Stone. 5. e-mail to nosetwo@yahoo.com.

Camp Subiaco expands to two weeks

Camp Subiaco, operated by the Benedictine Monks of Subiaco Abbey of Subiaco, Arkansas, in partnership with the Subiaco Alumni Association, has announced an opportunity for boys, ages 9 to 14, to participate in one-week or, beginning this year, a two-week summer camp experience.

Camp sessions will be offered June 17-23 and June 24-30. A camper may choose to camp for either one week or the full two-week session. Camp activities including swimming, camping, archery, go-carting, swimming, tubing, and riflery, with supervision from an all-adult volunteer staff.

Campers use the facilities of Subiaco Abbey and Subiaco, including a swimming pool, athletic fields, dormitories, and nearby streams and lakes. Subiaco is located in the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains, on State Highway 22, 50 miles east of Bentonville and 18 miles northwest of Little Rock.

Camp Subiaco is now taking applications. For more information or to register, visit the Web site at www.subiacocom or www.subi.org, or call (479) 934-1001.

THE LAST SUPPER — Seventh graders at Our Lady of Victory Schoolremark the Last Supper during a prayer service for the student body April 5. Following the service, the student body gathered to take part in a special meal, an annual event at the Fort Worth school, to commemorate a meal celebrated by Jesus and his disciples at which Christ instituted the Eucharist. (Photo by Joan Karwowski/Ciller)
Parishioners of San Mateo Mission in Fort Worth kneel in prayer at the Rosary Vigil for Life.

Admirers compare them to Gideon’s Army.

Five days a week, a handful of volunteers stand outside Fort Worth abortion clinics, prepared to defend life. Armed with rosaries and helpful pamphlets, they offer prayers and sidewalk counseling to women who arrive at the centers with plans to terminate a pregnancy.

Moved by the sincerity of the silent protest, some mothers reconsider their decision. Hundreds of other unborn children never draw their first breath, but that doesn’t discourage the devoted band of pro-life advocates.

“We do have our little victories,” said Patricia Ernst, a 22-year veteran of Mother and Unborn Baby Care, an organization that provides medical, emotional, and financial support to expectant mothers in crisis. “Moms bring the babies we’ve saved in to see us.”

“And God seems to send them in when we’re feeling the most battle-weary,” said Margaret Rainey, another counselor who has spent 17 years working for the pro-life cause.

These dedicated volunteers received an added emotional lift April 6 when more than 425 men, women, and children turned out for the annual Good Friday Rosary Vigil sponsored by Catholics United for Life and Mother and Unborn Baby Care. The large crowd, led by Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann and a contingent of Catholic clergy, filled the sidewalks outside a busy abortion clinic in Fort Worth’s hospital district.

In the past, organizers were allowed use of an adjoining field, but the land was recently sold, limiting the vigil participants to public property.

The restriction didn’t seem to bother Vincent Smith, who came to the prayer service with his wife, Lydia, and teenage daughters, Taylor and Rachel. Saying the rosary with other families has become a Good Friday ritual for the pro-life supporters.

“This gives us a more dramatic appearance, so visually it might be a blessing,” Smith said, referring to the long, narrow lines of people standing in prayer. “God works in mysterious ways.”

Delia Perez Yzaguirre has attended the Rosary Vigil in the past to show her opposition to abortion. This year she brought her husband, Crist.

“Christ died for our sins, and we’re still sinning,” Yzaguirre said. “Abortion affects our entire society by promoting a culture of death. This is something I do to help end that.”

Although the regular team of volunteers was heartened by the Good Friday turnout, countering the harm produced by abortion is a war they wage every day. No one knows that better than Chuck Pelletier, who helped found Mother and Unborn Baby Care in 1984 and spends most of his week counseling confused, frightened women and their partners.

“They begin to understand that we care about them and their future,” says Pelletier, director of the crisis pregnancy center, who uses prayer, intuition, and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide his ministry.

A Sudanese man and woman, who came to the United States as political refugees five years ago, were one of the latest couples to receive help at the center. Already the parents of several children, they were feeling overwhelmed emotionally and financially when they arrived at an abortion facility for an appointment.

Both Catholic, the pair responded to the presence of sidewalk counselors outside the clinic.

“They followed us back to the center, but the husband still wanted the abortion,” Pelletier explained.

With no medical insurance and new mortgage payments, the struggling couple was “hanging on by their fingertips, and they didn’t know how to use the resources available to them.”

Counselors at the center offered to provide material assistance as long as they needed it, but those assurances weren’t enough to change the husband’s heart. So Pelletier handed the man a rosary and a wooden crucifix blessed by the bishop, led him and his wife into the center’s chapel, and sat them down in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

That’s when the experienced counselor asked several provocative questions. The family left the Sudan because the ongoing death and destruction didn’t allow them to walk, breathe, and live as they should. Why then become part of the killing? Why become part of what you fled?

Pelletier closed the chapel door, and the pair spoke to each other for 10 minutes in their native language.

“When I opened the door, they told me they were going to have the baby. They had talked it out in front of God,” he said. “You could see the incredible sense of relief on the woman’s face. This beautiful smile lit up the room, and she had this whole sense of life about her.”

Mother and Unborn Baby Care helped the woman begin prenatal care and is working out a budget for the family. Pelletier credits God’s grace for sparing at least one child from the infanticide suffered by so many unborn babies in this country and in war-torn Sudan.

“In the end, the Blessed Sacrament made the difference,” he explained. “God is good to us.”

Below: The earnest prayers of Elizabeth Anne Crawford, age 5, are a hopeful sign for the future.

Above: Approximately 425 people gathered outside a local abortion clinic on Good Friday, April 6, to pray the rosary for life.

Above: Bishop Kevin Vann (front, left) and other diocesan clergy join Chuck Pelletier (right), director of Mother and Unborn Baby Care, and more than 425 pro-life advocates in praying for the sanctity of life.

Above: A woman holds a baby, praying for other little ones who are threatened by the abortion industry.
The death penalty was one of an array of topics broached by young people and adults during the public Good Friday observance co-sponsored by the diocesan Office of Peace and Justice and the Office of Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis. Other presentations discussed the tragedy in Darfur, the plight of the “invisible children” of Uganda, the growing influence of media on today’s culture, sexual abuse, and raising the minimum wage for the working poor.

As each youth group or adult spokesperson offered a reflection and prayer on a topic, teenagers from St. Matthew Church in Arlington, dressed in period costumes, acted out the Stations of the Cross at different downtown locations. A few tourists and pedestrians joined the cross-led procession as participants moved through the streets. Other bystanders stopped to take pictures or ask questions.

The Walk for Justice is an opportunity for people to experience faith and share their beliefs publicly, according to Kevin Prevou, diocesan director of Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis.

“It’s also a chance to dig in a little and explore Catholic social teaching,” he added. “We need to understand how we’re called to take care of one another and be Jesus to one another.”

Good Friday offers a powerful opportunity to learn more about the struggles of the poor, hungry, disenfranchised, and hurting. Along with information and worship, the Walk for Justice includes calls for action. Participants are encouraged to do something about the issues raised during the program.

“When we act justly and reach out to those in need, we experience Christ in our midst,” Prevou said, explaining the event’s fundamental message.

Years ago, Amy Arendt attended the Walk for Justice as a member of the youth group from St. Peter Church in Lindsay. This year she returned to participate in the program as part of a young adult ministry team from Holy Family and St. Andrew parishes in Fort Worth, which chose to discuss pro-life issues.

“I remember the impact this had on me when I was in high school,” Arendt said. “It’s a great way to spend Good Friday.”

Left: Approximately 200 people braved wind and cold temperatures to participate in the Walk for Justice.

Right: Lois Robinson, whose mentally ill son was put to death by the state, advocates against executing the mentally ill.

Above: The cross, which will be carried from station to station on the Justice Walk, lies on the ground as the assembly gathers for the beginning of the Good Friday pilgrimage.

Below: Children listen intently as they watch the passion of Christ unfold.
Voters on legislation involving human embryo research not enough to override expected veto

FROM PAGE 1

Catholic Divorce Ministry (CDM), the ministry of the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics, invites all divorced and separated individuals, members of the clergy, and pastoral professionals to its 33rd annual international conference, to be held at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, July 5-7.

With the theme “Water in the Desert,” the conference will offer participants the opportunity to hear keynote presenters and authors Kathy Brewer Gorham and Bill Dye, to attend workshops, and to experience fellowship with conference attendees. Workshops will address topics such as “Healing through rituals,” “Recovering from difficult life events,” “Forgiveness,” “Remarriage,” “Helping children cope with divorce,” and “The annulment process.”

Pre-conference ministry leadership seminars will also be held July 2-5. Participation in the seminars is available for a $200 registration fee. Registration costs for the international conference range from $170 for a bill that would promote alternative ways to pursue stem-cell research without destroying human embryos, but Doerflinger said in an interview that it was uncertain whether the Democratic leadership would let that bill come to a vote in the House or, if so, what form it would take.

The USCCB favors “a lot of things in S. 30” but has reservations about a provision that would allow use of “naturally dead embryos” for stem-cell research, he said. He said there are concerns in the pro-life community about how strict the standards would be to prevent abuse of that provision.

Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee, criticized the Democratic leadership in Congress for “political demagoguery, making claims for embryonic stem-cell research that go far beyond any evidence.”

“Not a single human patient has yet been helped by stem cells obtained by killing human embryos,” he said. “Meanwhile, many thousands of human patients have been helped with other types of stem cells, obtained in noncontroversial ways that do not require harming human embryos.”

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, praised the 34 senators who voted against funding “research that requires the destruction of human life.”

Noting that those votes are enough to prevent a veto override, he said, “Now that S. 5 is dead, we should immediately expand on adult stem-cell research that is treating people now.”

The Bush administration said in an April 10 policy statement that the president “strongly opposes” S. 5 and would veto it if it reached his desk. “The administration believes that research on alternative sources of stem cells is extremely promising and provides robust opportunities to advance cures without compelling American taxpayers to participate in ongoing destruction of human embryos,” it said.

The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW), a women’s service organization comprised of more than 5,000 affiliated Catholic women’s organizations in parishes and dioceses throughout the United States, has announced that NCCW’s 33rd national convention, “Bringing Light to our Global Society,” will be held Sept. 20-23 in Columbus, Ohio, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

The convention will feature internationally recognized Catholic speaker and author Matthew Kelly as the keynote presenter. Also featured will be writer Susan Conroy, author of Mother Teresa’s Lessons of Love and Secrets of Sainthood, currently a NCCW book club selection. Delegates and individual members with voting privileges will also have the opportunity to guide the future of the organization by proposing and voting upon new resolutions and bylaw changes.

For more information about housing costs, registration fees, and the conference schedule, visit the NCCW Web site at www.home.catholicweb.com or call the NCCW office at (703) 224-0990.
Shooting of Virginia Tech students ‘tremendously sad,’ says Bishop DiLorenzo of Richmond, Virginia

BLACKSBURG, Virginia (CNS) — The April 16 shooting spree at Virginia Tech that left at least 33 people dead is “tremendously sad,” said Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo of Richmond.

In a phone interview just hours after the shootings, Teresa Volante, Catholic campus minister at Virginia Tech, said she had sent out an electronic notice that the Newman Center chapel was open for anyone who wanted to stop in and pray.

But in the center, located just off the campus, was rather quiet at that time since the dormitories on campus were still locked down and the off-campus students had been instructed to stay away.

“I’m here for students to talk to,” she said.

Later in the afternoon Debbie McClinton, a volunteer who came in to help, told Catholic News Service that people at the center were calm and were focused on helping anyone who came in. A prayer service was held at 7 p.m. at the center.

At St. Mary’s Parish, the only Catholic parish in Blacksburg, the receptionist said the pastor, Father James Arsenault, had spent more than three hours at the hospital with those who were wounded before heading over to the university to help there.

She said the church would be open all afternoon, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed for adoration, followed by a special Mass in the evening.

Father Rob Cole from Our Lady of Nazareth Parish in Roanoke came in to celebrate the Mass, since Fr. Arsenault was still busy ministering to victims and their families.

The university president, Charles Steger, called the shootings “a tragedy that we consider of monumental proportions.”

Bishop DiLorenzo, who celebrated a noon Mass for the students April 17 at the cathedral in Richmond, said his heart goes out to the parents and family members of the dead students.

“At this time one cannot help but think of the endless years of commitment, of love and care these parents have invested in their children, and then to have it all cut down by a bullet is tremendously sad,” he said.

“The tragedy really hit home with me,” he said, because he learned of it at a chancery luncheon that included two women who have children studying at Virginia Tech. He said that fortunately their children were not harmed.

Father Victor Quagraine (center) also had been helping students deal with their grief. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Undergrads lend each other comfort at the Newman Center at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 17, the day after a student’s deadly shooting rampage at the university. The Catholic center provided a spiritual haven for mourning students, friends, and family members. Pictured from left are Chris Smith, Elise Ward, Suzanne Browne, and David Elliott. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Emily Flach, a freshman business major who lives on campus, said, “People are just really shocked. It’s unbelievable that something like this happened.”

She told CNS at 3 p.m. that many students had not eaten all day because of the lockdown and a remaining uncertainty about whether it was safe to go out.

She said her dormitory is about three minutes’ walk from West Ambler Johnston, the dormitory where two students were killed, but “People are just really shocked. It’s unbelievable that something like this happened.”

When Flach learned there would be a prayer service at the Newman Center that evening, she said she thought that was a good idea. “I think the best thing we can do is come together ... and pray for everyone,” she said.

Anne Greenwood, a second-year graduate student in history, said she was in a conference room in the Major Williams building, when Cho began shooting people at nearby Norris Hall. She said that the first notice the group she was with had received about the shootings was when they began getting campus e-mail around 9:30 a.m. In quick succession, messages from the administration said there had been a shooting in a residence hall, then warned everyone that a gunman was still on campus and that they should stay inside.

Greenwood said the people she was with were unsure whether they were hearing gunshots because of extreme high winds at the time.

“ ‘To be quite honest, it was scary as hell,” she said.

Speaking with CNS a couple of hours after students were allowed to leave the campus, Greenwood said the impact of the gunman’s toll was still hitting her.

“I’m having a hard time dealing with the fact that so many died,” she said.

The April 16 shooting was the deadliest on-campus attack in U.S. history. Before that was the worst at the University of Texas in Austin in 1966, when a gunman climbed a clock tower and killed 16 people before police killed him.

Last year on the first day of classes for the 2006-07 school year at Virginia Tech, an escaped inmate was captured near the campus after he allegedly shot and killed a sheriff’s deputy and a security guard. While the search for the inmate was on, classes were canceled, the Virginia Tech campus was closed, and students and staff were ordered to stay indoors.

Virginia Tech has about 26,000 students. Volante said about 800 to 1,000 of the students regularly attended masses at the Newman Center or are involved in activities there.

Contributing to this story were Jerry Filteau and Patricia Zapor in Washington.

Pope deeply saddened by massacre at Virginia Tech

By Alicia Ambrosio

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI was deeply saddened by the massacre at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and prayed for the victims and their families, said the Vatican secretary of state.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone sent a telegram to Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo of Richmond, Virginia, expressing the pope’s condolences to all those affected by the April 16 shooting that left at least 33 people, including the killer, dead.

Cardinal Bertone said in the wake of the “senseless tragedy” Pope Benedict asked him to assure the victims, their families, and the entire school community of his prayers.

Pope Benedict “asks God our Father to console all those who mourn and to grant them that spiritual strength which triumphs over violence,” Cardinal Bertone said.
Easter season is when we most intentionally celebrate new beginnings. What happens in the story of Easter is not that Jesus returns as he was … but transformed … and living now in a wholly new way.

By Dan Luby

Easter is over.

By Effie Caldarola

Easter is when we most intentionally celebrate new beginnings. What happens in the story of Easter is not that Jesus returns as he was … but transformed … and living now in a wholly new way.
Who belongs to ‘Us’?
By Tom Grenchik

As difficult as it may be for the rich and famous to fathom, our Lord Jesus Christ died not only for the people who look just like “us,” but for every human being, no matter how big or small or young or old.

T he Easter Season gives us many opportunities to reflect on the humbling reality that Jesus Christ died for all of us. Hanging in agony on that cross, our Lord passionately loved every human person that had ever been created and every human person that would be created from that moment on, until the end of the world. We are always in the mind of God, and He has loved us for all eternity. Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again — for each and every one of us.

But who belongs to “us”? Not very long after Adam was longing for “bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh,” human beings began spending a great deal of their time excluding others from the concept of “us.” In fact, in the very next generation we see Cain kill Abel, asking defiantly: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” This reality has been played out not only among individuals, but also with entire groups of people. Throughout human history we have seen the manifest tragedies that result when some people are defined to be outside of the concept of “us.”

It’s very easy to look at the past and present and see how reasonable people, and especially people of faith, really have believed that some simply didn’t belong in the human family. How could people have tolerated the mistreatment, enslavement, or extermination of neighbors because they were disabled, sick, mentally challenged, or the wrong color, faith, age, or nationality?

Yet don’t we still do this today? Are there not members of the human family who have been defined as outsiders, not worthy of love and protection? Unfortunately, we have enough current examples of how we mistreat persons at the very beginning of life, at the very end of life, and generally whenever they are most vulnerable.

For example, in the public debate over embryonic stem-cell research, we have prominent politicians, celebrities, and wealthy business leaders all joining forces behind the idea that our youngest members of the human family can be manipulated, experimented upon, and even destroyed if there is some hoped-for medical benefit for the rest of “us.” At state and national levels there is the constant and often successful push to justify, fund, and promote the cloning of human beings in order to harvest their parts. Because they are tiny human beings, we are told that it’s no big deal. Those pushing this agenda are not denying that these are human lives. They simply argue that these human beings don’t quite look like us (yet), or they are “left-overs” who no one really wants, or they are simply the property of those who brought them into existence. But no matter how they came to be, and as short as their lives may be, aren’t they still members of our human family?

As difficult as it may be for the rich and famous to fathom, our Lord Jesus Christ died not only for the people who look just like “us,” but for every human being, no matter how big or small or how young or old. During this Easter Season of new life, let us be reminded of our Lord’s perspective on who belongs to us. We must make this our perspective as well, and respond accordingly.

Tom Grenchik is the executive director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
ne week before Holy Thursday, the day Christ instituted the sacramental priesthood, priests from the Diocese of Fort Worth joined Bishop Kevin Vann to concelebrate the annual Chrism Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth.

At the Chrism Mass, the event at which holy oils and chrism are blessed for the year, priests and deacons also have the opportunity to stand together, renewing their commitment to ordained ministry.

In a year when a record number of seminarians are studying for ordination to the priesthood in this diocese, the Chrism Mass projected a clear emphasis on vocations — in the words of Bishop Vann’s homily, as well as in the offertory procession. Oil bearers and offertory gift bearers represented the home parishes of the four men who are to be ordained to the Order of the Presbyterate in July.

The oil of the sick was brought forth by hospital ministers representing St. Mary of the Virgin Parish in Arlington, Deacon Raymond McDaniel’s home parish; oil of the catechumens was brought up by parishioners of Fort Worth’s St. Peter the Apostle, home parish of Deacon Jonathan Wallis.

The holy chrism was presented by the members of the home parish of Deacon Isaac Orozco, St. Matthew in Arlington, and the offertory gifts were carried forward by Deacon Thomas Kennedy’s parish, St. Maria Goretti, Arlington.

During the Chrism Mass, when the oils are presented to the bishop, representatives read prayers that ask for blessings on the people for which they will be used: the oil of catechumens to anoint all who are called to baptism; the oil of the sick “for those who suffer in mind and body.”

For the holy chrism, readers proclaim, “We bring oil and fragrant perfume, and ask that it be consecrated as the holy chrism, to anoint all the baptized in the sacrament of confirmation, to anoint the presbyters’ hands and the bishop’s head, to anoint also the altar and walls of the house of the church.”

“We who prepare catechumens for baptism and candidates for confirmation, we who are preparing for these sacraments in our parishes, and we who support candidates for ordination, ask this blessing for our people.”

At the end of the liturgy, Bishop Vann stirred and blessed the oils, which were later bottled and packaged for immediate distribution among all the priests of the diocese.

In his homily, the bishop asked the assembled clergy to reflect on the priests who had been instrumental in their own vocations. He called this kind of example and influence part of the mission of the life of the priest.

Bishop Vann shared a story about a priest who had served in his home parish in 1963, while he was preparing to be an altar server. “I was trying to learn the Latin form of the Mass and was having a tough time with the responses,” he said. “I almost didn’t pass; in fact, I nearly gave up.”

But Bishop Vann did succeed, and from that priest learned to love and to appreciate the liturgy, especially the Easter Vigil.

“I also learned the gift of patience,” he said, “because my serving career had many failures. Perhaps from all of it, I learned from that priest the importance of going on. Father knew I could do better,” Bishop Vann said. “He kept me going and helped me put up with the weakness in my life that still haunts me sometimes.

“Priests are called to seek God always, to enter more deeply into union with the Lord, and to bear witness to God’s love,” he said. “That’s what that priest did for me and what we do for others today.”

Concluding, Bishop Vann said, “I can’t think of a better way to worship together than at the Chrism Mass, with Jesus Christ, the strength of the church, right here in our midst.

“We gather here this evening so that all may enter more deeply into the life of the church, and thus be ever more faithful,” he said, quoting Pope Benedict, “wherever — however — the Lord calls us to be his witnesses.”
In Easter message, pope laments wars, horrors, unrest in Iraq

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope John Paul II’s intense pastoral ministry, “but even more, the Calvary of agony and the serene death of our beloved pope, let all people of our age know that Jesus Christ really was his everything,” Pope Benedict XVI said.

Pope Benedict marked the second anniversary of Pope John Paul’s death by celebrating a memorial Mass April 2 in St. Peter’s Square.

The pope said his predecessor truly fit the biblical description of a “servant of God,” which is the way the church officially refers to him while “his process of beatification moves forward.”

Pope Benedict, who had set aside the five-year waiting period usually required before a sainthood cause begins, told tens of thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square that the initial, diocesan phase of Pope John Paul’s cause had concluded earlier in the day.

While the church has not solemnly proclaimed Pope John Paul a saint in heaven, Pope Benedict said he is certain that “our beloved John Paul II” continues to accompany the church with his prayers.

At the same time, he offered prayers that Pope John Paul, “our father, brother, and friend,” would enjoy eternal rest and peace in the company of God.

The pope praised his predecessor’s “ability to share with the world his faith, hope, and charity, even as Parkinson’s disease gradually made it impossible for him to walk and, ultimately, to talk.

“Especially with the slow, but relentless progression of his illness, which little by little stripped him of everything, he made himself an offering to Christ, a living proclamation of his passion, in a hope filled with faith in the resurrection,” Pope Benedict said.

“Like his divine master, he lived his agony in prayer,” the pope said. “He died praying. Truly, he fell asleep in the Lord.”

Sitting near the front of the crowd was Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, the 46-year-old French nun who believes she was healed of Parkinson’s disease through Pope John Paul’s intervention.

Earlier in the day, during a ceremony marked by prayers, song, and formal oaths in Latin, officials of the Diocese of Rome concluded the initial phase of Pope John Paul’s sainthood cause.

The process had included interviews with more than 120 people who knew Pope John Paul and a study of his ministry. The way he handled suffering, and how he faced his death, said Cardinal Camillo Ruini, papal vicar of Rome.

“In the certainty of being loved by God and in the joy of responding to that love,” the late pope “found the meaning, unity, and aim of his life,” Cardinal Ruini said during the prayer service in the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

The documents from the investigation were placed in five chests, latched, tied with a red ribbon, then sealed with red wax. They will be delivered to the Congregation for Saints’ Causes for further study.

“The pope suffered in his flesh, and he suffered in his spirit, finding himself increasingly obliged to reduce his commitments,” Cardinal Ruini said. His occasional “signs of impatience” were not the result of pain, but of his frustration at not being able to continue the ministry to which he felt called, the cardinal said.

Cardinal Ruini described Pope John Paul as a man of continuous, intense prayer, “concrete and radical poverty,” and great freedom, which allowed him to stand up to Poland’s communist government.

His love for God was lived as love for human beings, leading the pope to be an insistent voice for peace and for the defense of human life from conception to natural death, the cardinal said.

St. Marie-Simon-Pierre, a member of the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood, was at the prayer service, as were Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, Pope John Paul’s personal secretary for almost 40 years, and Polish President Lech Kaczyński.

Celebrating a televised Mass early in the morning at Pope John Paul’s tomb in St. Peter’s Basilica, Cardinal Dziwisz called the late pope an “extraordinary witness” of Christ.

“John Paul II was a member of the friends of Jesus, that is, the group of saints. Membership in this group was what gave meaning and direction to his life, to all he did and said,” Cardinal Dziwisz said.

“The people of God clearly recognize his sanctity,” he said.
On political and practical fronts, attention turns to immigrants

By Patricia Zapor

WASHINGTON(CNS)—With Congress preparing to reopen the touchy subject of an immigration-reform effort, religious leaders and organizations that deal with the human repercussions of the current situation are planning new strategies and dusting off old ones.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, said he will bring the immigration legislation to the floor for debate the last two weeks of May, even though a Senate bill has yet to be introduced. A House version that so far is serving as a baseline for congressional discussion was introduced in March. President George W. Bush was expected to promote a White House-backed bill during events planned for the week after

Like the return of spring flowers, the season has brought increased attention back to border issues on many fronts:

- The self-proclaimed “citizens” border-watch organizations such as the Minutemen were heralding their spring campaign along the Arizona-Mexican border.

- Workplace raids by the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, ICE, were the subject of vehement protests in California, New England, the mid-Atlantic, and the Midwest by religious leaders whose social service programs were trying to handle the repercussions for families who have had breadwinners arrested, detained, or deported.

- The vast coalition of faith groups, ethnic organizations, unions, business groups, and immigrants’ rights organizations that supports a comprehensive approach to immigration reform worked all their channels in Congress to influence what final legislation includes.

The House bill, H.R. 1645, the Securing Communities Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy, or STRIVE Act, represents “a good starting point,” according to Kevin Appleby, director of migration and refugee programs for the Church World Service.

Meanwhile, workplace immigration raids since last fall that have torn apart families, especially those with some citizen and some undocumented members, are prompting some religious groups to resurrect a 1980s idea — offering sanctuary in their churches.

California, New York, and Chicago-based interfaith organizations are laying the groundwork for what they call a New Sanctuary Movement, which will offer refuge to families of mixed immigration status who face deportation. A formal announcement launching the movement is expected in late April.

The New Sanctuary Movement is being coordinated by Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice-California, an alliance of interfaith organizations; Interfaith Worker Justice, a Chicago-based national network of worker justice groups; and the New York Sanctuary Coalition as a way “to accompany and protect immigrant families who are facing the violation of their human rights in the form of hatred, workplace discrimination, and unjust deportation,” as the movement’s Web site says.

The group cites roots in the sanctuary movement of the 1980s. Then, networks of mostly church-based shelters provided refuge for Central American immigrants who were fleeing wars in their homelands, but were unable to obtain legal asylum in the United States.

On its main Web page, the new movement cites Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony as prompting their efforts.

In March 2006, Cardinal Mahony said he would instruct his priests and other archdiocesan employees to disregard provisions of a then-pending House bill that would have criminalized the act of providing humanitarian aid to people without first checking their legal status. The bill passed in the House, but negotiators were never able to resolve it with the Senate. The immigration bill and both proposals died with the 109th Congress.

“Cardinal Mahony’s statements were significant in awakening the general public and legislators to the moral and human dimensions of the question—effectively changing the terms of the public debate,” said the site.

Since then, religious leaders nationwide have considered how to best support immigrants, the background material said.

“The crisis of ongoing raids and deportations as well as the opportunity offered by the push for federal legislation increased the urgency of creating an effective, pro-fideocratic national strategy,” it said.

Pope encourages priests to be inspired by Christ’s sacrifice, love

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI encouraged today’s priests to be inspired by Christ’s sacrifice and love for others as they face their “tremendously heavy” burden of pastoral responsibility, especially in nations that have a large number of refugees. He referred to the departure of Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, where he led more than 1,000 priests and bishops in a renewal of their ordination promises. The pope, presiding over the first of two Holy Thursday liturgies, blessed the oil for ordinations of priests and deacons, blessed “the cross taken from the altar of Mass” and gave blessings to the sick, the poor, and the elderly.

Catholic Press Association board urges new stress on diocesan newspapers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Diocesan newspapers deserve new emphasis as a means of spreading the Gospel and connecting Catholics to one another and their church, said a board member of the National Catholic Press Association.

“Diocesan publications can light the fire of faith that warms hearts to action for the good of all,” the CPA board said in a statement released April 10. “Recently the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies announced a bold initiative, the opening of 72 new community-based newspapers that each of Italy’s 226 dioceses would have at least one publication to serve its members,” the board said. “That same type of emphasis is needed in the United States and Canada,” it said. CPA members include Catholic newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, but the 173 diocesan newspapers of the United States and Canada that belong to the association form nearly half of its member publications.

Retired Episcopal bishop and wife to return to Catholic Church

ALBANY, New York (CNS)—Bishop Daniel W. Herzog, recently retired Episcopal bishop of Albany, and his wife, Carol, have left the Episcopal Church and re-entered full communion with the Catholic Church. Both were raised as Catholics and joined the Episcopal Church in their late teens. In a letter to the leader of the United States and Canada, “Diocesan publications can light the fire of faith that warms hearts to action for the good of all,” the CPA board said in a statement released April 10. “Recently the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies announced a bold initiative, the opening of 72 new community-based newspapers that each of Italy’s 226 dioceses would have at least one publication to serve its members,” the board said. “That same type of emphasis is needed in the United States and Canada,” it said. CPA members include Catholic newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, but the 173 diocesan newspapers of the United States and Canada that belong to the association form nearly half of its member publications.

Bishop says World Youth Day will be ‘an enormous grace’ for Australia

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, Australia, said he feels hosting World Youth Day 2008 will be “an enormous grace” for his country and added that the event is the biggest “single thing you can do to encourage our youth.”

“The bishop, who is chief organizer of the July 15-20 international event, made the comments April 10 to a group of about 50 people at the National Catholic Educational Association convention at the Baltimore Convention Center. At the final Mass at World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne, Germany, Pope Benedict XVI announced to the crowd that the 2008 gathering would take place in Sydney. Since then the country has been planning for the big event. Bishop Fisher said he has “really been praying about the theme: ‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.’ “Jesus calls us to go to the ends of the earth as witnesses of our faith and many young people are saying ‘yes’ to being part of this global church,” said Bishop Fisher jokingly. He said the goals of World Youth Day 2008 will be to enable youth to be witnesses of God, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and have a moving and sanctifying pilgrimage in faith.
By Nancy Frazier O’Brien

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Calling teachers “the greatest artists in the world,” Pope Benedict XVI’s representative to the United States opened the National Catholic Educational Association convention in Baltimore April 10 with praise for the “special qualities of mind and heart” that educators bring to their work.

Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., said many call Michelangelo the greatest artist ever because of his sculptures such as “The Pieta,” which depicts Mary holding her son Jesus after his crucifixion.

The marble sculpture, on display near the entrance to St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, manages to convey both Christ’s acceptance of suffering and his “full confidence in his mother,” the archbishop said.

“But I think the greatest artists of the world are teachers, because you sculpt the best of what you are, not in a piece of marble but in human beings who are the glory of God,” he said.

“Each of us has forgotten a lot of what we were told in school,” he added, “but a lot of what’s inside us is from the example of teachers.”

Archbishop Sambi said he was the son and brother of schoolteachers and that Pope Benedict, from whom he brought greetings, “understands perfectly the labors, the greatness,” and the usefulness of the mission of education, since he was “a teacher for a large part of his life.”

Up to 10,000 people were expected at the Baltimore Convention Center for the April 10-14 NCEA convention on the theme “Anchor of Faith, Harbor of Light.”

Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore; Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York; Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, chairman of the NCEA board of directors; Karen Ristau, NCEA president; and Ron Valenti, superintendent of schools in the Baltimore Archdiocese, also addressed the opening session of the convention.

Several speakers noted the historical importance of the choice of Baltimore as the site of the convention because it was the first Catholic diocese in the U.S. and once the home of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, considered the founder of the U.S. Catholic school system.

Archbishop Wuerl said the role of teachers in Catholic schools is “not just the communication of information, but to show a way of life, encourage a vision, and participate in the unfolding of God’s mission.”

“You have no way of knowing if the seeds you plant will bear fruit in the future, but you continue to sow,” said Cardinal Keeler.

Ristau presented two major NCEA awards to Catherine Hickey, secretary for education and superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of New York, and Sister Dominica Rocchio, a Sister of Charity who is former superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey.

Cardinal Egan noted that he had been “a student of these two teachers” who taught him to begin each morning with a salute.

“Sr. Dominica liked to hear my heels click as well,” he said with a laugh. “Dr. Hickey is not so demanding.”

Hickey, who received the Msgr. John F. Meyers Award for outstanding support of Catholic education, heads a system made up of 79 schools, “and she knows every principal and every problem, and every pastor as well,” the cardinal said.

He praised Sr. Dominica, who received the C. Albert Koob Merit Award given annually to a distinguished Catholic educator, for her commitment to inner-city Catholic secondary schools.

In New York, where each inner-city Catholic high school has at least 65 percent of the student body living below the poverty line, 98 percent of the students graduate in four years, and 95 percent go on to college, Cardinal Egan said.

“If any other system were doing the same thing, they would be bringing in truckloads of money to make it work,” he added.

In a singular collaboration with the National Gallery in London, the Meadows Museum presents Velázquez’s Immaculate Conception, on loan through May 30. View this extraordinary work of genius alongside other Velázquez masterpieces and depictions of the Immaculate Conception, and join us for these fascinating educational programs offered in support of this special collaborative exhibit. All lectures are FREE and take place in the Dr. Bob Smith Auditorium; seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday, May 1, 5:30 p.m.
17th-century Seville: Graces and Jests of a Dogma
Luis Martín, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of History, SMU
This lecture will explore the religious and spiritual climate of Seville in the early 17th century, when Velázquez was growing up there, and how it awakened his artistic genius.

Tuesday, May 8, 5:30 p.m.
The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art
Dr. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt
Scholar of Spanish and Spanish-American art of the 17th and 18th centuries
Dr. Stratton-Pruitt will show how the definitive iconography representing the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception came about and explain why it was so closely associated with Spain and her dominions in the Americas, as well as how the image was adapted for particular cities, religious orders, confraternities, and other groups.

Tuesday, May 15, 5:30 p.m.
Marian Piety: The Role of the Immaculate Conception in the Devotional Life of Religious Orders and Confraternities
Jessica A. Boon, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Church History, SMU
This lecture will address the influence on Marian theology of scholastic speculation, Franciscan traditions, and local festivals in the High and Late Middle Ages, with special attention to the influence of early modern Spanish mystical authors and confessional devotions on 17th-century views of the Immaculate Conception. Followed by a wine and cheese reception in the galleries at 6:30, and a voice recital with piano by the Meadows School of the Arts Division of Music at 7:30.

TOURS

Through May 30
Book a special, docent-guided tour focused on the evolution of Marian imagery within the context of paintings in the Meadows Museum’s permanent collection. Group discounts apply. Call 214.768.8993 to reserve space now!
Pope: Announce Christ’s death, resurrection at home, in the workplace

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI said Christians should imitate the early disciples by announcing Christ’s death and resurrection wherever they live and work.

“We, too, like Mary Magdalene and St. Thomas and the other apostles, are witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can’t keep this great news to ourselves. We need to announce it to the whole world,” the pope said at his general audience April 11.

The disciples had the gift of encountering the risen Christ in their homes, offering them a tangible confirmation of the resurrection, he said.

But as St. Augustine said, Christians should know that “to have Christ in one’s own heart is greater than having him in one’s home,” the pope said.

“We, too, if we seek the Lord with a simple and sincere spirit, will meet him. In fact, he himself will come to meet us. He will make himself known; he will call us by name; he will lead us to the closeness of his love,” the pope said.

More than 35,000 people filled the seats in St. Peter’s Square to see and hear the pope at his first general audience following Holy Week liturgies. They cheered in the sunshine as the pontiff took two turns through the crowd in an open jeep before delivering his talk from the steps of the basilica.

The pope encouraged Christians to deepen their understanding of Easter by reading what church fathers had to say about those crucial events, especially Christ’s appearances to his disciples in the days after his death.

He cited an insight of early church teachers about the discovery of the empty tomb and the excitement it generated among Christ’s followers.

“When Peter and John go running to the tomb, each trying to arrive there first, they show us the one form of competition that is legitimate between believers: zeal in the search for Christ,” the pope said.

After the audience, the pope returned by helicopter to his villa in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, where he was staying for several days after Easter.

He was scheduled to return to the Vatican April 15 for a morning Mass, a liturgy that would mark his 80th birthday the following day.
**Scripture Readings**

April 29, Fourth Sunday of Easter.

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**Cycle C: Readings:**

1) Acts 13:14, 43-52
Psalm 100:1, 2, 3, 5
2) Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

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**By Dan Luby**

Hunger? Thirst? The oppressive power of these dogged and ruthless scourgings of human-kind is unknown to most of us living in the post-industrial world of the United States or other prosperous countries.

Sure, we might occasionally miss a meal or two; even, in extraordinary circumstances, go to bed hungry. We may once in a while get really thirsty, stuck in a hot place with no ready supply of safe water. But the gnawing, life-threatening hunger that is the daily bread of millions around the world over? The tongue-thickening, mind-numb- ing thirst that haunts the days and nights of huge populations in underdeveloped regions? Most of us have no concept.

So, in Sunday’s reading from Revelation, when we hear feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty as images of salvation, we may once in a while get really thirsty, stuck in a hot place with no ready supply of safe water. But the gnawing, life-threatening hunger that is the daily bread of millions around the world over? The tongue-thickening, mind-numb- ing thirst that haunts the days and nights of huge populations in underdeveloped regions? Most of us have no concept.

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**QUESTIONS:**

Who has helped wipe away the tears from your eyes? How can you express your gratitude? Who do you know that is suffering? What’s one specific way you can offer consolation?

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**By Jeff Hedglen**

The words flew out of my mouth like a Nolan Ryan fastball. As soon as they got past my lips, I knew I was in trouble. The words were out there, never to return, no matter how badly I wanted to stuff them back down my throat and pull out the magic pen of my insensible remark. I was caught with my foot stuck squarely in my mouth.

Sadly this description could be told about a couple of dozen moments throughout my life, some more innocent than others; some rather funny, and others very embarrassing — all of them regrettable.

Words have the power to heal and an equal force for destruction. In a country where speech is free, it far too often is used cheaply. Sometimes this freedom costs us more than we bargained for.

These slips of the tongue are not reserved just for hosts of radio shows. It seems that all people can use words that are insensitive, angry, rude, disrespectful, prejudiced, and inexplicably ugly to each other — and this is just with family members.

While it is true that sticks and stones can break bones, it is not true that words never hurt. They have a staggering ability to cut people to the heart.

Though it is no excuse, I suppose I can kind of understand why a person who has not experienced the love of Jesus would resort to words motivated by emotions other than love. But what really bothers me is when people of faith do it — especially when the person is me.

I wish I could say that my desire to be continually converted to Jesus and his Gospel has washed away all imperfections, but anyone who knows me even a little bit has been privy to some amount of the shadow that still remains. You might be thinking, “Yeah, but sometimes that person really deserves to be yelled at,” or, “Sometimes I just need to blow off some steam,” or, “What I said was the truth.” To all of these well-reasoned excuses I will say: That’s all well and good for people who desire to follow Jesus half way, but we are called to more than that. In fact, we are called to perfection: “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Called to perfection? That seems so unreasonable. I suppose it depends on your definition of perfection. I cannot imagine that the all-knowing and all-loving God would call us to the unattainable. Sure, ultimate perfection will only be ours when we see the Father face to face, but until that time striving for it may be its own type of perfection.

The more we improve and refine ourselves, the more perfect we become. Recently I have become inspired by a young Italian man on his way to sainthood. He is Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. One of his sayings is “The higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ.” To me this means that we must flee mediocrity and seek with all our hearts to be the best living example of God’s love that we can be.

This means taking the high road, even if it is not fair to us, swallowing our pride from time to time, and letting others have their way. In a word this attitude is humility. James says, “Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you” (James 4:10). Thus it is our job to be humble and God’s job to raise us up.

There is no better example of this than that which we saw during Holy Week. Jesus took everything his accusers threw at him with humility, even though they were wrong and he had done no wrong. He was secure in knowing that it is the Father’s place to put others in their.

This Easter season, fueled by the power of the resurrected Jesus, let’s strive for humility. Before we know it, we will be traveling with Blessed Pier Giorgio, “Verso l’alto!” (“Toward the Heights!”)

Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal or- ganizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at jeff@stbartsfw. org.
**Monseñor Vann anima a seguir ejemplo de Santo Tomás: rendirnos a nuestro CREDO de la fe**

Estimados amigos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth,

Un asunto crucial en la vida de cualquier creyente es que nuestra fe se haga con proyección.”

| hora estás en la época pasacional de cincuenta días, tiempo en que la Iglesia nos invita a celebrar la Resurrección de Cristo, y encontrarlo en nuestra vida diaria.

Quizás un Evangelio clave para estos días es el Evangelio del segundo domingo de Pascua, que es a que nos relata el encuentro de los discípulos con el Señor Resucitado en la “tarde del primer día de la semana.” Este es el momento en que Santo Tomás no estaba presente. El rehusó creer hasta que él viera al Señor Resucitado. Y por eso, el Señor Resucitado le ofreció esa oportunidad la semana siguiente!  

En nuestro calendario litúrgico, este relato se nos presenta en el Domingo de Pascua. Las palabras del Cristo Resucitado a Santo Tomás son palabras importantes, no solamente para Santo Tomás, sino para nosotros, también:  

**Nosotros, como Santo Tomás, podemos luchar con nuestra fe. Ciertamente podemos tener nuestros momentos de duda. Pero, como Santo Tomás, el Señor nos llama a rendirnos ante Él, y no ser incrédulos sino creer.**

...No seas incrédulo; ¡cree!... ¿Crees porque me has visto? ¿Dichosos los que creen sin haber visto!  

— Juan 20:27-29

Nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Benedicto XVI, habló sobre este punto el 12 de septiembre del 2006, sobre las alegres y bendiciones de creer cuando nos recordó en su homilía en Ratisbona:  

“El que cree nunca está solo... la fe nos une y nos regala una fiesta. Nos da la alegría en Dios, la alegría por la creación y por estar juntos.”

Nosotros, como Santo Tomás, podemos luchar con nuestra fe. Ciertamente podemos tener nuestros momentos de duda. Pero, como Santo Tomás, el Señor nos llama a rendirnos ante Él, y no ser incrédulos sino creer.

El Señor nos llama a creer en una época, que ocasionalmente, se adapta más a preguntas, diálogos, y procesos que un “Sí, Yo CREO” como respuesta. Y durante la Vigilia Pascual, o el Domingo de Pascua, dijimos claramente en nuestras comunidades parroquiales “Sí Creo”. Un “Sí” al Señor Resucitado, un “Sí” al Credo de Nicaea, la profesión de fe de la Iglesia de la fe. Damos esta respuesta de un “Yo Creo” en una época en que nuestra fe esta sujeta a constantes escrutinios y dudas de ciertos sectores de nuestra sociedad y cultura. Las exageradas atenciones y publicidad dadas a las supuestas “tumbas de Jesús y María” durante esta pasada Cuaresma es solamente el más reciente ejemplo de esto.

Es por esto que nuestro “YO CREO” es tan importante, lo que creemos es muy importante, conocer nuestras Sagradas Escrituras y doctrina es esencial. Todo lo que profesamos, mantenemos, y que vivimos en nuestra comunidad de fe sigue de este “YO CREO”.

El Evangelio según San Juan concluye con estas palabras que ciertamente se refieren a nosotros:  

“...Pero estas se han escrito para que uestes crean que Jesús es el Mesías, el Hijo de Dios, y para que creyendo tengan vida por medio de él.”  

— Juan 20:31

Quisiera decir unas palabras de agradecimiento y de aprecio a todos los que están participando de los diversos ministerios parroquiales que prepararon a nuestros catecúmenos y candidatos para la recepción de los Sacramentos de Iniciación.  

Gracias a nuestros músicos y a todos los que participaron en las liturgias de la Semana Santa. Una palabra muy especial de agradecimiento a nuestros sacerdotes que pasaron tantas horas en estas actividades, y especialmente por las horas dedicadas a la celebración del Sacramento de la Reconciliación, sean en celebraciones individuales del sacramento o participando en los muchos servicios comunales del sacramento alrededor del de la Diócesis.  

La recepción y la celebración del Sacramento de la Reconciliación es una visible expresión de la Misericordia Divina de Cristo, que es también un tema del Segundo Domingo de Pascua.

Que Dios los bendiga siempre en estos días de Pascua.

+Kevin W. Vann

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**En Pascua, el Papa lamenta las tragedias humanas**

Por Carol Glatz

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — En su mensaje de Pascua el Papa Benedicto XVI lamentó las incontables tragedias humanas que sacudida “por el escándalo de la fe”. La muerte como camino hacia la paz y la alegría”, dijo él.

El Papa Benedicto XVI lavó los pies de 12 hombres para conmemorar el gesto de humildad de Cristo a sus apóstoles la noche antes de morir. (Foto CNS/Tony Gentile, Reuters)

El Evangelio según San Juan concluye con estas palabras que ciertamente se refieren a nosotros:

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Que Dios los bendiga siempre en estos días de Pascua.

+Kevin W. Vann
¡CRISTO ES VIDA!

...y la muerte no prevalece

Por Pedro A. Moreno, OPL
Director, Instituto Luz de Cristo

Juan 8:51, En verdad les dije: el que guarda mi palabra no probará la muerte jamás.

Pascua es cuando los cristianos celebran el triunfo de Cristo sobre la muerte. Cristo es vida eterna y la ofrenda a todos aquellos que la buscan. ¡Cristo nos da vida! Pero necesito aclarar que Él no impone la vida. Nuestro Señor Resucitado no obliga a nadie a que reciba esa vida que él sufrió tanto por conseguirla. Él la oferece y a nosotros nos corresponde expresar nuestro interés en recibirla o no. Es más, nuestro Señor no obliga ni impone ninguna de sus bendiciones o dones. Y tristemente son muchos, los que un día renacieron por el agua y el Espíritu, que no aprovechan los dones de nueva vida alcanzados en la Pascua.

Algunos creyentes, tristemente, no siguen realmente a Cristo. Algunos discípulos están supuestamente muy entusiasmados con el Señor pero no lo siguen de cerca a pesar de que Él es el camino. Muchos no creen en todas sus enseñanzas, buscan solo escoger sus doctrinas favoritas, a pesar de que él es la plena verdad. Otros saben de Jesucristo, y hasta te pueden citar capitulos y verso de la Escritura, pero realmente no lo conocen ni viven íntimamente su presencia a pesar de que Él es la vida.

Solo existe una manera de recibir y disfrutar la vida que Cristo nos ofrece. Solo existe una manera de no llegar a probar la muerte eterna jamás. Esa manera es guardando su palabra, guardando plenamente sus enseñanzas y nunca escogiendo unas doctrinas sobre otras. La unión de todas sus doctrinas y enseñanzas, este depositeo de la fe recibida, forman la palabra de Cristo que todos tenemos que guardar y vivir.

Cristo nos lo dice en el Evangelio de Juan “En verdad les dije: el que guarda mi palabra no probará la muerte jamás.” El Señor nos está diciendo que aquel que aporta la palabra de Cristo a las personas a las que escucha, es el verdadero discípulo de Cristo, es el verdadero amigo de Cristo, es el verdadero hijo de Cristo. Él dijo: “El que guarda mi palabra no probará la muerte jamás. Esa manera es guardando y guardando, y la muerte no prevalece.”

Unámonos en un mismo testimonio del amor y verdad que es Cristo. Viviendo y guardando sus enseñanzas, y haciendo ejemplos de vida. Vidas que son un reflejo de todo el amor de Cristo.

Unámonos a Cristo Resucitado, que está buscando a todos aquellos que están hambrientos de Él. Compartamos su palabra con amor y cariño. Seamos instrumentos de Cristo Resucitado amor, camino, verdad y vida. Huyamos, con la ayuda de Cristo, de la eterna muerte pues ella sí que no prevalece.

Pedro Moreno es director diocesano del Instituto Luz de Cristo. Sus escritos espirituales han recibido varios premios de la Asociación de Periodistas Católicos de los Estados Unidos y Canadá. Vive en el noroeste de Fort Worth con su esposa María Mirta y sus tres hijas María, Patricía y Mirangela. Pedro es Laico Dominico.
Por John Thavis

El Papa Benedict XVI le agradeció a la iglesia por rodearlo de afecto, como una verdadera familia, y por sostenerlo con sus oraciones. (CNS foto/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

**El Papa, cumpliendo 80, agradece a iglesia por rodearlo con afecto**

Por John Thavis

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO

(CNS) — En una Misa marcando su 80mo cumpleaños, el Papa Benedicto XVI le agradeció a la iglesia por rodearlo con afecto “como una verdadera familia” y por apoyarlo con oraciones.

“Una y otra vez reconozco con alegría cuán grande es el número de personas que me sostienen con sus oraciones, quienes con su fe y amor me ayudan a realizar mi ministerio y quienes son indulgentes con mi debilidad”, dijo él el 15 de abril.

La Misa abrió dos días de celebraciones conmemorando el cumpleaños del 16 de abril del Papa y el segundo aniversario de su elección el 19 de abril.

Las festividades incluyeron un concierto en el Vaticano, docenas de testimonios escritos y una gigantesca torta de cumpleaños en forma del Vaticano.

Cincuenta mil personas, incluyendo peregrinos alemanes vistiendo indumentaria tradicional, atestaron la Plaza de San Pedro para la liturgia. El área del altar estaba rodeada por miles de flores — amarillas y blancas, los colores del Vaticano.

En su sermon el papa aparentó estar un poco reticente en cuanto a ser el foco de la Misa, diciendo “de hablar sobre uno mismo”. Pero el añadió que su vida personal puede también ofrecer lecciones sobre la misericordia de Dios.

El papa dijo que él siempre creía que él había recibido un regalo especial por haber nacido el Sábado Santo, “al principio de la Pascua”. En un sentido, dijo, él nació en su familia personal y en la familia más grande de la iglesia el mismo día.


Mientras tanto, los regalos se verían en el Vaticano. El secretario privado del Papa, monseñor Georg Ganswein, dijo que estos incluyen cartas, libros, discos compactos y hasta un gigantesco oso de peluche, el cual el papa donó al hospital de niños Bambino Gesu en Roma.

Monseñor Ganswein dijo que el Papa había dicho que él no deseaba aceptar regalos personales de los fieles. Aquellos quiern darle algo pueden hacer una ofrenda que el papa usará para causas eclesiásticas o humanitarias especiales, dijo el secretario papal.

Un regalo que el papa sí aceptó fue una capa, o manto litúrgico, que le dio su hermano. El papa también recibió 800 botellas de cerveza de parte de una cervecería cercana a Freising, Alemania.

Se necesita ayuda

Apartamento privado disponible como intercambio para ayuda en propiedad. (Ubicada en Southside) Solicito mujer necesita tener horas flexibles para ayuda en casa y cuidar 2 niños. Si hay pareja interesada, el esposo necesita estar empleado. Hay algún pago negociable. No debe tener niños por favor. Llame Tracy (817) 329-4332.

**Retiros para jóvenes**

¿Qué son los retiros espirituales ‘Discípulos de Jesús’?

Es una serie de 4 retiros espirituales que se llevan a cabo en cuatro fines de semana durante el año. Estos retiros preparan y disponen el corazón para Dios y ayudan a buscar y encontrar la vocación de Dios. A través de los fines de semana, encontrarás las respuestas a preguntas tales como: ¿Qué quiere hacer el Señor con mi vida? ¿Cómo propone salvarme y llevarme a la plenitud como su hijo? ¿Cuál es mi vocación y qué está pidiendo Dios de mí?

¿Quién puede participar?

• Jóvenes entre de los 18-30 años
• Solter@es
• Para el primer retiro, debes haber participado en un retiro evangélico (tal como Búsqueda, Jornada Juvenil, etc.)

¿Cómo se Realizan?

Cada retiro es de un fin de semana (o cuatro días). Se lleva a cabo en un ambiente de silencio, meditación, y oraciones. Se da algún tiempo para compartir tus experiencias con un grupo pequeño. Cada retiro tiene temas específicos en los cuales se enfoca.

¿Cuál es el costo para cada retiro?

$50 por cada retiro

Para más información o para inscribirte, comunícate con: Sr. Elvira Mata, mcdp emata@fwdioc.org

**Discípulos de Jesús**

**Questa conferencia diocesana católica para parejas**

Sábado y domingo, 9 y 10 de junio, a las 7:30 a.m.

Conferencista: Dr. Carlos Barrillas y su equipo

en el salon parroquial de la Iglesia de Todos los Santos

214 N.W. 20th St. Fort Worth, 76103.

Fecha limite: 1 de mayo

Cada retiro tiene temas específicos en los cuales se enfoca.

¿Cuál es el costo para cada retiro?

$50 por cada retiro

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**Encuentro para comprometidos (Spanish Engaged Encounter)**

El Encuentro para Comprometidos es una preparación matrimonial de fin de semana para parejas de novios que desean contraer matrimonio. Está diseñado para dar a las parejas la oportunidad de dialogar, intensa y honestamente sobre su futura vida como pareja. Es presentado por un equipo de parejas casadas. El primer fin de semana se llevará acabo el 7 y 8 de julio, 2007 en el Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth, Tx. 76103.

Para hablar con Suzanna Ordóñez al (817) 560-3300 ext. 256

¡Mano a mano caminando juntos! ¡Invita a tu pareja a conocer el verdadero amor!

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Aid for the Church in Easter Europe

By Jerry Filteau

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Twenty-seven of 29 Catholic dioceses and eparchies audited in 2006 complied with the church’s national standards for child protection programs and the prevention of and response to sexual abuse, says a report released April 11.

However, four dioceses that were not found in compliance in 2005 refused to participate in the 2006 audit.

“The overall results of the 2006 audit are encouraging,” said Patricia O’Donnell Ewers, chairwoman of the bishops’ all-lay National Review Board.

But she described the refusal of four dioceses to participate as “discouraging news.”

Two — the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, and the Melkite Eparchy of Newton, Massachusetts — had refused to participate in the 2005 audits as well and were supposed to undergo full audits. The Diocese of Baker, Oregon, and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Deliverance of Newark (New Jersey) for Syriacs refused partial audits that would have focused on those areas where they did not meet compliance standards in 2005.

“It is most unfortunate,” Ewers said, “that the bishops and eparchs of these dioceses/eparchies are unwilling to participate in the one measure of public scrutiny that assures the Catholic lay faithful that the church is taking every means possible to reach out to those who have been harmed by individuals in the service of the church and to promote the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to its care.”

William A. Gavin, president of the Massachusetts-based Gavin Group, which conducted the audits, reported that among the dioceses that were audited in 2006 only the Cincinnati Archdiocese and the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont, were found to be not yet fully compliant with the abuse response and child protection standards set by the bishops’ “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.”

The remaining problem in both dioceses was the need to complete the safe environment training of all volunteers who work with children, he said.

He told Catholic News Service that both dioceses have been “very conscientious” about working toward full compliance, and he expects they will reach that goal this year.

The report on the 2006 audits, prepared by the bishops’ Office of Child and Youth Protection, was released by Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Washington, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, after the National Review Board reviewed it and recommended its publication.

Noting the high level of compliance on all articles of the charter, Bishop Skylstad said, “Vigilance to ensure the safety of children is now a way of life.”

“In the last five years we have made enormous progress, yet we must continue to proceed steadfastly,” he said.

The year 2006 was a period of transition for the audits. To adjust better to the rhythms of parish and diocesan life that are built around the school year and summer vacation time, future audits will go from July 1 to June 30 instead of Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. All dioceses are to receive a full 2007 audit, which will look at compliance from July 2006 to June 2007.

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At age 80, pope is seen as patient teacher, sharing message of God’s love

FROM PAGE 24
ments, ecumenism, sainthood causes, health care, justice and peace, interreligious dialogue, Eastern churches, and Vatican finances.

The fact that the pope has not already put his own team in place and has introduced few major changes at the Vatican has disappointed some of his strongest supporters in Rome.

“His problem is that he doesn’t want to offend anyone,” one Vatican official remarked recently.

Some journalists, too, have been frustrated that the “Ratzinger revolution” they predicted has failed to materialize, at least in the dramatic form they had foreseen.

Joaquín Navarro-Valls, the former Vatican spokesman under Popes John Paul and Benedict, tackled the issue in a commentary written for the Rome newspaper La Repubblica.

The pope is certainly cautious, Navarro-Valls said, but that should not be confused with indecision or timidity. He said the pope is acutely aware that he’s called to make serious judgments with lasting consequences for the church which often need “the right timing and the right maturational period.”

Navarro-Valls said the pope’s style seems to embody an intellectual seriousness: the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas’ “diligent and subtle inquiry,” which is never in a hurry.

The pope’s patience also has been evident in his teaching style during his first two years.

His back-to-basics approach has aimed at gently prodding people to question the values of today’s dominant culture and to make space in their lives for the divine.

In his one encyclical and in many talks, he has concentrated on the simple and positive core of the Christian message: love of God and love of neighbor.

When he has the world’s stage, the pope tends to set aside intellectual sophistication and doctrinal complexity.

At the recent Way of the Cross procession on Good Friday, he summarized in seven easy sentences the relationship between Christ’s passion and the suffering of today’s world.

“This is the profound intention of the prayer of the Way of the Cross: to open our hearts and to help us see with the heart,” he said.

“Our God is not a distant God, untouched in his blessedness: Our God has a heart,” he said.

At 80, the pope is not wielding a flame thrower. He’s blowing on the coals.

Good Neumaker / Diocesan

Pope’s new book to be released in English in May

FROM PAGE 24

go on sale April 16, the pope’s 80th birthday, with subsequent editions in English and 18 other languages to come.

The book, the first of two planned volumes on Christ’s life, covers the public acts of Jesus from his baptism in the Jordan River to the transfiguration before his disciples. Its 10 chapters analyze Scriptural passages, but also explore commentary from early church fathers and modern scholars.

In a preface, the pope makes an unusual disclaimer, saying the book should not be read as an expression of official church teaching, but as the fruits of his personal research.

“Therefore, anyone is free to contradict me,” he said.

Throughout the text, the pope cites Old and New Testament passages to show that to understand Christ one must understand his “union with God the Father.”

Even at his baptism, Jesus appears as the divine savior, not as an ordinary man who perhaps had a vocational or psychological crisis that led him to the Jordan River, he said.

The Christian faithful need to know that the New Testament is more than a collection of symbolic or allegorical stories, and that this is not just another myth of death and rebirth, he said.

“Yes, it really happened. Jesus is not a myth; he is a man of flesh and blood, a real presence in history…. He died and rose again,” he said.

The pope explained in his preface that the book was the product of a “long inner journey,” and that he had begun writing it in 2003. He said he was concerned that the figure of Jesus was becoming increasingly unclear, even for believers.

He decided that he could offer a portrait of the “historical Jesus” that was “more logical and understandable than reconstructions we have seen in recent decades.”

Naturally, he said, to believe that Christ was God and that he revealed this in his public life goes beyond the possibilities of the historical method. In this sense, he said, the Scriptures should be read in the light of faith.

Doubleday, the U.S. publisher of the pope’s book, plans to release the volume in English in May.

By Jean Denton

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Hamer…

FROM PAGE 11

themselves.

Apart from personifying the biggest tragedy that can befall a family, the shootings at Virginia Tech University demonstrated our fragile and temporary state, our days on this earth.

Students walked innocently into classrooms, where all their choices went away, except in some cases, the choice between waiting to be shot or jumping out an upper-story window.

There was no justice in those rooms; there was nothing that could save those children’s lives, it would seem — his life ended.

Those children’s lives, it would seem — his life ended.

We don’t know why we were spared, any morning, any day.

We don’t know what is going to happen to us, any morning, any day.

We don’t know why we were born, where our lives will lead, or what God wants us to do with them.

We can only pray for his guidance and our own eventual acceptance of his will.

Little Maddie calls me “Grammie” now, and that is pleasant. It was never what I expected to be called, but right now, it seems okay.

Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. Her column is syndicated in a number of the best Catholic diocesan newspapers across the U.S. In May of 2005, her column received the first place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada.

Hamer...
A mass of welcome for all members of the Diocese of Fort Worth "To Report Misconduct if you feel you have been a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone serving in the Catholic Church or who have completed their Christian initiation within the past year will be celebrated beginning the evening of April 29 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Cathedral, 1200 Throckmorton Street in downtown Fort Worth. All are invited to attend. A reception will be held following the Mass. Reservations are required by calling 817-827-6288 or e-mail to tmcmurry@dfwccc.org.

GRIEFSHARE GROUP St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 5508 Black Oak Ln., Fort Worth. GriefShare Group Session 31 through May 13, 12-2:30 p.m. For information, contact Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Avenue, Fort Worth 76107 or call (817) 737-6768

To Report Abuse if you or a family member is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone serving in the Catholic Church or who have completed their Christian initiation within the past year will be celebrated beginning the evening of April 29 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Cathedral, 1200 Throckmorton Street in downtown Fort Worth. All are invited to attend. A reception will be held following the Mass. Reservations are required by calling 817-827-6288 or e-mail to tmcmurry@dfwccc.org.

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COME AND SEE Sunday, May 6, the Sisters of St. Mary of Nazareth, 1501 9th Street, Fort Worth, will host a "Come and See" day for single women, ages 18-45. The day will include living in the convent chapel, followed by dinner with the sisters, a presentation, and a time of questions and answers. The day will end with a symbolic visit with the sisters may inquire about the "Come and Stay" weekend to be held May 14-16. For more information, contact Sister Emanuel Easler at (817) 430-2454.

ST. JOHN'S SINGLES EVENTS The St. John’s Singles Ministry announces the following upcoming events: May 11, 7:30 p.m.—"The Song of Solomon," a study on relationships and marriage, call (817) 838-5996 for reservations; May 27, 4 p.m., and May 28, 7:30 p.m.—"Friday night volleyball in St. John’s Gym, April 22 and May 29 and 13 and 10, 11 a.m.—Single us; May 28; for more information, contact the Web site at web2.airmail.net/sjta/index.html or e-mail to singles@sjta.org.

EUCUMENICAL ASSEMBLY The spring assembly of the Fort Worth diocesan Parish Interfaith and Ecumenical Council will be held May 16, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at First United Methodist, 1824 Planet Avenue, Fort Worth. Philip the Apostle Parish, 1897 West Main Street, Lewisville. The topic of the meeting will be the program and dialogue with the church in the same year in the Catholic and Methodist churches’ dialogues. The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. in the fellowship hall. The program will feature the following: Workshop with a Hebrew lay, a doctoral candidate of Southern Methodist University, as the speaker. Loyer attended the Assembly of the World Council of Churches Interchurch Association by the World Methodist Council on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. For more information, contact Kathleen Easter at (817) 430-2454.

ENGLISH CURSILLOS A Cursillo is a spiritual retreat consisting of a series of talks and meditations examining one’s life in relation to Jesus Christ. It is presented in English and consists of a three-day retreat for English-speakers for men and women ages 18-70, with a maximum of 40 participants per group. The next retreat is May 12-14. For more information and registration, contact Mary Jane Nagy at (817) 226-1110 or by e-mail to mnagy@rediaffl.dw.com.

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have a desire to know Jesus Christ more intimately through retreats, divorce, or separation. The weekend retreat provides an environment and tools to help participants participate in the process of letting God create a new beginning in the present. The retreat will begin April 27-29 at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center, 4503 Bridle Street, Fort Worth. For more information, call metro (817) 601-4091 or e-mail the Dallas/Fort Worth BE team at obbe@bazaar.com.

ST. AUGUSTINE’S GROUP St. Augustine’s Men’s Purity Group, a ministry for men who have been sexually active with female partners, is held the first Thursday of the month, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller, and Sundays at 7 p.m., at 1301 Paxton (Padre Pio House) in Arlington. For additional information, visit the site at web2.airmail.net/sjta/index.html or e-mail to staugmen58@earthlink.net.

Catholic Pilgrimages From DFW Fatima-Lourdes-Italy-Poland-Mexico-Lourdes (all and more). Accompanied by a priest with Daily Mass and rosary. Call Renaisance Pilgrimages at (1 866) 295-8687 (toll-free) or visit www.jyp.org, or e-mail to pillowsulp@yaho.com.}

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Pope Benedict at 80: Blowing on the coals of faith

When Pope John Paul II turned 80 in 2000, it fueled yet another round of speculation about whether the ailing pontiff might break with tradition and resign.

In contrast, Pope Benedict XVI’s 80th birthday April 16 finds him with the wind in his sails.

The pope’s new book on Jesus was being released in several languages, an event that will no doubt launch the Christological themes of his pontificate into wider circulation.

In March the pope published a major document on the Eucharist, and sources said he was preparing to release a long-awaited decree liberalizing use of the Tridentine Mass.

Following a recent Vatican summit, the pope’s announced letter to Chinese Catholics was anticipated eagerly in April, in hopes that it could offer a new path of dialogue with the government and help heal internal church divisions.

Meanwhile, the pope was preparing for his first papal trip to the Western Hemisphere, a mid-May journey to Brazil for a crucial planning session among Latin American bishops.

Pope Benedict, who marked the second anniversary of his election April 19, seems fit and energetic in public appearances. He glides through crowds and lingers with well-wishers and often delivers his most incisive remarks off the cuff.

Although the pope sometimes suggests he may have little time in office, he shows no sign of ill health or failing stamina. During Holy Week, he seemed unfazed by the heavy schedule of 10 major liturgies and encounters.

The pope is one of very few top church officials not obligated to hand in his resignation on or before the age of 80. For cardinal and bishop members of Vatican congregations, 80 is the mandatory retirement age. Bishops must offer to resign as heads of dioceses when they turn 75, and so must the heads of offices of the Roman Curia. That leaves Pope Benedict as the oldest among chief Vatican officials, but the others are not far behind.

Today’s Vatican is a senior-citizen crowd: Of the heads of the 25 main Vatican agencies, only one is under the normal U.S. retirement age of 65.

The average age of top curial officials today is almost 73. That’s more than 10 years older than the average age under Pope John Paul at the two-year mark of his pontificate.

In part, that’s because 80 percent of curial leaders are holdovers from the era of Pope John Paul. That could change significantly over the next 12 months, when 10 of the 25 current department heads will be of mandatory retirement age.

To a great extent, then, Pope Benedict has a chance to put his own mark on the Curia in the coming year. The changes could affect Vatican agencies dealing with liturgy and sacred rites.

SEE AT AGE 80…, P. 22

Christ must be known as Son of God, pope says in new book

In his new book, Jesus of Nazareth, Pope Benedict XVI said Christ must be understood as the Son of God on a divine mission, not as a mere moralist or social reformer.

Re-emphasizing Christ’s divine nature is especially important in a world that tends to ridicule religious faith and that is experiencing a “global poisoning of the spiritual climate,” the pope said.

While Christ did not bring a blueprint for social progress, he did bring a new vision based on love that challenges the evils of today’s world — from the brutality of totalitarian regimes to the “cruelty of capitalism,” he said.

The 448-page book was presented in its Italian, German, and Polish editions at the Vatican April 13. It was to be presented to him at the Vatican April 15. The pope thanked the church for surrounding him with affection “like a true family” and for supporting him with prayers.

Above: Pope Benedict XVI meets the crowds in St. Peter’s Square at the end of a Mass marking his 80th birthday at the Vatican April 15. The pope thanked the church for surrounding him with affection “like a true family” and for supporting him with prayers. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

Above: Pope Benedict XVI speaks at the end of a special concert performed by Germany’s Stuttgart Radio Symphonic Orchestra in honor of his 80th birthday in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican April 16. (CNS photo/Dario Pignatelli, Reuters)

Above: Pope Benedict XVI looks at a copy of his new book, Jesus of Nazareth, presented to him at the Vatican April 13. (CNS photo/L’Osservatore Romano, Reuters)