Pledges pass 75 percent of goal at $30.5 million

All Things Possible Campaign continues to build momentum

With many parishes still preparing for upcoming pledge weekend events, the All Things Possible campaign for the Diocese of Fort Worth has already raised $30.5 million dollars in pledges from a total of 9,384 households, according to campaign staff. The amount represents over 75 percent of the total goal of $40 million dollars for the campaign.

“This exciting figures are a reflection of the enthusiasm and high levels of commitment that we have seen throughout the diocese at our parish receptions and other campaign events,” said Don Phifer, general chairperson of the campaign. “We are seeing a tremendous response to our early spring pledge weekend efforts, with several of our rural and urban parishes quickly exceeding their goal.”

This early success will lead to greater support of both diocesan projects and individual parish needs. Twenty-five percent of the funds a parish raises, up to their goal amount, is retained by the parish.

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— Don Phifer, general chairperson of the campaign.

New Missal will bring changes in words spoken at Mass, but diocese will ease the transition, prepare priests, ministers, and all Catholics

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As Catholic dioceses across the United States and other English-speaking countries prepare to implement the changes that will come with the new translation of the English Roman Missal, the Diocese of Fort Worth plans to ease the transition for local Catholics, as well.

Deacon Don Warner, diocesan director of the Office of Worship, said that the Liturgical Institute from the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois will offer a one-day workshop locally for clergy and parish liturgy directors on Oct. 2.

The time and location for this workshop will be announced at a later date. In addition to this workshop, the diocesan Office of Worship will offer workshops on the implementation of the new translation at the deanery level around the diocese. Participants in the deanery level workshops can then offer them in their parishes.

The new missal will not be used until it receives recognitio from the Holy See and new liturgical books are published. It is anticipated that recognitio will be given sometime this summer, and new liturgical books will be published by Advent 2011.

Deacon Warner said the intent of the workshops is to help people have an understanding of the changes and the new language of the prayers.

“I think right now, the reception is mixed … primarily because people haven’t seen the workshops,” he said.

Weigel says battle over nature, dignity of life part of U.S. culture war

By Ann Carey

Catholic News Service

NOTRE DAME, Ind. — The United States is currently engaged in a “great culture war” that involves “a battle over the nature and dignity of the human person,” author and scholar George Weigel told participants at a pro-life conference organized by University of Notre Dame students.

On one side are those who say everything in the human condition is “plastic, malleable, changeable, improvable,” he said.

On the other side are those who say moral truths are built into the world and into human beings that they can know by reason and which teach them how to live as individuals and citizens, he said.

Weigel, who is a biographer of Pope John Paul II, delivered an address titled “Pro-life Catholics in President Obama’s America” on the second day of the annual Notre Dame Right to Life Colloquium April 9-10.

Other speakers were Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Bishops; Joan Lewis, Rome bureau chief for the Eternal Word Television Network; and Maureen Condie, associate professor of neurobiology and anatomy at the University of Utah’s medical school and senior fellow at the Westchester Institute for Ethics & the Human Person.

New Things Possible Campaign continues to build momentum

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Recent coverage has distorted and left out much of the pope and the Church's response to sexual abuse crisis

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you may have been aware, there has been a lot of media coverage regarding tragic sexual abuse cases that have unfortunately taken place in the Catholic Church over the past 40 years.

The recent coverage has been centered around some abuse cases that have surfaced in Europe that have supposedly implicated Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. I know from having spoken to some people here and elsewhere that this is a serious issue that is on the mind of many Catholics these days. As the Shepherd of the Diocese of Fort Worth, I would like to take this time to address this troubling issue.

First, we as members of the Church must acknowledge that the sin of sexual abuse by priests is a tragic and deeply troubling reality that has happened in the Church. We cannot ever minimize the immense harm that has been done by some priests that have not only deeply wounded the victims of abuse, but has caused grave scandal in the Church and throughout the world.

As Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, I have sat with the victims of abuse by priests. My brothers and sisters in Christ, I have seen the devastating and long-lasting damage that victims of sexual abuse by a priest and their families endure. I am always moved to express my deep sorrow for any sexual abuse the victims may have endured and suffered at the hands of a priest. I am moved at these moments to press my deep sorrow for any sexual abuse committed by a priest and suffered at the hands of a priest.

The Holy Father has been one of the most outspoken leaders within the Church against sexual abuse by priests, dating back to when he was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and served as the Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He assisted greatly in establishing legislation within the Church to help Bishops deal with priests who have abused children.

In the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People adopted in a Dallas meeting in 2002, U.S. bishops said “we have acknowledged our mistakes and our roles in that suffering, and we apologize and take responsibility again for too often failing victims and the Catholic people in the past. From the depths of our hearts, we bishops express great sorrow and profound regret for what the Catholic people have endured.” In addition, an annual audit conducted by outside experts on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, categorically documents that the problem of sexual abuse of children by priests is not expanding. Rather, the assertive actions of the Catholic Bishops of the United States show that we have made great strides in prevention through vigorous screening of each and every priest, employee, and volunteer of a diocese. Finally, recent news reports that suggest that Pope Benedict XVI is implicated in allowing or tolerating sexual abuse by priests, are skewed and selectively reported. The Holy Father has been one of the most outspoken leaders within the Church against sexual abuse by priests, dating back to when he was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and served as the Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He assisted greatly in establishing legislation within the Church to help Bishops deal with priests who have abused children.

In conclusion, I ask that you please keep in prayer all of the victims of sexual abuse by anyone, that they may experience the healing presence of Christ in their lives. I also ask, especially during this Year of the Priest, that you pray for all of our priests and seminarians that the Lord will continue to strengthen them in his grace that they may all be faithful and servants to the Body of Christ and clearly be the light of Christ to us all.

Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD
Diocese of Fort Worth
Pope: God’s loving plan greater than life’s tragedies

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Do not fear life’s storms and disasters because God’s loving plan is greater than any tragedy, Pope Benedict XVI said.

In speaking about his recent trip to Malta, the pope also recalled his emotional meeting April 18 with eight men who suffered abuse as minors by clergy.

“I wanted to meet with some people — victims of abuse by some members of clergy,” the pope told some 15,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square for his general audience April 21.

“Isolated in their suffering and, with emotion, I prayed with them, assuring action on behalf of the Church,” he said.

The pope traveled to Malta April 17-18 to commemorate the 1,950th anniversary of St. Paul’s shipwreck on the island, which heralded in the beginnings of Christianity in Malta.

Ever since St. Paul’s arrival, Malta has held fast to its Catholic roots, and the pope praised the Mediterranean nation for being faithful to the Gospel for the past two millennia.

It is not always easy for a country to draw inspiration from the Gospel that will help them address complicated, modern-day challenges, he said.

However, the people of Malta have “a Christian vision of life” when they respond to new challenges — for example, he said, the country has staunchly maintained its respect for the unborn and the sanctity of marriage by not allowing the legalization of abortion or divorce.

He recalled his meeting with young people April 18, which was “a moment of deep and intense dialogue.”

After the youths presented their hopes, doubts, and worries, the pope offered St. Paul as an example of a youth who experienced “a radical transformation and his encounter with the risen Christ,” he said.

Young people around the world are called to discover the beauty of God’s love and the mystery of Christ’s cross, and to be victorious over the trials and tribulations in their own lives, said the pope.

He said the message he brought to Malta was that people should not be afraid of the storms of life, even less its shipwrecks, because God’s loving plan is even greater than storms and shipwrecks.”

He also reminded people of the problem of immigration in Malta, which must deal with large numbers of people who often are fleeing poverty, violence, and persecution.

The humanitarian, political, and legal problems caused by a large influx of immigrants on a tiny island “do not have easy solutions,” he said. But solutions must be “sought with perseverance and tenacity” while working together with international organizations and initiatives, he said.

Our local college kids need interaction and support to help them keep and grow in faith

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Our Catholic students at our local colleges and universities need much more support than they are getting from their Church. You and I must do more! Their need of the Church is not in the form of money, rather, I believe their need is to have a sense that they are welcomed, supported, and important in the eyes of the Church.

A good example of mutual support of Catholic students and local parishes that I noticed while I was a campus chaplain in Denton is the relationship the University of North Texas campus ministry has with the two local parishes — Immaculate Conception and St. Mark’s. About five years ago, several of the male students involved in the “C” — the Catholic Campus Center — decided to join up with the Knights of Columbus council at St. Mark’s as they encountered needs at the center beyond their own resources. They were in dire hope the Knights could help.

They were not disappointed! Yes, at first there were many needs financially to update and repair this, that, or the other, but more importantly, the Knights began to see the real needs of the students that went beyond building repairs and became more involved with these students in helping provide spiritual fatherhood and positive Catholic role models.

Today, 50 UNT male students have joined up with the Knights of Columbus and have their own council on campus with great support at their wings from both local parish KC councils in Denton.

The same thing has now started this semester at UNT and Texas Woman’s University for the Catholic women students with the support of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Keep up the good work! There is much more to do! We need to replicate this all over our diocese. I hear the Catholic students at the University of Texas at Arlington are also forming an alliance with the local Knights of Columbus. Way to go!

Another dynamic between UNT Catholic students and the local parishes of Denton is the tremendous help that the Catholic students give to the parishes in the form of ministry, with music ministry and youth ministry being most notable.

This trend is also part of the Catholic Campus Ministry at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls where the Catholic students regularly organize and lead confirmation retreats for area high-schoolers. Imagine how encouraged high school teenagers become when Catholic college students are helping lead their youth group. What? You mean, I can be Catholic and proud of it? You mean, college students are proud to be Catholic? It is easy to see how incredibly infectious all this can be. The high school students are more fulfilled and excited about their faith when they constant-ly hear live testimonies of the faith journeys and struggles given by their peers that they look up to — the Catholic college students who volunteer their time in youth ministry.

We have many local colleges where the Catholic students have no place to call home, no local Newman Center where they can drop by for a few hours between classes to gather, study, pray, play, or eat. We owe it to them to see to it that they know their Catholic Church cares for them and is supporting their vocation to remain Catholic!

The biggest concern I hear is about whether the next generation of Catholics will carry on the faith. I think you and I know the answer to that. If we don’t support them, they will find a group of people that will and it may not even be Christian! If, on the other hand, we demonstrate our great desire to support them, give them a place they can call home, let them grow in their faith through the sharing of our faith, then we will have a new generation of Catholics that will live the faith greater than our grandparents.

Keep and grow in faith

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**Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth 2009/10 directory**

The 2009/10 Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth directory is currently available for purchase. The cost for each directory is $15. Send a check, payable to North Texas Catholic, to Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, 3100 South College St., Fort Worth, TX 76108, along with mailing address.

For more information, contact Judy Russeeu at (817) 560-2452 ext. 308.

**Natural Family Planning class to be offered at two locations**

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

To register for a course starting May 23, call the Reverend Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations, at (817) 560-3300.

**St. Paul the Apostle Parish to host Divorce Care series**

St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 5508 Black Oak Ln., Fort Worth, is offering a Divorce Care Series with the addition of a companion support group for Kids (DC4K) to run with it. The series, distributed by Church Initiative, will begin Thursday evening through June 23. Support groups and helped programs have been through the divorce process themselves, have been trained in the program, and have attended Care for Kids and Teaching Children Safe program. The content for each session is age appropriate. DC4K is geared to children five-12 years of age, and the adult series is geared for those age 13 and older.

Deacon Ron Anere emphasizes, “Although this program is a scripture-based program, it is not a Bible study. The topics presented are personal and professional input from professionals in pastoral care, entertainment, and social services to help the participant focus on the job of healing.”

There is no cost for this series. Pre-registration is preferred. Call the parish office at (817) 388-9295, leave a name and number, a team member will return the call.

**St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group meets at three locations**

The St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly throughout the month. The group meets at St. Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller, at 1301 West 96th St., Arlington, and at immaculat Conception Parish in Denton at 2355 Bonnie Bray St.

For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampg.com, or e-mail to Mark at men@smarmypurity@yahoo.com.

**Engaged Encounter to be offered at CRC May 14-16**

The next Engaged Encounter weekend will be held May 14-16 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4305 Bridge St., Fort Worth. The weekend retreat helps couples examine the long commitment they are making to one another and to better understand the rich meaning of Christian marriage.

The weekend is presented by a team of trained counselors and a chaplain. It lasts from Friday evening to around noon on Sunday. Throughout the weekend, the presenting team will give a series of talks. There will be time following each talk for personal reflection. Each couple will also have an opportunity to share ideas, dreams, feelings, and hopes with each other.

To register, contact Jeri Edmunds at (817) 346-9520. Registration从而使 compound more readable, it is better to organize such elements, such as the following Catholic bookstores, St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group, into separate sections or tables.

**St. John Parish to offer weekly summer camp**

St. John the Apostle Parish will offer a weekly summer camp June 1 to Aug. 13 for students one through eighth grade. The camp will be available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Registration may be accepted for the entire summer or specific weeks. In addition, a summer camp for kindergartners will be offered from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays only or Tuesdays and Thursdays for children ages one through five years. Registrations are also being accepted for 3-5 year olds.

St. John’s is located at 7341 Glenview Dr. in North Richland Hills. For more information call (817) 595-2964.

**Diocesan Singles Retreat to be held in May**

The Diocesan Singles Retreat will be held May 7, 8, and 9 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4305 Bridge St., Fort Worth. The retreat will include a day of sharing and intercessions.

The weekend is designed to “build your spirit and energy, welcoming God into your current life,” according to promotional materials. There will be a breakfast Saturday evening for those not staying overnight.

The cost of the weekend is $70 if paid in advance by April 21 and $80 after April 21. Participants are asked to bring linens for their room and share. Financial assistance is available if needed. For more information, contact Susan at (817) 346-9520.

**Silent weekend retreat to be offered at Montserrat May 13-16**

All are invited to attend the Contemplative Outreach’s annual Four-Day Silent retreat to be held May 13-16 at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 North Shady Hills. For more information, contact the retreat leader, Father Ernest Lee, at (817) 617-9941.

**Nolan’s Big Band Jazz Dance Revue to be held May 1**

The Nolan Catholic High School Jazz Band invites all to its annual Big Band Jazz Dance Revue Saturday, May 1 from 7 to 11 p.m. The disc will be held at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Arlington. A $20 cover charge per person will be charged. Appetizers will be available and drinks will be sold for $1. For more information, contact Kelly Alfonso at (214) 435-0022.
Despite having to move indoors because of rain, the Good Friday Stations of the Cross liturgy at St. Patrick Cathedral allowed North Texas Catholics to reverently meditate on the Passion of our Lord.

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Rain showers poured in downtown Fort Worth on Good Friday, April 2, setting an appropriate tone to remember the Passion of the Lord. The weather forced the annual Stations of the Cross liturgy to be moved from its scheduled site on Lancaster Avenue to St. Patrick Cathedral.

The annual Good Friday observance, led by Bishop Kevin Vann, is traditionally held outdoors in downtown Fort Worth as a public witness to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. "The angels are crying," explained Knight of Columbus Vic Stevens to a local parishioner when the liturgy was moved inside. Although the rain forced a change in plans, it took nothing away from the solemnity and significance of the worship service.

Angelina Corso of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller was looking forward to experiencing the Stations of the Cross in an outdoor setting but was not disappointed by the turn of events. "It's especially important for young people," said the college student who plans to attend Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. "We have so much suffering and trials, and being here is the biggest comfort in the world," she said. "Christ died for us and He knows what we feel. If we lose ourselves and gain comfort from Him, it will be a rewarding experience."

Using a version of the Stations of the Cross introduced by Pope John Paul II on Good Friday 1991, Bishop Vann led the congregation to remember the late pontiff. "Today is the fifth anniversary of his death," he explained. "As we remember that, we should give thanks for the tremendous impact of his ministry as bishop of Rome and shepherding the universal church for 27 years."

As the bishop processed down the aisles of the cathedral stopping at each carved image of Christ's suffering affixed to the walls, members of the Knights of Columbus General Worth Assembly also held up hand-drawn artwork of the Passion reserved for the outdoor service.

Among the worshippers at the Stations of the Cross was Jamie Lewis who brought her children and a non-Catholic friend, Lori Schaefer, to the morning service. Both mothers had their children excused from public school classes, so they could observe Good Friday properly. "They've never done anything like this, so I wanted them to experience it," said Lewis, a St. Andrew parishioner. "I want them to hear the story of Jesus' suffering and focus on that instead of schoolwork. That's really all that matters."

Lewis, who was raised Catholic and remembers attending Stations of the Cross devotions as a child, appreciates the biblical approach offered by the updated version. "I like all the Scripture references and the reflections. It really drives the message home," she added. "It ties into our lives and we can see ourselves in the story."

Schaefer, who belongs to a Bible church, said the story of the Passion unites Christians regardless of denomination. "The service just followed the Bible and that's God's word," she said. "It's all true. It doesn't matter what denomination you are. We all belong to the family of God."
Winners in the Serra Club 2010 Poster Contest were honored at an awards ceremony Sunday, April 11 at the diocesan Catholic Center in Fort Worth.

Representing parish religious education programs and Catholic schools from across the diocese, students in grades one through eight created art works expressing the theme of this year’s contest, “The Year for Priests.” Monsignor Joe Schumacher, former vicar general for the Diocese of Fort Worth, presented the awards to the young artists, standing in for Vocations Director Father Kyle Walterscheid in congratulating the students and their parents.

“We suggested to the parish catechists and the Catholic schoolteachers that they share the passage from Hebrews 5:6 with the children,” explained Deacon Lynn Sowers, the director of the contest. “That passage proclaims, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ We invited the contest participants to reflect upon that passage and upon the character of the priest Melchizedek, who appears in both the Old Testament and the New Testament in Scripture. We were pleased that we had an excellent response to this year’s contest, with several participants at each grade level.”

The first place winner for each grade level received a $50 prize; second and third place winners received a handcrafted religious pendant, created by local artist Janet Rodriguez of Hart Street Pottery and donated by Thompson’s Harveson and Cole Funeral Home in Fort Worth.

“The Serra Club devotes its efforts to promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life,” said Dcn. Sowers. “We sponsor this contest each year in the hope that seeds will be planted in the formative years of these young students.”

Members of the Serra Club of Fort Worth, a chapter of the International Serra Club, work to support and encourage the call to the ordained priesthood and religious life. For more information about the USA Council of Serra International, visit the Web site at www.serraus.org. For more information about the Fort Worth chapter’s annual poster contest, contact Deacon Lynn Sowers at St. Peter Church in White Settlement at (817) 246-3622.
When she was 17, her mom told her the abortion would only hurt for a little while...

but 40 years, 2 sons and 3 grandkids later, it still hurts.

Unwanted abortions are common. Healing is possible.

Maxine was 17 when her mother demanded the abortion and ordered her to keep it a secret. Her mom said it would only hurt for awhile. But decades later, the pain is still there.

Millions of women like Maxine suffer silently for years after abortion. Few abortions are freely chosen or fully informed. The heartbreak often surfaces later in the form of clinical depression, anxiety, eating disorders, or substance abuse. Fortunately, women like Maxine are learning they are not alone, and that hope and healing are possible. Learn more online.

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Diocesan Deaf Community volunteers at St. John Outreach Center for Lenten service project

Members of the Deaf Community gathered at St. John the Apostle’s Outreach Center on March 27 to help prepare items to be given to clients in need of food and other outreach services. This activity was part of the Deaf Community’s commitment to pray, fast, and help others during the Lenten Season. Colleen Cargile, director of the Center, gave the volunteers a tour of the department, helping them to better understand exactly what the department does to help those in need in the community as well as those in their sister community in Patzun, Guatemala.

CUSTOM PILGRIMAGE TOURS – DFW – 2010 & 2011
-PORTUGAL & SPAIN - Oct 26 – Nov 3, 2010 - $2,099
-Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Avila, Segovia, Madrid, Toledo
-HOLYLAND, Mt Sinai, Jordan, Oct. 25-Nov. 5, 2010- $2,699
-Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Dead Sea, Catherine’s Monastery
-TURKEY – St Paul, Revelation Churches – Nov 2-12 2010-$1,999
-Istanbul, Ephesus, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Thyatira
-IRELAND – March 10 – 19, 2011 - Springbreak - $2,149
-St. Patrick’s week, Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork, Tralee, Galway & Knock. Ext. to Edinburgh, Scotland – March 18 –22,-$699

Prices - per person dbl occ. incl.air/taxes DFW, breakfast/dinner/daily, 1st class hotels (pvt. facilities), local escort, coach + driver
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509 W. MAGNOLIA, FORT WORTH
HIGH MASS SECOND AND FOURTH SUNDAYS
LOW MASS FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS

Save the Date:
Charity & Truth in Ministry: Our Call to Service
Friday, April 30 - Saturday, May 1, 2010 - Austin, Texas
Featuring Fr. Louis Brusatti, Theologian and Professor at St. Edward’s University
Carmelites in Vertebrate, Pope Benedict’s third encyclical, links charity and truth in the pursuit of justice, the common good, and authentic human development. In doing so, the pope calls all men and women to think and act anew. Charity & Truth in Ministry: Our Call to Service is an opportunity for volunteers in church ministry to gather and reflect on our common call to service. Participants are also offered workshop choices to hone skills in specific areas relevant to their ministries, including fundraising, volunteer retention, Hispanic outreach, legislative advocacy, re-entry services and wrap around services for families of the incarcerated, and more.
Sponsored by the Texas Catholic Conference Charity & Justice Department.
For more information call 512-379-5882 or visit www.xcatholic.org

St. Mary parishioners process live Stations of the Cross up Hemphill Street on Good Friday

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

Along, grieving procession of the faithful walked solemnly up Hemphill Street in Fort Worth at midday on Good Friday.

Serious-faced guards cracked their whips, women mourned, and passers-by received a realistic rendition of what it might have been like to walk with Jesus through his Passion.

“It was not just an act,” said Father David Bristow, pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption, “it was a re-presentation. The people were not acting; they were reliving the Passion of Our Lord. It reminds me of the re-presentation of the Seder meal — it is not just reenacting something, it is re-presenting it. And it is similar to re-presenting the Lord in the Eucharist every Sunday. That’s as real as it gets.”

St. Mary’s Way of the Cross has been a long-standing annual custom at the parish, according to Fr. Bristow, with the past five years’ events planned and chaired by parishioner Lupita Gonzalez. For years the Passion and death have been produced only in Spanish, but this year the narrative was bilingual. Martha Galvan read the story over a loudspeaker from the truck that Galvan and two others, played by Jose Luis Gonzalez and Osvando Perez, hung on wooden crosses until Jesus’ death.

When the three were on the crosses, Deacon Hector Salva spoke to the crowds, in English and Spanish, on the subject of forgiveness.

The procession and crucifixion concluded after three hours, at which time Jesus’ body was taken down and gently carried off by six of the guards who formerly had flogged him.

“It feel sad and I cry at the crucifixion,” Lupe Gonzalez said. “I remember Jesus died for us.”

Organizing the Way of the Cross is only part of what Lupe Gonzalez does for the parish. She also is active in all three prayer groups who participate in the Good Friday event. She is president of Un Pueblo de Dios, who worked on the procession, vice president of the Guadalu-panas, who prepared food for the entire crowd for after the play, and she participates in the parish’s Ultreya group, whose members helped with traffic and distributed water to people in the crowds.

Sara Drummond, a friend of Lupe Gonzalez, attended the Way of the Cross, although she is neither a parishioner nor a Catholic. She said the event was meaningful because, “We have no idea how the image of us walking on Hemphill must have affected people. It was a way to witness and to stand up for Jesus.

“Even the children and teens giving out water to strangers,” Drummond said, “how many times has Jesus told us to do that? I hope the teens know what a great witness they were.”

The man who played Jesus has done so for five years, and wishes to endure the pain, to carry the cross, to be beaten with the ropes Lupe Gonzalez said. He and his wife pray for a month before Good Friday, and before the service begins they go to a quiet place together and pray some more.

“I pray too,” Lupe said, “and ask the people to pray for me and for Fr. David. This is a big, big responsibility. Many work on it, and Jesus is the principal reason. He is the pinnacle of our lives.”
New principal named at St. Andrew School

Charles Llewellyn has been named principal of St. Andrew School in Fort Worth. He succeeds Janet Camarillo, who has served as interim principal since October.

Llewellyn earned an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Arlington and a graduate degree in education from Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth.

Since 2006, he has served as assistant principal at Hillwood Middle School in the Keller ISD.

Prior to that, he taught social studies at Haltom High School in the Birdville ISD.

A native of Fort Worth and a graduate of St. Rita School in Fort Worth, Llewellyn is active as a volunteer at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville. He participates in youth and young adult ministries, in the parish Men’s Club, and in the Why Catholic? adult religious education program. He will begin his service at St. Andrew School July 1.
Carmelite Auxiliary luncheon and fashion show raises $20,000 for Carmelite Sisters

Supporters who attended the Carmelite Auxiliary’s 25th Annual Divine Affair Luncheon were in for a double-header.

They watched a fashion show, where members, children, and even grandchildren were models. But they also saw a fashion show of hats, worn by master of ceremonies Chris Hull, DO, whose vast collection of headgear is legendary in Fort Worth, and in his sports medicine office.

This year Dr. Hull wore an assortment of hats of religious significance, and as he began the auction he said, “The bishop has done this in years past and he couldn’t be here today. He asked me to wear his hat. So I am wearing the miter of the office of bishop, cardinal, and pope.

“This is a special miter that was made for me and I added the symbol of Mary to the front,” Dr. Hull said, indicating the fleur de lis embroidery. “Of course it is also the symbol of the New Orleans Saints.”

This year’s fashion show/auction played to a crowd of about 105, said Karen Hull, Carmelite Auxiliary president-elect, who will be inducted into the office of president this spring. The event, she said, would provide a check for $20,000 to be presented to the nuns.

Thanks to a group of members who expanded the organization’s database, Karen said, a much larger mailing was sent out this spring, bringing in higher “angel donations” for the year.

The nuns receive no support from outside their small community, Karen said, except for donations, and sales of the products, such as stationary and cards, they produce in the convent. “I think our role with them in the community is very important. We are a vital part of their support, and they rely on us and pray for us. And we need all the prayers!”

— Karen Hull
Carmelite Auxiliary
president-elect

For questions contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, Director of Vocations, Fort Worth Diocese at 817-560-3300, ext. 105, or email kwalterscheid@fwdoc.org. Apply online or for additional information visit http://www.vapinfo.org.

Sponsored by the Serra Clubs and Diocesan Vocation Offices of Dallas Fort Worth.
Diocese-wide retreat brings 1,400 women closer to Christ

Story and Photos by Juan Guajardo

Editorial Assistant

When Father Valdemar González stepped into Nolan Catholic High School, he was quite surprised.

The audience at the day-long retreat wasn’t the largest that Fr. González, a visiting priest from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, had seen. But it did leave him impressed.

Fr. González and retreat leaders were expecting 400 women, but approximately 1,400 women attended the first Congress for Women held on March 13 in Nolan’s Hartnett Arena.

“God attracted a lot of women, and in the end, they will bring their men, their husbands. And so it goes . . .” Fr. González said.

“It is a chain reaction.”

The Spanish-language retreat focused heavily on forgiveness and healing, coming to better understand Christ’s love and mercy, and opening one’s heart to God.

Several talks, Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, a healing ceremony, and prayer, and a ‘forgiveness’ service inviting women to let go of their men, their husbands. And in the end, they will bring their men, their husbands. And so it goes . . .” Fr. González said.

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But he kept that fact to himself and spent the week closing himself to the retreat.

Near the end of the week, Fr. González started crying during Eucharistic Adoration, and he fell to his knees, grief overwhelming him, feeling “broken-hearted.” So he said to Jesus in the Eucharist, “I already said I was leaving, but if you want me to become a priest, at this very moment — I don’t know how you’re going to do it — come and tell me you love me, and that you want me to become a priest.”

A few moments later, a priest he had never met came up to him, knelt beside him, spoke to him in tongues, and then said, “Jesus wants you to become a priest. He loves you.” Fr. González’s sadness left, and he began praising God.

But the next day he couldn’t believe what had happened, and he started making up excuses and explanations for the incident.

“God cannot be like this,” he remembered thinking. “How can God be like this; how can God respond so quickly, if God is over there?” Fr. González pointed toward the sky.

But he learned otherwise during the Mass concluding the retreat. During the consecration, he again said to God, “If You really want this, come tell me here.” At that moment, “the nuns began to fall. One fell right next to me and said, ‘Lord, You have manifested Yourself to us today so that those who do not believe will believe, so that their faith will grow, their hope, their love,’” he recalled.

Fr. González went on to become a charismatic priest evangelizing in some of the poorest parts of Mexico and occasionally at retreats in the U.S.

“God wants to heal your heart, always,” he told the audience of women. “Jesus said, ‘Come to me the tired, the weary, the overwhelmed, and I will bring you rest.’ The Lord has healed my heart, and the Lord keeps on healing it. Always, when you let God heal you, God will restore you . . .”

Father Ángel Infante, of All Saints Church, gave the second talk, referring to Jesus’ visit with the Samaritan woman who previously had five husbands and was living with yet another man.

“Six men is the reflection of the insatiable thirst in the life of this woman,” Fr. Infante explained. “How many things have you tried in your life, trying to find your fill? And in all reality, nothing has fulfilled you, not even your husband. Not that he’s a bad man. A finite person cannot fill humanity’s desire for such an immense love.

“Who, then, is the seventh man?” he asked, as 1,400 women replied, “Jesus.”

Fr. Infante continued, “The Lord is the Seventh Man for all of us because He is the great love for whom we wait . . . Today we realize the joy that this Seventh Man offers — his life on the altar to feed us.” Fr. Infante said, as hundreds of amens rose from the crowd.

Retreat-goer Isabel Castañeda enjoyed the Saturday retreat.

“It is something incredible, marvelous,” said Castañeda, who found it beneficial to her sister and herself. “Here even a dead person comes back to life; the only thing we need to bring in our purse is faith, hope, and love for Christ. What made me feel better is that the Holy Spirit touched my sister; this is what most filled me . . .”

Andrés Aranda, delegate for the diocesan Hispanic Ministry Office, said the women-only retreat and the men’s retreat which took place in January, will continue, thanks to their having drawn so many participants and their effectiveness in reaching the hearts of those in attendance.

“We are very happy because we know that the people want to be evangelized; they want to experience Jesus, but we have to supply the means with which to do this,” Aranda said. “The numbers are good, and the people leave very happy.”

Fr. Infante was also happy with the success of the retreat, adding that the large turnout meant more people would benefit.

“The experience of God in a retreat is one more sign that He is in our lives . . . He not only leaves one sign, He leaves many more signs throughout our lives,” said the priest, who just began leading charismatic retreats about a year ago. “We have to take all the signs that He gives us.”
Some say religion damages us but the Cross of Christ heals

By David Mills

In the very first line of the book, the author declares: “Religion has wrought untold misery in human affairs.” This was the opening of a prestigious lecture recently given at Yale University by one of the world’s most famous literary critics. You can imagine the learned audience nodding in approval.

It’s the sort of line the Christian passes over with a shrug — an unfortunate truth, and one unbelievers trot out all the time, but one you can’t contest. It’s a cultural platitude up there with “Cholesterol is bad for you” and “Don’t drink and drive.” It forms the conversations we have when something religious comes up, especially when someone religious has done something bad and made the evening news.

As a result, as religious people we begin any discussion of religion at a disadvantage. It’s as if you’ve applied for a job at the zoo but had to admit that your family was famous for eating endangered species, and that your brother had just roasted a California condor and your aunt is the famous author of Fifty Ways to Prepare Mountain Gorilla. You may throw open your refrigerator and show the people from the zoo your tofa and bean sprouts, but they’ll still wonder whether you can be trusted. Unless you cut your family out of your life completely, you’ll be guilty by association.

The usual Christian response is to say that some religions are worse than others, or that religions are no worse than any other type of belief, or that religions fail when people fail to live up to their teachings. Your brother may eat California condors, but you’re a vegetarian.

The responses are mostly true, but they look too much like excuses. As a Christian, you are still held responsible in some way for the Crusades (always described in the most prejudicial ways possible), the Salem witch trials, German Christians who supported the Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, the massacre of the cult members in Jonestown, and that hateful group of Baptists who disrupt military funerals. You’re a vegetarian, but your brother eats California condors.

And now, to add to the burden, Christians are blamed for the sins of other religions, under the category of “fundamentalism.” This seems to mean any belief that we have been given a word from outside the world that tells us how to live in this world, because (supposedly) people who think they know what God wants will force others to do what they say and hurt them if they don’t. The same impulse drives the suicide bomber and the people saying the Nicene Creed at Mass.

The Christian will want to ask whether it’s dangerously “fundamentalist” to believe that God wants us to love others as He loved us, and to give up our lives for them as Jesus gave his life for us. Christians might point out that this is a “fundamental” upon which hospitals and soup kitchens have been built. No “fundamentalism” about the love of God demonstrated on the Cross, no hospitals and soup kitchens.

The real problem with “Religion has wrought untold misery” is that we can’t speak about “religion” in any useful way. Many a Christian questions whether religion as such actually exists, or whether “religion” is just a word carelessly used to cover a great diversity of systems of belief and practice that don’t have much to do with each other, besides a belief in some sort of higher power. (I am indebted for this insight to David Bentley Hart’s very helpful book Atheist Delusions.)

What exactly, for example, does the Islamic terrorist have in common with Mother Theresa of Calcutta? Does calling them both “religious” tell us anything at all useful? Can we generalize from these two examples to say anything of value about religion and the various religions as a whole?

Not much, is the answer to all three questions. The secular idea of “religion” is more than a little unfair. It’s more or less the same as holding you responsible for the murderer who lives six blocks away because you both live in the same town, or have the same ethnic heritage, or both have two legs and two arms. You’d expect more evidence of a real connection before being sentenced to jail for his crime.

David Mills, author of Discovering Mary, is now the deputy editor of First Things. David can be reached at Catholicsense@gmail.com.

Holding on to God first requires letting go

By Mary Morrell

“We find by losing. We hold fast by letting go. We become something new by ceasing to be something old.” — Frederic Buechner

“Let go!”

My father’s voice seemed to reverberate against the ice laden branches that graced the gully where I sat, frozen to a level ground and laughing along with everyone else. It was the first of my lessons in the importance of letting go, and of the role fear has in keeping us frozen where we stand — or sit.

The spiritual life is a journey often impeded by the things to which we cling. Our culture of competition pressures us, and our children, to acquire and accomplish beyond a healthy point. Fearful of falling behind, or being different, we cling to the world’s way of doing things. Jesus shows us that it can, and should, be different. Perfect love casts out fear, offering hope instead, if we can just open our hands long enough to surrender everything to God.

“Hope,” wrote Thomas Merton, “is proportionate to detachment. It brings our souls into the state of the most perfect detachment. In doing so, it restores all values by setting them in the right order. Hope empties our hands in order that we may work with them. It shows us that we have something to work for, and teaches us how to work for it.”

I often think of how hopeful Mary Magdalene must have felt when she went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body. But then, he calls her name: “Mary!” She responds, “Rabboni!” reaching out to touch her beloved teacher. But Jesus tells her, “Don’t hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to God, my Father.”

When I was younger, I wondered at how Jesus could be so insensitive. Mary, who loves Him so much, who is now filled with hope at his appearance, wants nothing more than to touch Him. But Jesus stops her. Today I understand; it was the first of my lessons in the importance of letting go, and of the role fear has in keeping us frozen where we stand — or sit.

Looking up I saw our fathers, having a knee-slapping good laugh at my expense. But I was still happy to see them. After all, a laughing rescuer is better than no rescuer.

My father dropped a rope to within inches of me and told me to grab on. “I can’t!” “Why not?” “There’s a big hole down here. I’ll slide in!”

In spite of my father’s assurances that I wouldn’t disappear into a huge hole in the ground, I resisted his instructions. Finally, he resorted to using my name, a well-known tactic among parents. “Mary! Let go of that branch and trust me!”

So I did, one finger at a time, and grabbed on to the rope. As he pulled me up, I heard the tearing of my snowsuit and realized any security I had in being frozen to a fallen tree trunk. That would be frozen, literally, since my snowsuit had bonded to the gnarled bark as afternoon turned to early evening.

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People as pollution?

view shows need for respect for human life

By Mary McCluskey

A writer for Canada’s Financial Post has been hailed for her candor in calling for a “planetary law, such as China’s one-child policy, [as] the only way to reverse the disastrous global birthrate” and “prevent the destruction of the world’s other species, vegetation, resources, oceans, arable land, water supplies, and atmosphere.”

Pesticides, oil spills, litter — everyone agrees that these pollute the environment. But what about … babies?

Environmental groups have long argued that population growth causes a host of environmental problems, but many of these groups have traditionally avoided the controversial promotion of birth control as a solution. Recently, though, a brazen new group of environmentalists has become more vocal in their promotion of birth control as the most efficient and cost effective means of reversing the degradation of the earth’s resources, the pollution of our water and air, and even global “warming.” People are seen as the threats to the environment instead of stewards of creation.

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Earlier this year, the London School of Economics published a paper noting that, by breathing, human beings emit on average 2.3 pounds of carbon dioxide every day. The authors claim that the most efficient way to reduce global warming is to make “family planning” even more widely available in the developing world. In population control circles, family planning can mean forced contraception, coercive sterilization, and even coerced abortions.

Statisticians at Oregon State University have calculated that “the carbon legacy and greenhouse gas impact of an extra child is almost 20 times more important than some of the other environmental…

Ecological responsibility must, “safeguard an authentic ‘human ecology’ and thus forcefully reassert the invisibility of human life at every stage and in every condition, the dignity of the person and the unique mission of the family, where one is trained in love of neighbour and respect for nature” (no. 12).

The Holy Father therefore advocates, “the adoption of a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, on the promotion and sharing of the common good, on responsibility, on a realization of our need for a changed life-style, and on prudence …” (no. 9)

As we seek solutions to environmental concerns, let’s remember that we must never eliminate human problems by eliminating human beings.

Mary McCluskey is Special Projects Coordinator at the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more about the bishops’ pro-life activities, go to www.usccb.org/prolife.

Kathy fears her automatic response to a phone call on a busy day may result in her being kicked out of the club.

There won’t be any Mother’s Day presents this year. In fact there’s a good chance I’m going to be kicked out of the club.

What’s the maternal version of, say, a lawyer being dis-barred? Is it dis-carpooleed? For grandmothers, is it dis-rocker-chaired?

I missed the mark on mothering yesterday, when a car hit my daughter, and I didn’t even ask how she was. My daughter’s call came about 3 p.m., a busy time at my office, when I’d just finished a long series of conversations. So I answered the phone with this: “I’ll call you back.” There was no “What’s new?” “No ‘Hi to the kids,” not even a cursory, “Everything ok?”

It was a full-blown neglectful-mother response, and now, reliving it, I realize it also falls into the shoddy-grandmother category.

“I knew you were busy, Mom,” Meredith said later. (She called back to inform me of the event, before her siblings tweeted it or posted it on Facebook. She is a quick thinker, even while bruised.)

“I got side-swiped,” she said. “More like body-swiped. I was parked along the curb after school, and when I walked around to my door, a car brushed me into the side of my car.”

“It was probably a college student,” Meredith said, “driving too fast and too near the side of the street.” (I almost heard my daughter use the words “young whip-snapper,” I swear.)

“Her side-view mirror broke when it hit me.”

“Now, my mothering status would have been infinitely worse then, if I had said, “Ooh! Seven years bad luck.” But even as a bad mother, I’m not that bad a mother.

Instead, I tried to relate: “I got hit by a car once in France. But the streets in Provence are so small, there wasn’t even room enough to fall.”

“Well this was a perfectly wide street,” Meredith declared, “I don’t do that anymore!”

“The bad part is, I started thinking, “DID I jump into the street?”

“You were delirious, dear,” I said, “you were shaken.”

By Kathy Cribari Hamer
Fort Worth community leaders gather to dedicate and open new Catholic Charities building

Catholic Charities’ big dream had begun on a windy March day in 2008, with hard hat-clad Holy Family School children planting “flags of hope” around the perimeter of where a new Catholic Charities building one day would stand.

But on that windy March day the Building Hope effort had just begun; the perimeter was imagination; and the building project itself was nothing more than hope.

So, 25 months later, the joy could not have been more complete than it was when the imaginary perimeter had been replaced with the Fischer Family Campus, and where the children once stood were supporters and donors who had, in fact, completed the building — with hope.

“This is the culmination of a huge dream, and a lot of prayer and great vision, of how to better serve the people of Fort Worth,” Catholic Charities Board Chair Cathy Hirt said, at the grand opening ceremony. “Our capacity to grow has doubled. And even though we are not happy to know there are so many in our community who need our help, it is great news that we will have the capacity to help them.”

“There is a psalm that is common to all our faith traditions,” Bishop Kevin Vann said to the crowd of more than 500 people, as he began the prayers, “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.”

Special guests, gathered in front of the $4,000-square-foot facility, included Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief, and his wife Rosie, who had served as the project’s honorary chairpersons. Also present were Fort Worth councilmen Joel Burns, Zim Zimmerman, Carter Burdette, and Sal Espino; also Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley, along with county commissioners Roy C. Brooks, and Marti Van-Ravenswaay; and school board member Juan Rangel.

“Rosie and I were here when the first dirt was turned,” Mayor Moncrief reminisced, of the fall 2008 groundbreaking “the first time I’ve ever turned it in a tractor that big!” Both he and Bishop Vann smiled at the reference to their groundbreaking adventure—one driving an orange excavator, and one in a yellow front loader.

“But I knew everything was going to be all right,” the mayor said, “because we had the good Lord on our side.”

The Fort Worth Diocese donated four acres of land for the new structure, and they added a $1 million gift to be used to endow the building for long-term sustainability. But the Catholic community and the Fort Worth community as a whole, joined together to complete the $17 million project at 249 Thornhill Dr, near Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish.

“It’s the Catholic Charities way!” Heather Reynolds, president and CEO said, in her remarks at the ribbon cutting.

“Caring for others is the bedrock of any successful community,” Mayor Moncrief said in his own address, “It is indeed the Fort Worth way, it is also the Catholic Charities way — we have no pride of authorship. We are mighty proud to have been the partners of Catholic Charities.”

The family of Charles and Jill Fischer gave the project’s first $3 million donation, and “The Building Hope campaign was an easy one for us to support,” Kenny Fischer said, on behalf of his parents and siblings. “Providing for the hope of individuals and those of the families, being able to provide hope, vision, treat them with dignity and respect — it was a very easy project to support.

“Each of you played an amazing role in this campus,” Reynolds told the crowd, who applauded, showing their support for her and for the program, “and it seemed like whenever asked, you only knew one word and that word was ‘yes.’ The need for this campus is great.” When the journey started in late 2005, she said, “We were serving 77,000 people. Last year we served over 111,000 people. We’ve gone from 24 programs to 34 programs.”

“Because of you, Catholic Charities had one of its best days on Monday, March 29, because we opened the doors of our brand new facilities to the clients — the real reason all of us are here,” she recalled, as she saw people streaming into the building in order to receive service.

“I was brought to tears with that.”

Dignitaries cut the ribbon for the new Catholic Charities Fischer Family Campus, including (from left to right) Charles and Jill Fischer, who donated the project’s initial $3 million, Catholic Charities President Heather Reynolds, Rosie and Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief, and Bishop Kevin Vann.

Fort Worth community leaders gather to dedicate and open new Catholic Charities building

The Fort Worth Diocese does the ribbon-cutting.

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County Judge Glen Whitley presented a proclamation for the opening of Catholic Charities. “We were asked to come up with names for seven rooms that are housing some of the people in this facility,” Judge Whitley said. “The court thought long and hard about this,” he said, “and we chose to use words that would hopefully instill something into the folks who would be living in those rooms. The names that came up were the words hope, peace, joy, faith, confidence, patience, and respect.

“And I think that when the people started out 100 years ago they certainly hoped that the institution would develop into what we’re here celebrating today. That it would always show respect to the folks and the people we serve; that they would have the patience to deal with the problems along the way. Faith — there was no question that faith was always a part of this. Peace — hopefully being able to provide the people with peace at the moment when they really need it in their lives.”

Among the dedication day prayers was the passage from the Gospel of Matthew: “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?” He will answer them, “Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.”

“As we reflect on these words of the Lord Himself,” Bishop Vann said, “we realize they are more than just words but an obligation of faith, of discipleship, to make known his love to those most in need. The faith while it is in our hearts must also be in our hearts and lives, be part of who we are … every day that God gives us to serve Him.”

“Thank you to all who have made this possible,” the bishop said, “because making this possible makes the Gospel come alive for all who come here, and makes the presence of God a reality.”
Catholic Charities workers move into their new home

“Building Hope” had been completed and the Catholic Charities staff felt it. Finally, they realized, they had the facilities to better meet the burgeoning needs of the community. And they could do this under one roof.

During the March 24 and 25 move-in to their new home, the agency radiated energy and expectation, with little reminder of typical moving day chaos. Departments created order in their specific nooks, which had been situated and furnished creatively, practically, and conveniently, and occupants seemed intent on arranging the building to benefit clients, who would begin arriving the following week.

Even in the newness of it all, Catholic Charities staff maintained the constant vision that is the signature of their organization: The people they will help — now better than ever.

“We designed it so all the client flow is on the first floor,” said Ray Ramirez, director of business and facilities. “This is the heavy traffic area, and the second floor is for those who go out to the homes themselves and do the home visits, and for administration.”

Catholic Charities serves the needs of more than 111,000 people in 28 counties. They offer 34 different community services, such as working to assist and resettle refugees, provide housing and pharmaceutical assistance for the elderly and disabled, and financial assistance (including training to better handle their finances) for the working poor. They have programs to reduce infant mortality, prevent the spread of HIV to newborns, and provide for parent education to help prevent child abuse. They recruit, train, and certify foster families, help families secure healthcare, and provide shelter for abused and neglected children.

“Central intake is located on this floor,” said Amy Borg, from Catholic Charities; here’s how we arrange the building to benefit clients, who will make the phone call to the appropriate place, get the name of the person the client should see, so that they’re directly connected to them, they can get to that place, and say, “I’m here to see so and so.”

A circular desk sits near the building’s front entrance, and, “We have greeters — kind of like Wal-Mart,” said Sarah Ramirez, vice president of development and public relations, “to greet people at the door so they feel welcomed and engaged.

“If a family comes in and says, ‘I don’t know what I need, but here’s my situation,’ our central intake can say, ‘We’ve got this at Catholic Charities; here’s how we can help you.’

“Or if we don’t offer those services,” Ramirez explained, “central intake won’t let the client go — we don’t just turn them away. They will make the phone call to the appropriate place, get the name of the person the client should see, so that they’re directly connected to them, they can get to that place, and say, ‘I’m here to see so and so.’”

The new facility was designed practically, but the environment is also creative and sensitive. Art was selected to convey certain emotions, such as in the financial assistance offices, Ramirez explained, “We always say it’s about a hand up, not a hand out,” so all the art is pictures with hands.

In refugee services, she said, the artwork is drawn from varied cultures; in the counseling areas, the art design is whimsical, light and airy. In the St. Joseph Health Care Trust section, where they manage diocesan funds that provide medical services for individuals who can’t afford them, “The art is playful — kids playing in water, trampolines,” Ramirez said. The art always connects, somehow, with the services provided in each particular area, she said.

Former Catholic Charities facilities are represented in the building as well, with the St. Teresa statue in the garden, and the chapel altar.

Stations of the Cross and stained glass all having come from the original St. Teresa’s Home.

Catholic Charities provides chapel service every Wednesday, Ramirez said. Because of the diverse nature of the organization’s employees, preachers of different faiths are invited to do inspirational talks at these services.

Helping with the move-in were volunteers Ramirez said, “who just have a feel for the mission.”

“Theoretically our concept of volunteers and donors is that we want the mission of Catholic Charities to be like a child in your family. You’re not gonna let children do without, and when they call on you for help you’re going to respond immediately — and that’s what we do!”

Helping with move-in day were Catholic Charities board members, among them Jill Fischer, who, with her husband Charles, of the Harbison-Fischer Manufacturing Company, had given the initial $3 million contribution to the $17 million project. Mrs. Fischer, at the groundbreaking 18 months ago, had said the construction marked “the beginning of the realization of all our collective dreams.”

On move-in day she and fellow board member Shirley Matzinger pitched in wherever needed, and at midday provided box lunches for personnel.

“The new building is such a mazelike-building thing,” Matzinger said. “And I think it’s important for the staff to know we appreciate what they do.” Matzinger has been on the board six years and Fischer is in her fourth year.

“I was part of the big fundraiser,” Matzinger remembered. “It was exciting. We looked back now and it’s gone by so fast!” She was referring to the campaign to build the new Fischer Family Campus and the move from the Burchill Road location, formerly the most comprehensive of Catholic Charities offices. She described that complex of buildings as something of a maze, with workers and programs scattered here and there.

“And now, to have it all under one roof — it’s like a miracle really. It’s like a miracle.”
Nine parishes have surpassed their goals

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individual parish. Additionally, 75 percent of all funds a parish raises beyond their goal amount is likewise retained for the parish to use for their own needs. These funds can be used for specific items identified by parish leadership.

“Some parishes are using campus workshops for physical plant projects and maintenance, and others are starting their own endowed trusts for the future needs of their parish,” said Meegan Wright, executive director for the campaign. “Every parish in this diocese will benefit from this effort, and it is exciting to see the momentum building. It truly shows that the parishes and their families are taking ownership of the campaign.”

Parishes now exceeding their campaign goal include:

- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Decatur
- St. John the Baptist, Bridgeport
- St. Mary, Jacksboro
- Our Lady of Guadalupe, Wichita Falls
- Santa Barbara, Knox City
- St. Mary of the Assumption, Megargel
- St. Matthew, Arlington
- immaculate Heart of Mary, Fort Worth
- St. Mary’s, Gainesville

Workshops will ease Missal transition

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the new translation,” said Dcn. Warner. “Any time there is a change in the way we pray as a Church, people have a hard time with it. I think people will find the language of the new translation to be very prayerful in that it is a more poetic language which addresses God, rather than being everyday spoken language.”

The new translation is a translation of the Latin text of the Mass parts and will include changes in the responses and prayers of the people, and Eucharistic prayers of the priests. Dcn. Warner noted one example of the changes is the congregation’s response to “The peace of the Lord be with you.”

“... the response ... in Spanish, French, German, Italian is, ‘And with your spirit,’ and now the English will be, ‘And with your spirit.’”

According to an announcement at the Vatican in late January, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments is pulling together the final version of the English translation of the missal. Because bishops’ conferences approved the Roman Missal in sections over a period of years, a congregation official said, a final review and minor edits were needed to ensure consistency.

Additionally, 22 workshops intended for clergy and diocesan leaders will take place in each of the nation’s 15 regions between April and November. They are sponsored by the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship and the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, in cooperation with the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy and the National Association of Pastoral Musicians.

Each seminar will be staffed by either Monsignor Anthony Sherman, executive director of the Divine Worship Secretariat, or Father Richard Hilgarter, associate director. Topics to be covered include the historical and theological context of the new missal; the role of the priest celebrant in both proclaiming and singing the texts; the impact of change on both priests and lapeople; and suggested strategies for implementing the new language of our families and that all three parishes hit goal during our first pledge weekend.”

Father Hector Medina, pastor of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, attributed the success of All Things Possible in St. Matthew’s to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the strength of the campaign volunteers. “In our early meetings,” he said, “I explained the campaign and we prayed over it. They convinced me that with continued prayer, and by taking the plan and making some adaptations for our own needs, we could make our goal.

“As we worked all together,” Fr. Medina continued, “we brought in artworks and groups to take charge of each element of the plan, and those groups then brought in all the parisioners who had signed up as volunteers.

“By involving so many in every part of the campaign, the message of the campaign made its way to everyone in the parish, and we saw an incredible response!”

For more information about the All Things Possible campaign, visit the diocesan website at www.fdioc.org or contact the campaign office at (817) 560-2452 ext. 170, or via e-mail to Executive Director Megan Wright at MWG112@AOL.com.

Weigel says presidential insertion into Church discussion historic

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It was in the context of the culture war he described that Weigel talked about President Barack Obama’s graduation address at Notre Dame last year.

He said there have been “passionate debates” within various religious communities over doctrine, identity and boundaries for centuries.

“You never in 227 years of these arguments, never has a president of the United States, in the exercise of his public office, and speaking as president, intervened in any such decision, in any such a political advantage, until that is, May 2009 here at Notre Dame,” Weigel said.

Obama’s appearance on campus ignited a national debate on the university’s status as a Catholic institution. Critics said his support of legal abortion and embryonic stem-cell research made him an inappropriate choice to be commencement speaker at a Catholic university.

Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, Notre Dame’s president, stood by his decision to invite Obama. Afterwards he said he hoped the president’s visit would “lead to broader engagement on issues of identity and of deep significance to Catholics.”

In his speech Obama urged those bitterly divided over abortion and other issues to adopt an approach of mutual respect and dialogue.

Weigel said Obama had suggested in his speech that good Catholics were those who agreed with a so-called common-ground approach to life issues and implied that those who questioned that approach were bad Catholics.

Weigel called for building a compelling Catholic public pro-life presence in “Obama’s America.”

He urged his listeners to do to that by, among other things, calling for a new appreciation of the dignity of human life; building alliances with people of various faiths who share Catholics’ pro-life views; and acknowledging shameful behavior of some priests and bishops regarding child sexual abuse but also promoting the fact that the Catholic Church is now the country’s safest environment for children and young people.

In her remarks April 10, Condi said science does not address some questions considered fundamental to the abortion debate, such as the rights of the mother versus the rights of the developing embryo/etus.

But science answers definitive-ly when life begins, she said, using a series of slides to demonstrate that it starts at fertilization.

Condi noted that the accepted scientific definition of death is when the brain ceases organisational function and it’s irreversible. She said she finds it puzzling, then, that some people do not accept that life begins with fertilization, where there is “clear evidence for organis-ational behavior and function.”

Lewis thanked the students for being “pro-life heroes and heroines,” for not finding an excuse to sit on the sidelines and for being the voice of the defenceless.

“I rejoice in the fact that God is using you to make this difference,” said Lewis, who also spoke April 10. “Take pride that men and women are out there, who you may never know, who now have a child because of something you did or said or maybe because you prayed.”

In a dinner address April 9, Cardinal George said Pope Benedict XVI did not use the term “abortion” in his social encyclical but he said the document reflects the gift of human life and the protection of life both in good law and in a good economy.

To achieve that good law and good economy, he said, the pope ties justice — which governs the exchange of goods — to love.

“That’s what the pope was trying to do in his letter Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth), to say that a complete separation of love and justice means that we’ll have a society that not only doesn’t support life, but in fact kills it,” Cardinal George said.

“God has created the face of children and the face of young people. In their dreams, in their laughter, in their smiles, in their tears, in their laughter, in their love, in their joy.”

—George Weigel

Father Sojan George, HGN, pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Decatur; St. John the Baptist, Bridgeport; and St. Mary, Jacksboro said, “I was confident we would do well because we have met our goal for Sharing in Ministry the past few years, but I was surprised and impressed by the generosity of our families and that all three parishes hit goal during our first pledge weekend.”

“In our early meetings, I explained the campaign and we prayed over it. They convinced me that with continued prayer, and by taking the plan and making some adaptations for our own needs, we could make our goal.”

—Pastor, St. Matthew Parish, Arlington
Reported cases of priest sexual abuse continue to decline

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON — Reported cases of child sexual abuse in U.S. dioceses and religious institutes declined between the 2008 and 2009 audits to evaluate how church institutions are complying with the U.S. bishops’ 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The 2009 annual report also showed that costs to dioceses and religious orders for lawsuits and other allegation-related expenses also decreased. In addition, it reported on how dioceses and religious orders are complying with provisions calling for education about sexual abuse for children and all who work with them, and for handling all allegations of sexual abuse, among other obligations included in the charter.

According to the 2009 report released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops March 23, a total of 513 victims came forward with 513 credible allegations against 346 people who were under the authority of dioceses or religious orders. That represents a decline from 2008 in all three figures of between 33 and 36 percent. The vast majority of those allegations related to incidents dating back decades, the report said.

The U.S. bishops adopted the charter in response to a wave of reports of sexual abuse of minors involving church personnel and criticism of how the church had handled allegations of abuse in the past.

In 2004, the combined number of reported allegations of abuse for religious orders and dioceses was 1,192 allegations against 756 people by 1,083 victims, figures which have generally declined each year since then.

Data collected by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University found 398 new credible allegations of abuse were reported by dioceses and eparchies in 2009; the allegations were made by 398 victims against 286 individuals. In reports from religious orders, there were 115 people who made 115 allegations involving 60 priests or brothers.

Among the allegations reported by dioceses, six involved children who were under the age of 18 in 2009. The remaining 392 cases involved adults who alleged they were abused when they were minors. Among religious orders, none of the new allegations involved people who were under 18 in 2009.

Costs to dioceses and religious orders declined by a total of $316 million, with the vast majority of that from a $310 million decrease in the amount paid out in legal settlements between 2008 and 2009. Religious institutes reported a $44 million overall drop in costs, including $42 million less in legal settlements. Dioceses and eparchies paid out $272 million less than in the previous year, including $269 million less for settlements.

As in previous years, a few dioceses and eparchies declined to be audited. They included: the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, and the eparchies of St. Peter the Apostle in El Cajon, California, for Chaldeans; Newtown for Melkites in Massachusetts; Our Lady of Nazareth in New York for Armenian Catholics in the U.S. and Canada; St. Joseph of Parma, Ohio, for Ukrainians; and Our Lady of Deliverance of Newark, New Jersey, for Syriac Catholics. The report said they declined for “various reasons.”

On most provisions of the charter, only a few dioceses were cited during the year for failing to comply with aspects of the procedures it sets out. In nearly all cases, the report said, those problems were corrected by the time the annual report was completed.

Data for the survey of allegations and costs was collected by CARA between December 2008 and February 2010. CARA received responses from 193 of the 195 dioceses and eparchies and from 159 of the 219 religious institutes.

The two dioceses that did not respond to the CARA survey were Lincoln and Gallup, New Mexico. Gallup participated in the audit with no problems, but the CARA section of the report said the diocese was unable to get its material together by the deadline for the survey.

Church has made real progress in protecting children and young adults since implementation of Charter

Editor’s Note: The following list of the efforts, programs, structures, and accomplishments flowing from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ passage of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People at its meeting in Dallas in 2002 was compiled by the USCCB’s Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, headed by Teresa Kettelkamp.

What the Church is now doing to protect children and reach out to victims is serving as a guide for many others, both here in the U.S. and in other countries.

Here are the quick facts nationwide as verified by the audits:

• Safe environment training is taking place in every diocese.
• Background checks are conducted on Church personnel who have contact with children.
• We have trained more than 2 million clergy, educators, employees, and volunteers in parishes in how to create safe environments and prevent child sexual abuse.
• We have prepared more than 5.5 million children to recognize abuse and protect themselves.
• We have run criminal record checks on more than 1,600,000 volunteers and employees; 167,000 educators; 53,000 clerics; and 6,000 candidates for ordination.
• Dioceses have codes of conduct.
• Victim Assistance Coordinators and Safe Environment Coordinators are in every diocese.
• Dioceses/eparchies have Healing Masses, retreats for victim/survivors, and other reconciliation events.
• Counseling assistance is provided to victims.
• Bishops are meeting with survivors/victims.
• The Church maintains a Zero Tolerance policy on abusers which means that if there is a credible accusation against a priest or deacon, they are out of public ministry forever, regardless of how long ago the offense occurred.
• Dioceses/eparchies require intensive background screening as well as psychological testing for those wishing to enter the seminary.
• Audits of dioceses have been conducted every year for the past seven years.
• Diocesan Review Boards exist in every diocese and there is increased lay involvement.
• Dioceses are cooperating with public authorities on allegations.
• A National Review Board has been established that is composed of lay experts.
• The Church issues a national public report annually which is shared with the Holy See.
Trials will leave priesthood, Church stronger, priest-psychologist says

HOUSTON (CNS) — The U.S. priesthood and the Catholic Church itself will emerge from today’s crises stronger than ever, according to a priest-psychologist. Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, an expert in treating psychological and spiritual difficulties, especially among priests, spoke April 13 at an annual convention in Houston of the National Federation of Priests’ Councils. Although a look at newspapers and blogs gives the impression that the priesthood is in disrepair, discouraged, and disintegrating, “Msgr. Rossetti said two studies he conducted of 4,000 priests between 2002 and 2010 show that “priests like being priests; they find great satisfaction in their lives.” “Rather than disintegrating under the pressure and stress of our day, it appears to me that our priests are becoming stronger,” he said. “As the public negativity rises and the chorus of naysayers crescendos, I believe our priests and Church are actually the better for it,” he added. “Truly, the more the Church suffers, the stronger it becomes.” Msgr. Rossetti, now a clinical associate professor of pastoral studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, was accepting the NFPC’s Touchstone Award, presented annually to a priest “whose service in the Gospel of Jesus Christ exemplifies the purpose and goals of the federation.”

Catholic Charities affiliates aid in job creation, placement

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Charities USA and its many U.S. diocesan-based affiliates have long been known as social service providers. But they’ve also been part of the job-creation movement, even in the midst of tough economic times, and even for some of the hardest-to-place job seekers. Catholic Charities leaders detailed some of their initiatives at the Capitol during an April 20 congressional briefing on job creation and innovative workforce policies. In Cleveland, Catholic Charities conducts job training for felons. In Chicago, a food-service program instituted by the Catholic Charities affiliate there has an 85 percent job-retention rate, impressive given the turnover in the food-service industry. In Baltimore, Catholic Charities expanded a feeding program into a multi-point service program that each year helps hundreds of poor Baltimoreans out of the ranks of the jobless. Still, more could be done with congressional action, said Father Larry Snyder, president and chief executive of Catholic Charities USA. “The (economic) recovery must be an inclusive recovery, and we are here today to discuss the absolute necessity of job creation and job stability as the foundation that must exist in order for this to happen,” he said.

Sessions on marketing, religious education among NCEA highlights

MINNEAPOLIS (CNS) — The annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association April 6-8 in Minneapolis featured keynote speakers and workshops tailored to address different Catholic school interests including marketing, administration, and religious education for the 8,500 Catholic educators, administrators, and leaders in attendance. Mary Bray, principal at St. Joseph School in Prescott, Wisconsin, said that she attended the convention for the opportunity to be in solidarity with other Catholic educators and to be on “the cutting edge” of education, both in technology and curriculum. St. Joseph, which has kindergarten through sixth grade, has 177 students and seven teachers. All the teachers attended, Bray said. “It’s a great place for our teachers to hear national speakers and gain access to info they don’t get in our tiny school,” she told The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Derrick Gordon, a physical education instructor at St. Ignatius Loyola School in New York, said he hopes to share what he learned at the convention with his colleagues and students especially on the topic of bullying and harassment, addressed by several presenters during the convention.

Gordon does not see bullying as a current issue in his 500-plus student school, but by learning more about it, he believes he could easily recognize and address its signs before it grew into a problem, he said. Dominican Sister Joan Sorge, from St. Agnes in Springfield, Illinois, attended the convention to receive a distinguished principal award during an April 6 banquet. She said attending the convention gives her a feeling of unity in faith and work among educators.

“There’s a spirit here that’s positive, and amidst some of the difficulties of the Church, it’s a light that shows in the darkness. That light will penetrate the spirit and help us carry that forward,” she said.

Archdiocesan superintendent of schools Marty Frauenheim welcomed the crowd at the Minneapolis Convention Center, urging them to allow the three-day convention “to rekindle in you great pride as an American Catholic and to reaffirm for you your own ministry.”

NCEA president Karen Ristau is no stranger to the Twin Cities. Earlier in her career she was a faculty member and director and chair of programs in education leadership at the University of St. Thomas, where she established, along with another colleague, the university’s first doctoral program in educational leadership. She joked with educators that people who came to Minnesota needed a special spirit to survive. She added that the “special spirit of NCEA is the Holy Spirit” and said the association was “created to do big things, far beyond surviving.”

Ristau said one of those big things on her agenda is an issue in the news recently — bullying in schools.

Jesus Father James Martin, one of the keynote speakers, brought down the house in his general session presentation, “Laughing with the Saints: Joy, Humor, and Laughter in the Spiritual Life.” He told the convention participants that the Church has plenty of funny expressions. “We install an archbishop — install, like a dishwasher or refrigerator.” He also noted that when Archbishop Timothy Dolan was installed as the archbishop of New York, a reporter asked him, “What do you condemn?” The archbishop, showing his own sense of humor, replied: “Instant mashed potatoes and light beer.”

During several convention workshops audiences filled every seat, sat down on the floor and stood in the doorways. Convention attendees came from across the United States and from the Netherlands, Nicaragua, New Zealand, and Japan, among other countries.

Bob Zygowski contributed to this story.
Engineers begin assessing ways to rebuild destroyed Haitian parishes

By Dennis Sadowski

Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON — Traveling along the dusty roads in the mountains southwest of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, Maryland engineer Larry Newman tried to imagine what the future might hold for thousands of Haitians left homeless by January’s massive earthquake.

Newman’s focus was on helping Haitians regain a sense of belonging and comfort. With guidance from the Haitian Catholic bishops’ conference, the way to do that, it was suggested, was through their parishes. The question remained: How?

“The whole idea is to re-establish the church as community down here,” Newman told Catholic News Service by phone April 8 as he traveled from Port-au-Prince to the coastal community of Jacmel to the south as part of a weeklong trip to assess local needs. “The magnitude 7 quake, said Oblate Father Andrew Bernardito Auza, papal nuncio to Haiti.

“While not a formal reconstruction plan, the document offers a basic framework through which the U.S. and Haitian churches can begin to address the massive reconstruction needs of parishes in the earthquake zone.

The idea is to get several key parishes up and running as quickly as possible and to get schools functioning so young people can begin to experience some normalcy in their lives and where people can gather in a safe place in weather emergencies, the document said.

“This is about gaining momentum focused on church communities which have been battered and decimated and also imperiled as far as the living of the faith is concerned,” Fr. Small told CNS.

The proposal was also calls for each construction project to be similar in design so each parish or chapel site can be completed quickly and without massive reengineering.

Haitians would be hired under the “cash for work” concept to build the structures in each community.

For Newman, who has worked for several years with CRS, to digitally map its project sites, the destruction caused by the earthquake was beyond comparison with anything he has ever seen.

“A lot of (the destruction) we’re seeing down here is a result of the construction techniques that have been used over the years in the absence of building codes,” he said. “One of the things the Church wants to make sure is what gets rebuilt is rebuilt to international standards.”

New bishop ordained in northern China, first on mainland since 2007

HOHHOT, China (CNS) — Bishop Paul Meng Qinglu, 47, ordained bishop of Hohhot April 18, became the first bishop ordained in mainland China since December 2007.

Bishop Meng told the Asian church news agency UCA News April 19 that since the diocese had no bishop for five years, the priests had become used to managing their parishes in their own way. “I will strive to bring diocesan management back on the right track so that pastoral and evangelistic work will be gradually enhanced,” he said.

The bishop received a papal mandate and the approval of the Bishops’ Conference of the Catholic Church in China for his ordination, UCA News reported. As is the tradition in China, diocesan leaders elected him as their candidate for bishop in June 2005, a month after his predecessor, Bishop John Baptist Wang Xian, died at age 79.

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Vatican offers online summary of clerical sex abuse procedures

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican has placed online a summary of its procedures for handling sex abuse allegations against priests, in order to suffer the Church’s commitment to protecting children and punishing offenders. The online “introductory guide” lists the investigative steps, trial options and possible penalties for clerical sex abuse of minors, including dismissal from the priesthood. It underlines the local bishop’s responsibility to follow civil law in reporting such crimes to the appropriate authorities. “This is to help the public understand how we facilitate, how we proceed. This is transparency, transparency of the Vatican. We have nothing to hide,” Passionist Father Ciro Benedetti, a Vatican spokesman, said April 10. The Guide to Understanding Basic CDF Procedures Concerning Sexual Abuse Allegations is available in English at: www.vatican.va/resources/resources_guide-CDF-procedures_en.html.
Priests called to make the Gospel visible in their lives, says pope

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY — In a world where many people are confused about right and wrong and even about the meaning of life, priests are called to guide them to Christ, Pope Benedict XVI said.

With just two months left in the Year for Priests, the pope began a series of audience talks about the priest’s task to teach, sanctify, and govern.

Speaking on behalf of the groups present at the audience, Vatican officials wished the pope a happy birthday in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Polish, and Italian. The pope was to celebrate his 83rd birthday April 16.

Although the international media was still running stories about clerical sex abuse, the pope did not mention the scandal in his audience talk, but rather spoke about how priests are called to identify so completely with Christ that their words, actions, and lives fully represent Christ on earth.

The teaching mission of a priest is especially important today because “we are living amid great confusion about the fundamental choices in life,” about the meaning of life and about what is good and what is bad, he said.

Like Jesus who taught the crowds that followed him and gave them direction, the pope said, priests today are called to help people find their way toward goodness, joy, and eternal life.

The priest’s task is “to make present amid the confusion and disorientation of our age the light of the word of God, the light that is Christ himself,” he said.

“The priest does not teach his own ideas” and “he does not speak on his own” or try to gather a circle of admirers around him, but he proclaims the word of God, the pope said.

At the same time, the pope said, “he is not a spokesman who simply reads a text that is not his own.”

A priest must identify so closely with Christ that the Lord’s teaching and values become the priest’s own, he said.

In preparing homilies, teaching religious education classes, counseling people, “and especially through that unwritten book that is his life, the priest must teach — not with the presumption of one who tries to impose his own truth, but with the humble certainty of one who has encountered the truth, been seized and transformed by it,” the pope said.
May 9, Sixth Sunday of Easter.
Cycle C. Readings:
1) Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
2) Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23
Gospel John 14:23-29

By Jeff Hensley

Frank was a postman and a faithful cradle Catholic. When he came into contact with the Catholic charismatic renewal in the late 1970s, he had a rather dramatic renewal of his faith and a deepening of his personal relationship with God. Having just gone through a difficult divorce, he ended up raising a family of teens and preteens mostly by himself.

Amid all this turmoil, Frank delivered the mail and continued to seek God’s assistance as he experienced more of his presence in his daily life. Frank asked me once if I ever felt God’s loving presence so strongly that it seemed as though He were right there with me, showing his love by embracing me and holding me in his arms.

The question didn’t seem strange because I had known such moments myself, sometimes in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or sometimes simply by being in church, surrounded by other Catholics, many of whom I knew well because of involvement in my parish.

In the passage from Revelation today, John describes his vision of the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. Although his image is of a physical city, he explains there was no temple, “for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb.”

I suspect that the moments of joyful unity with God that Frank experienced are foretastes of a time when we will have God’s presence with us continuously, foretastes of the joy of heaven.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus offers his disciples another promise of God’s presence with us: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and the Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.” Then He gives them the gift of his peace.

Having said this, it would be wrong to conclude that the absence of these momentary feelings of God’s presence means God is absent from us. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta experienced an extraordinarily long period without them, even as she was obedient to God’s call to serve the poorest of the poor. How much greater must be the reward of those like her when they come into God’s loving presence on their arrival in heaven.

QUESTIONS:
Have you experienced God’s presence as you prayed, worshipped or served the needs of others? Have you sometimes contemplated the joy of heaven and being in God’s presence?

The abundant life Jesus promised is an Adventure

By Jeff Hedglen

“The glory of God is made evident in a heart filled with love,” said Jesus in a parable. “Therefore, the abundant life is a life of love…full-on pursuit of God is anything but boring.”

A life of heartfelt, no holding back, full-on pursuit of God, is anything but boring. Everest. My friends and family can attest to the fact that the “holy grail” of trying to get their kids out of bed for Mass, much less get them to the point of desiring to attend, is an adventure worthy of another sequel in the Indiana Jones saga. Additionally those of us who know young adults know that they are more likely to “get down” to modern music at a low club and get down on their knees to participate in the great sacraments of the Church, and talking to them about this will only get you a look that would vote you off the island on any season of “Survivor.”

So the adventure is out there to be had. Like most adventures, it is filled with a mixture of difficulty and delight. A life of heartfelt, no holding back, full-on pursuit of God, is anything but boring. In fact, you might say it is a life of abundance, which is just the message Jesus is sharing with us in John’s Gospel when He lets us know that He did not come so our lives would be mundane. He says: “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

For God it is not enough that we possess resurrection power. We just heard a story at Mass of disciples who were beaten for spreading the Good News. They were released — “They left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name” (Acts 5:41). They found joy in the midst of their suffering. This is the true nature of the abundance Jesus came into our world to give us.

The real adventure, the real abundance, is much closer than we might think. Sure we can travel the world and walk in the footsteps of Jesus and the saints, but this is not a requirement to experience all that Jesus has for us. I have seen enough documentaries of missionary activity in developing countries to know that abundance has less to do with material possessions than it has to do with internal peace and joy.

To truly experience the abundance Jesus desires for us, we must embody the message of the first beatitude — “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

Remember always having a problem with this beatitude. It seems to say that we are blessed if we are poor in spirit. I always thought being rich in spirit would be better. Then I learned that a more direct translation of this verse says: “Blessed are the Anawim, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The word Anawim is an ancient term used to refer to the widow, the orphan, and the extremely poor. In biblical times these people were totally dependent on others for their wellbeing. Thus Jesus is saying, blessed are those who are totally and utterly dependent on Me. For when we measure our lives based on our connection to Jesus, we experience not only abundance and adventure, but the Kingdom itself.

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

“Whoever loves me will keep my word and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.”
— John 14:23
An act of love, purgatory prepares souls for heaven

By Lucas Pollice

As we saw in the last article, God does not desire to merely “cover up” or “forget” our sins, but rather wishes to completely heal, cleanse, and purify our souls from the very last speck of sin and corruption. Thus, those who die in friendship with Christ but are still imperfectly purified (are still wounded or disfigured by already forgiven sin) undergo a final purification in purgatory to prepare their soul for entrance into heaven. Purgatory is the great final act of God’s love and mercy!

Purgatory: Who needs it?

The Book of Revelation clearly shows that nothing unclean can enter heaven. “Nothing unclean will enter (heaven), nor anyone who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those who enter whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27). In other words, a soul with even the tiniest speck of sin or corruption would be unworthy of heaven and being in the presence of God. Thus, there are three possible things that can happen to a soul at the moment of death or what we call the particular judgment:

1. A soul who has fully cooperated with God’s grace on earth and is in the perfect state of grace and is completely detached from sin and the effects of sin is worthy of heaven and will go straight into paradise.

2. A soul in the state of unrepentant mortal sin is in heaven and hell, this would be impossible. Those in heaven do not need forgiveness, while those in hell cannot be forgiven.

3. However, many souls die in the state of grace, or in friendship with God, but are still wounded by venial sin (a sin that dimishes grace but does not destroy it). While this soul is not yet worthy of heaven, it is spiritually alive and needs final purification for entrance into heavenly glory. This soul will go to purgatory, or the place of final purification, for a time until it is completely purified of all sin and corruption and then enter into heaven to be with the blessed for all eternity.

Purification in purgatory may also be needed for mortal sins that are forgiven through sacramental confession, but the temporal punishment of the sin may still remain. For example, a drug addict may repent and confess using drugs, and is forgiven his sin and restored to the state of grace. However, the temporal effects of that sin remain: the soul and the will remain distorted, the desire for drugs remains, etc. While the soul is in friendship with God, it remains in need of purification. In other words, through forgiveness of sin, God may free someone from eternal punishment of sin (damnation) and restore grace at the moment they repent (sacramental confession), but the residual effects, or temporal punishment of past or present sins, remain and need to be expiated.

While no suffering is enjoyable, all of us at some point in our life will subject ourselves to suffering to obtain a certain goal. For example, if one desires to lose weight, one will subject oneself to a variety of sufferings such as less or no food, that food tastes bad, painful and difficult exercise, etc. Yet one wills it and perseveres in it because they desire to be thin.

Now, let’s see how a soul in purgatory thinks. In purgatory you are able to see sin for what it truly is and what it has done to you, others, and God. You know where you could be (hell), if it were not for God’s gift of mercy and salvation. The best part is that you see where you are going (heaven), and want to get there very badly. You are going to want to rid yourself of horrible and disgusting sin. You are praising God for his love and mercy while you suffer. Yes, it will be painful and not be fun, but you are being healed and prepared for heavenly glory!

Where is purgatory in the Bible?

While you will never find the word “purgatory” in the Bible, there are many implicit references to it that make it clear that purgatory has always been a part of the Christian Tradition:

Matthew 12:32: “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” Here Jesus is implying that some sins can be forgiven even in the next world. If there were no purgatory, then the Holy Spirit (who we are not worthy of) would be unforgivable.

1 Peter 4:6: “For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead that, though condemned in the flesh in human estimation, they might live in the spirit in the estimation of God.” Here Peter speaks of the Gospel being preached to the dead in order that they might live. Again it supports the possibility of salvation after death is put forth in the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15: Paul speaks of “the Day (which is the Day of Judgment) which will make its appearance with fire, and fire will test the quality of each man’s work.” It goes on to say that “He himself will be saved, but only as one passing through fire.”

2 Maccabees 12:44-46: This is probably the clearest reference to purgatory in the Scriptures: “For if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from sin.” If purification after death was not possible in purgatory, then why would there be offerings of atonement after death? The idea of purification of sin after death was a part of the Jewish tradition even before the coming of Christ.

Prayer for the souls in purgatory

As members of the Church, we belong to the Mystical Body of Christ. However, the Church exists both past, present, and future. elegationary suffering of the Church.

God in his loving plan allows that each of us, as members of the Church, can merit or obtain graces for others by offering our prayers and daily sufferings for those who are in need of grace. “In my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24). St. Paul is not saying here that Christ’s sufferings were somehow insufficient or incomplete, but that Christ wills that we assist in obtaining and applying the graces of the Redemption for others through our prayers and sufferings.

Thus, the members of the Church in purgatory (the Church Suffering) are aided through grace obtained by the prayers and sufferings of the members of the Church on earth (the Church Militant) and the intercessory prayers of the saints in heaven (the Church Triumphant). Therefore, everyday sufferings and disappointments can become for those of us on earth a moment of grace and merit for not only ourselves but also for others who are suffering on earth and also for the souls suffering in purgatory. This is the beauty of intercessory prayer and redemptive suffering. Our sufferings can be for us a means to holiness and a powerful aid for others to overcome sin and grow closer to Christ by uniting our suffering with his suffering. It is a powerful opportunity to grow in virtue and love for others. Or else we can squander these “hidden” moments of grace that are given to us each and every day.

Consequently by uniting our sufferings to Christ’s sufferings with love, our suffering also becomes salvific, for we share in the redemption of Christ; we are co-redemers. Co-redeemer does not mean equal to Christ, but rather with Christ. He allows us to and expects us to participate in his redemptive suffering by uniting our sufferings to his in order to obtain graces for ourselves and others. Remember, we share in every aspect of the mission of Christ, even in his redemptive suffering. He has will that we participate with him by sharing in his redemptive suffering of the cross. It is in no way diminishes his perfect, full, and everlasting sacrifice, we simply share in it and become powerful instruments of Christ’s grace and mercy!

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

Cobertura reciente ha distorsionado y omitido mucho sobre la respuesta del papa y la Iglesia hacia la crisis de abuso sexual

**Estimados Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo,**

como probablemente ya se han enterado, ha habido mucha cobertura en los medios de comunicación con respecto a los trágicos casos de abuso sexual que desafortunadamente han ocurrido en la Iglesia Católica durante los últimos 40 años.

La cobertura reciente se ha centrado alrededor de algunos casos de abuso que han surgido en Europa, que supuestamente han implicado a Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, ahora el Papa Benedicto XVI. Se han tenido conversaciones con algunas personas aquí, y en otros lugares, de que esto es un asunto muy serio que actualmente está en la mente de muchos católicos. Como pastor de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, quisiera tomar un momento para tratar este tema tan preocupante.

Primero, nosotros como miembros de la Iglesia debemos reconocer que el pecado de los abusos sexuales, por parte de los sacerdotes, es una trágica y profundamente preocupante realidad que ha sucedido en la Iglesia. Nunca podremos minimizar el inmenso daño que ha sido infligido por algunos sacerdotes, que no sólo han herido profundamente a las víctimas del abuso, sino que también han provocado un grave escándalo en la Iglesia y en el mundo entero.

Como obispo de la Diócesis católica de Fort Worth, me he sentado con víctimas de abuso por sacerdotes. Hermanos y hermanas en Cristo, he visto el daño devastador y duradero que han tenido que soportar los familiares y víctimas del abuso sexual por un sacerdote. Siempre me complace y expreso mi profundo dolor por cualquier abuso sexual que las víctimas tuvieron que soportar a manos de un sacerdote. En esos momentos me complace y comienza a orar para que todos alcancen la sanación y la reconciliación en sus vidas. Una de mis principales preocupaciones durante toda esta cobertura reciente es que se vuelvan a abrir viejas heridas en individuos que han sido abusados sexualmente en el pasado, y ahora resulten en sufrimiento adicional.

Nosotros, como el Cuerpo de Cristo debemos hacer todo lo que podamos para evitar que suceda este tipo de abuso por cualquier persona que esté envuelta en, o sea parte de un ministerio dentro de la Iglesia Católica. Es por esto que nuestra diócesis, durante los últimos siete años, hemos dedicado una enorme cantidad de recursos y tiempo desarrollando nuestro Programa de ambiente seguro para niños para ayudar a los voluntarios, o los que estén en cualquier tipo de ministerio en la Iglesia, a estar conscientes de los signos y evidencias de abuso, para así poder proteger a niños y jóvenes contra abusos sexuales de cualquier clase. Esto debe ser y continuará siendo una prioridad importante en la vida y misión de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Al mismo tiempo, nosotros como católicos debemos ver este triste capítulo en nuestra Iglesia como una ocasión para reafirmar de nuevo la bondad de la Iglesia, y para ser testigos positivos. Lleva todos, a través de nuestro propio buen testimonio, y siendo fieles a la llamada del Señor a la santidad y caridad. Debemos ver esta tragedia como medio para la purificación, y tomar en serio la llamada a convertirse en seres humanos y rechazar el ser esclavizado por el pecado en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas y vocaciones. Durante esta época de Pascua, hacemos esto en cada Misa dominical cuando renovamos nuestros votos bautismales y nos comprometemos con la ayuda de la gracia de Dios a rechazar a Satanás y al pecado, y vivir nuestras vidas con grane, esperanza y amor.

Sin disminuir la gravedad y el sufrimiento de las víctimas, la alavancha de noticias recientes deja una impresión de que el abuso sexual de niños, por parte de sacerdotes, es un problema cada vez mayor. Los casos de abuso sexual que son el foco central de artículos ocurrieron hace varias décadas. Los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos han trabajado diligentemente en no sólo entender las razones detrás de los casos de abuso sexual, sino también en asegurarse de que no vuelva a ocurrir, por lo que no puede volver a ocurrir. En los estatutos para la retección de niños y jóvenes adoptados en una reunión de Dallas en el 2002, los Obispos de los Estados Unidos dijeron que “hemos reconocido nuestros errores y la parte que nos toca en ese sufrimiento; pedimos perdón y asumimos la responsabilidad nuevamente, por haber fallado con frecuencia a las víctimas y al pueblo católico en el pasado. Desde lo más hondo der nuestro corazón, nosotros, los obispos, expresamos nuestro profundo pesar y tristeza por lo que el pueblo católico ha padecido”. Además, una auditoria anual condujo por expertos externos, a nombre de la Conferencia de obispos de los Estados Unidos, categóricamente documenta que el problema de los abusos sexuales de niños, por parte de los sacerdotes, no se está expandiendo. A lo contrario, las acciones asertivas de los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos demuestran que hemos progresado a grandes pasos en la prevención a través de la investigación vigorosa de cada sacerdote, empleado, y voluntario de una diócesis.

Finalmente, reportajes recientes, distorsionados y discriminatorios, siguen que el Papa Benedicto XVI está implicado en el permitir o tolerar abuso sexual por parte de sacerdotes. El Santo Padre ha sido uno de los más vocales líderes dentro de la Iglesia contra abusos sexuales por parte de sacerdotes, desde que era Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger y servía como Prefecto para la Congregación para la DOCTRINA DE LA FE. Asistió extensamente en el establecimiento de legislación dentro de la Iglesia para ayudar a los obispos en tratar con sacerdotes que han abusado de niños.

De hecho, estos días son preocupantes para nosotros los católicos, pero debemos movernos hacia delante, reconociendo los errores y los pecados del pasado, y movernos hacia delante con una convicción más firme y vibrante de vivir nuestra fe católica, de modo que podamos ser testigos positivos y eficaces para el mundo y la cultura que nos rodea.

En conclusión, les pido a todos ustedes que por favor mantengan en sus oraciones a todas las víctimas del abuso sexual por cualquier persona, que ellos puedan experimentar la presencia sanadora de Cristo en sus vidas. También pido, especialmente durante este Año del sacerdocio, que oren por todos nuestros sacerdotes y seminaristas, que el Señor continue fortaleciéndolos con su gracia y que puedan todos ser fieles y sirvientes del Cuerpo de Cristo y que claramente sean la luz de Cristo para todos nosotros.

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**Dijo:**

“En el curso de mis tres años como presidente [de la Conferencia católica de Obispos de los Estados Unidos], hace 13 distintos viajes a Roma, y tuve casi siempre una reunión privada con el cardenal Ratzinger. Fue, sin duda, la voz de más apoyo en la mesa, y siempre parecía poseer la comprensión más grande de la seriedad, y lo significativo de reaccionar y responder con una acción fuerte”.

Desde el comienzo de su pontificado, Benedicto ha salido decididamente a encontrarse con las víctimas de los abusos sexuales, incluyendo aquellos que están aquí en los Estados Unidos durante su visita en 2007. Recientemente, ofreció un discurso con palabras muy fuertes a los obispos en Irlanda, en la cual indicó: “Las heridas causadas por estos actos son profundas, y es urgente reconstruir la confianza donde ha sido dañada. En nuestros continuos esfuerzos por afrontar de modo eficaz este problema, es importante establecer la verdad de lo sucedido en el pasado. Los obispos nos debemos hacer todo lo que podemos para asegurar la seguridad de nuestros jóvenes y de ocuparnos rápidamente de cada alegación creíble. El Papa Benedicto no sólo amonestó a los obispos en mantener un ambiente seguro, sino que también nos ocupemos de las transgresiones pasadas de los sacerdotes con los menores de edad, la mayoría de las cuales han ocurrido hace muchos años”.

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**+Monseñor Kevin W. Vann**

Obispo de Fort Worth
Retiro diocesano acerca más de 1,400 mujeres a Cristo

Por Juan Guajardo
Asistente Editorial

C uando el padre Valdemar González llegó al colegio Nolan Catholic, se sorprendió. El público en el retiro de un día no era el más grande que el padre González, un sacerdote de Nuevo Laredo, había visto. Pero sí lo impresionó.

El padre González y los directores del retiro esperaban 400 mujeres; sin embargo, aproximadamente 1,400 mujeres asistieron al primer congreso anual de mujeres, marzo 13.

“Dios atrae a muchas mujeres y, al final de cuentas, luego ellas van a traer a sus compañeros, a sus esposos, y por ahí nos vamos”, dijo el padre González. “Es una cadena de conversación”.

El retiro se enfocó fuertemente en el perdón y la sanación, comprendiendo mejor el amor y la compasión de Jesucristo, y abriendo el corazón a Dios. El retiro del sábado consistió de varias pláticas, adoración Eucarística, una misa, un servicio de perdón, y un servicio de alivio de las necesidades del ser humano.

El padre González inauguró el retiro. Durante la consagración, de nuevo le exclamó a Dios: “Si realmente quieres que yo sea sacerdote”. Después de unos momentos, un sacerdote que nunca había visto se acercó, se arrodilló a su lado, habló en muchas lenguas, y luego le dijo: “Jesús quiere que tu seas sacerdote. Él te ama”. La tristeza que sentía el padre González se evaporó, y comenzó a exaltar al Señor.

Sin embargo, el día siguiente no podía creer lo ocurrido, y comenzó a crear excusas y explicaciones para el incidente.

“Dios no puede ser así”, recuerda González. “¿Cómo puede Dios responder tan rápido, si Él está allá?” El padre González apuntó hacia el cielo. Pero comprendió la otra verdad durante la Misa que concluyó el retiro. Durante la consagración, de nuevo le exclamó a Dios: “Si realmente quieres que esté, dímelo aquí”. En ese momento, “se empiezan a caer todas las monjas. Una se cae al lado mío y dice, ‘Señor, Tú te has manifestado hoy con nosotros para que crea que el no cree, para que aumente su fe, su esperanza, su amor’, el padre contó.

El padre González llegó a hacerse carismático, evangelizando en las áreas más pobres de México, y ocasionalmente participando en retiros en los Estados Unidos.


El padre Ángel Infante, de la iglesia Todos los santos (All Saints Church), dio la segunda plática, refiriéndose a la visita de Jesús a la mujer samaritana, quien había tenido cinco maridos y que en ese entonces estaba viviendo con otro hombre.

“Seis hombres es el reflejo de la sed inquietante en la vida de la mujer”, explicó el padre Infante. “¿Cuántas cosas has probado en tu vida, tratando de encontrar esa saciedad en tu vida? Y realmente nada te ha llenado, ni tu esposo. No es que sea malo. No. Una persona finita no puede cubrir la necesidad del ser humano por un amor inmenso.

“¿Quién es el Séptimo Hombre entonces?” preguntó, mientras que 1400 mujeres contestaban, “Jesús”.

El padre Infante continuó, “El Señor es el Séptimo Hombre para todos porque Él es el amor tan grande que estamos esperando... Hoy tenemos la dicha que ese Séptimo Hombre ofreció su vida en el altar para alimentarnos”, dijo el padre Infante, mientras centenas de voces exclamaban ‘Amén’

Señor, continúa, tráemes a tu compañía para que te veas sanado
desde el día de hoy.

Encuentra algo en el retiro para trae
con ti hasta el día de hoy.

El Padre Ángel Infante levanta la Eucaristía durante la adoración en la Hora Santa.

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Isabel Castañeda, una participante del retiro, expresó: “Es algo increíble; es algo maravilloso”, comentó Castañeda, quien le contó a su hermana que lo sintió a través de la experiencia con Jesús, pero teniendo una nueva esperanza, a su resultado en tocar los corazones de quienes estuvieron presentes.

El padre Infante también estaba contento con el éxito del retiro, añadiendo que tantos asistentes querían decir que muchos más se beneficiarían.

“La experiencia de Dios en un retiro es una huella más de Él en nuestras vidas... El no solo deja una huella, Él deja muchas huellas a largo de nuestras vidas”, comentó el sacerdote, quien acaba de comenzar, hace un año, a liderar retiros carismáticos. “Hay que tomar todas las huellas que Él nos da”.

“Estamos muy contentos porque sabemos que la gente quiere ser evangelizada, quiere una experiencia con Jesús, pero tenemos que darles los medios,” dijo Aranda. “Son buenos números y la gente sale muy contenta”. El padre Infante también estaba contento con el éxito del retiro, añadiendo que tantos asistentes quería decir que muchos más se beneficiarían.

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“La experiencia de Dios en un retiro es una huella más de Él en nuestras vidas... El no solo deja una huella, Él deja muchas huellas a largo de nuestras vidas”, comentó el sacerdote, quien acaba de comenzar, hace un año, a liderar retiros carismáticos. “Hay que tomar todas las huellas que Él nos da”.

“Estamos muy contentos porque sabemos que la gente quiere ser evangelizada, quiere una experiencia con Jesús, pero tenemos que darles los medios,” dijo Aranda. “Son buenos números y la gente sale muy contenta”.

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Arzobispo Gómez de San Antonio nombrado coadjutor de la Arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles

WASHINGTON (CNS) — El Papa Benedicto XVI ha nombrado al arzobispo José H. Gómez de San Antonio como arzobispo coadjutor de Los Ángeles.

El nombramiento fue anunciado en Washington, el 6 de abril, por el arzobispo Pietro Sambi, nuncio apostólico ante los Estados Unidos.

El cardenal Roger M. Mahony actualmente dirige la arquidiócesis. Como coadjutor, el arzobispo Mahony actualmente dirige la arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles. El cardenal Sambi, nuncio apostólico ante los Estados Unidos, fue instalado como autoridad temporal hasta que se elija el sucesor del cardenal Mahony.

El arzobispo Gómez, de 58 años de edad, se convierte en el arzobispo Gómez en una declaración.

Una Misa de recepción para el arzobispo Gómez será celebrada en Los Ángeles el 26 de mayo.

El arzobispo, uno de los 22 obispos Opus Dei en todo el mundo, fue instalado para dirigir la arquidiócesis de San Antonio en febrero del 2005. Antes de eso había sido obispo auxiliar en Denver durante unos tres años.

El arzobispo Gómez es director efecto del Comité sobre migración de los obispos estadounidenses. También es director del Subcomité sobre la Iglesia en América Latina, del Comité ad hoc de la Biblia en español y del Comité sobre doctrina.

José Horacio Gómez nació el 26 de diciembre de 1951 en Monterrey, México. Asistió a la Universidad Nacional de México, donde obtuvo licenciatura en contabilidad. En la universidad, se unió a Opus Dei, institución dedicada a ayudar a las personas a convertir su trabajo y actividades diarias en ocasiones para acercarse a Dios.

El arzobispo Gómez estudió teología en Roma y en la Universidad de Navarra en España, donde obtuvo licenciatura en teología y doctorado en teología moral. Fue ordenado sacerdote de Opus Dei el 15 de agosto de 1978 en Torrejón, España.

Después de la ordenación siguió su trabajo pastoral con estudiantes de la escuela secundaria y la universidad en España y en México. En 1987 fue enviado a lo que entonces era la Diócesis de Galveston-Houston para ministerar para el Opus Dei en varias capacidades en Texas. Se hizo ciudadano estadounidense en 1995.


Durante su ocupación del puesto, el cardenal ha sido un líder nacional abogando para que el Congreso de los Estados Unidos apruebe la reforma abarcadora de inmigración. Ha servido como director del comité de doctrina de los obispos y actualmente es consultor para los comités de culto divino, migración y actividades pro vida.

Nacido en Hollywood, California, el cardenal Mahony es el primer nativo angelino y el tercer arzobispo de Los Ángeles en ser elevado a cardenal. De 1980 a 1985 fue obispo de Stockton, California, y anterior a eso fue obispo auxiliar de la Diócesis de Fresno, California.

El arzobispo José H. Gómez de San Antonio se dirige a los medios de comunicación en una conferencia de prensa en la catedral Our Lady of the Angels, en Los Ángeles, el 6 de abril. Al nombrar al arzobispo Gómez coadjutor de Los Ángeles, el Papa Benedicto XVI ha elegido un sucesor del cardenal Roger M. Mahony, a la izquierda. (Foto CNS/Tim Rue)

José H. Gómez

1951 Nació el 26 de diciembre en Monterrey, México.
1978 Ordenado sacerdote de la Prelatura del Opus Dei el 15 de agosto.
1980 Obtuvo doctorado en teología de la Universidad de Navarra, España.
1995 Elegido presidente de la Asociación Nacional de Sacerdotes Hispanos, luego se convirtió en director ejecutivo.
2001 Nombrado obispo auxiliar de Denver, donde sirvió como rector de la catedral, moderador de la curia y vicario general.
2003 Presidente del Comité Ad Hoc para la Biblia en lengua española de la Iglesia en América.
2005 Nombrado uno de los 25 hispanos más influyentes de EE.UU. por la revista Time.
2007 Unificó a líderes hispanos y obispos para la creación de la Asociación Católica de Líderes Latinos.
2008 Elegido consultor de la Comisión Pontificia para América Latina. Se convirtió en presidente del Comité para la Diversidad Cultural de los Obispos de EE.UU.
2009 Elegido presidente del Comité sobre Migración de los Obispos de EE.UU.
2010 Nombrado arzobispo coadjutor de Los Ángeles.

El Espíritu Santo y la Eucaristía

Un día de retiro en español para celebrar la fiesta del Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo, en el Centro de Casillas de Fort Worth, 2221 NW 26th St., junio 6, domingo, de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m.

Venga con sus amistades a alabar al Señor por su amor en la Eucaristía, y quédese con nosotros por amor. Será un día que podrá cambiar su vida y su amor a Jesús en la Eucaristía. No hace falta reserva previa. Matrícula a la puerta desde las 7:30 a.m. el mismo día. Donación a la puerta $25.

Para más información, sírvase llamarnos.

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

• Llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de asistencia para víctimas, al número (817) 560-2452, Ext. 201, o, mandarle correo electrónico a jlocke@fwdioc.org
• Llamar a la Sra. Laura en urgencias, al número (817) 770-4522, o a la Oficina de Vítimas, (817) 624-9411. Jesús le espera en junio 6, domingo.

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Rosary...

FROM PAGE 28
Although the threat of bad weather earlier in the day kept participation at the Rosary Vigil slightly down this year, the Pelletiers were pleased by the turnout. But the pro-life workers say they also need people outside the abortion clinics and at the crisis pregnancy center at other times of the year.

“We need their presence. The young mother we’re helping proves that,” Pat Pelletier points out. “Being there physically lets them know they are not alone. We can tell them we’ve been doing this a long time and can take care of them.”

The plight of troubled, expectant mothers is never far from the thoughts of Tracie and Dan Huber who bring their children to the Rosary Vigil every year. The Easter weekend activity is a tradition for the family who belong to St. Peter the Apostle Parish.

“We want them to grow up knowing it’s OK and cool to be out in public praying the Rosary for a good thing,” the father of seven explained. Huber believes the experience will make his children better Christians, students, and people. He encourages other parents to guide their youngsters in a similar way.

“I’d advise everyone to bring their children at least once. If they don’t come to the big Good Friday event, at least once a week to pray outside the clinic,” he suggested. “It will give the kids a real clear view of what’s good and what’s not.”

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 13
up.” (Okay, a little late for maternal concern, but I had answered the phone when she called the second time, hadn’t I? Doesn’t ‘close’ count in mothering like it does in horseshoes?)

Everybody at school — teachers, parents, even her children, checked on Meredith’s well-being. “A friend called last night and said she had stopped and talked to me after it happened — I don’t remember that part.”

“I am enjoying one thing,” Meredith said. “I like being the super woman cars crash into and then wither in my wake.”

“Who wouldn’t like being that person!” I agreed. Unfortunately I had been the person who is a worthless excuse for a mother.

Some of us never fail at the job God entrusted to us when he gave us children. My friend Debbie has a son Danny, who has always been a gift to her, but one day I got a vivid image of the gift she is to him.

We were having dinner at their family’s home, celebrating birthdays, and visiting with Debbie’s daughter Sarah, and her then fiancé, my son John. The large family group was gathered around the table; conversations and interactions were lively and unpredictable. It was the kind of chaos that is by no means unwelcome, because it is a sure sign to God that more than a few of us are gathered there, each one beckoning Him into our midst, where He belongs, always.

Some of us are closer to God than others, among them Danny. Danny has cerebral palsy, and still lives his life with such intensity, curiosity, and vibration that he becomes, to observers, a being we should emulate all days and in all things.

When both our families were Nolan Catholic High School families, I would watch Danny with his mother and father, Bill, at football games. Every time, Bill would lift his son from his wheelchair and carry him in his arms to the bleachers, so Danny could easily see his younger sister Sarah, dancing on the field during halftime.

The action showed a degree of love not everyone is privileged to observe, much less to enjoy.

I saw that love again, between Danny and Debbie, that night at their home during dinner. Debbie’s son swallowed wrong and began to choke.

She walked calmly to the end of the table, where Danny sat, and I was next to him, in the envied position of having a perfect sight of what happened next. Debbie knelt on the floor in front of him, took his hands in hers, and gazed into his eyes. “Look at me,” she said to Dan, who had become agitated and was making his swallowing situation worse.

“Look at me,” she said, and then, tenderly, with the demeanor of a mother who has done this before, and always with love, Debbie repeated, “Say Momma. Say Momma. Say Momma.”

She did not say, “Be calm, Dan.” She did not say, “Focus.” She did not say, “Breathe, Danny!”

Debbie said, “Say Momma, say Momma,” and Danny did. With those words, the anxiety was gone, replaced with confidence and faith that when Mom’s there, all is well. He stopped struggling, and swallowed his food.

I never experience a Mother’s Day, now, when the memory of that moment does not enrich me.

I am pretty sure my daughter Meredith will forgive me for not answering when she called, “Momma.” Fortunately she had somebody else taking care of her at that moment, putting her arm four-year-old Emma.

Later that evening, Emma asked, “Are you okay after a car hit you?”

Meredith answered, “Yes. Thanks for taking care of me!” Emma was quietly thinking, then asked carefully: “You are still the mom, though, right?” Meredith smiled. “Absolutely.”

To Meredith and Debbie: Happy Momma’s Day.

Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. In May 2009 her column received the second place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association for the second time in two years at the Catholic Media Convention in Anaheim. In 2005, Kathy’s column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.
MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER
Would you like to attend a Marriage Encounter weekend June 11–13? Marriage Encounter is designed to give married couples the opportunity to examine their lives together. The emphasis of Marriage Encounter is on communication between husband and wife, helping couples to get back together away from the distractions and the tensions of everyday life to concentrate on each other. For more information, visit the Web site at www. dioceseoffw.org. To register for the weekend, call African American Ministry at (817) 317-2400 or e-mail to arwe@fwmd.org.

SILENT RETREAT WEEKEND
All are invited to attend the Contemplative Divine Office series annual retreat May 14-15 at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 North Shady Shore, Dallas. Father Michael Arundel, OFM, will be the retreat leader. This retreat is designed for those interested in deepening their spiritual practices in an atmosphere of silence and community. Registration form and details are available online at www.CelitePeace.com or e-mail to pmac@cdrom.org, or call (972) 722-6029. Registration deadline is April 30.

ST. JOHN SUMMER CAMP
St. John Vianney Parish will offer an 11-day summer camp June 1 to Aug. 7 for children ages one through eight grade. The camp will be available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Registration may be made for the entire summer or daily. For more information, contact Jo Ann Cooper at (817) 235-6552. The following dates are available for children ages one through five years. Registrations are also being accepted for the fall sessions. St. John, 4404 N. Glimmer Rd. in North Richland Hills. For more information call (817) 595-2654.

LAY CARMELITE
The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of a deeper relationship Jesus and Mary to join them on the second and fourth Sundays of the month for a time of prayer and fellowship. Those interested in participating are asked to gather at 2 p.m. in the chapel of the College of St. Thomas More on the campus of the Catholic University of America in Fort Worth. Formation will take place in the college library from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Phyllis Pohl at (817) 457-1444.

COURAGE SUPPORT GROUP
Courage D/FW, a spiritual support group for Catholics struggling with same-sex attraction, according to the Catholic Church’s teachings on homosexuality, meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Ministry Office at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4053 Bridge St., Fort Worth. Call (817) 235-6552 or e-mail jo@joclee@hododic.org for more information. Contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 922-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 922-5385.

MEN’S / WOMEN’S DISCERNMENT
The Diocesan office sponsors a Men’s Monthly Discernment on the second Monday of each month for single men ages 16 to 50. The discussions will be held at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month for single women ages 16 to 50. The groups meet at St. Catherine of Siena, 4200 Wheelock St., Ft. Worth, from 6 to 9 p.m., to pray together, share their vocational call, listen to God’s word, share life events, and have a meal together. For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations, at (817) 580-3300 ext. 115 or kwalterscheid@hododic.org.

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TO REPORT ABUSE
Call the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services) at (800) 252-5400.

DIOCESEAN SINGLES RETREAT
The Diocesan Singles Retreat will be held May 7, 8 and 9 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4053 Bridge St., Fort Worth. The retreat “Walking with Jesus” will begin Friday night at 7 p.m. Saturday will be a day of sharing and interactive sessions. Participants are asked to bring linens for a sleeping bag, swim trunks, and snacks to share. There will be a break Saturday evening for those not wishing to stay Friday night. Cost per person is $80. Financial assistance is available if needed. For more information, contact Susan at (817) 346-8023.

GOLF TOURNAMENT
The eighth annual Eagle Classic Golf Tournament for Sunday morning golfers will be held Saturday, May 15 at Iron Horse Golf Club, 12801 E. Broadmoor Ave., Fort Worth. Registration is $70 per player before May 7. Golfers are asked to bring their own clubs. Registration after May 7 is $80 per player. All proceeds will be donated to the Religious Formation Department.

GARAGE SALE
The Parent Team will host a garage sale at 9 a.m. on May 15. Admission is $7. The breakfast will be held at St. Simon’s Catholic Church, 4200 W. Princeton Rd., Ft. Worth. Admission is $10 per person. Appetizers will be available and drinks will be sold for a fee. For more information, contact Mike Alonso at (214) 435-0022.

DIOWIS熟通 INTERNAL DEADLINE
The North Texas Catholic is published twice monthly, except during the months of July and August. Items for the May issue must be received by noon on April 28.
Good Newsmakers

North Texas Catholics gather outside the Henderson Street Planned Parenthood facility in Fort Worth on Good Friday and hold a Rosary Vigil to pray for Conversions to Life

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Michelle Easley and her son, Eric, share a bond that makes their involvement in the annual Good Friday Vigil for Life especially poignant. Both mother and son are adopted.

“We come every year to pray for our birth mothers,” explained Michelle who adopted her child, a nine-year-old Holy Trinity fifth grader, as an infant. “We’re grateful people prayed for them and they chose life.”

A native of Fredericksburg, a heavily Catholic community, the vigil participant said 16 of her 32 first cousins are also adopted.

“I grew up in a nest where adoption was very accepted,” Easley added. “We’re here to help save these babies, save souls, and promote Catholic teaching.”

More than 500 people with similar intentions lined the street outside a Fort Worth abortion clinic on April 2, Good Friday, to pray for the unborn and publicly give witness to the belief that all life is precious. Sponsored by Catholics United for Life and Mother and Unborn Baby Care for the past 25 years, the event brings together clergy and parishioners from across the diocese for the recitation of the Rosary.

“We’re here today to pray in reparation for the sins of abortion, for our own sins of neglect, and to heal those who have had abortions,” announced organizer Chuck Pelletier who used a public address system to reach the throng of supporters. “We also pray for all those involved in the abortion industry.”

During the 90-minute prayer service, a Wichita Falls doctor who travels to Fort Worth to perform abortions drove out of the clinic’s parking lot. As a steady stream of patients and other clinic personnel exited the building, vigil participants remained prayerful and focused.

Pelletier, his wife, Pat, a few of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and dedicated volunteers are a familiar group of sentries outside local abortion clinics. Every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and alternate Saturdays, they offer sidewalk counseling to women arriving to terminate a pregnancy. It’s a ministry of presence that is sometimes rewarded with a saved life.

One more unborn life will have a birthday because a handful of counselors were ready to help a distraught mother of three facing a crisis pregnancy. Financially strapped and in the throes of a divorce, a young woman in her mid-20s thought abortion was her only alternative.

“She wanted to be helped but couldn’t see any way out of the situation,” explains Pat Pelletier, recalling how the expectant mother drove into the clinic’s parking lot, spotted the volunteers, and walked toward them. “Without their gentle offers of help that day, she would not have found a way out.”

Volunteers at Mother and Unborn Baby Care are now providing monetary assistance and emotional support to the struggling mom.

SEE ROSARY, P. 26

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Bishop Kevin Vann addresses concerns regarding the history of child sex abuse in the Church and offers insights into what the Church is doing proactively to prevent these abuses in the future. Read what he has to say.

As part of its centennial celebrations, Catholic Charities dedicated and moved into its new location, the Fisher Family Campus located in South Fort Worth. Check it out.

Allegations of sexual abuse within the American Church have decreased dramatically in the last seven years, according to an independent auditor. Take a look at the results.