Pilgrimage offers chance to experience the Church from its heart — Rome

One exciting way for Catholics to live out the Diocese of Fort Worth’s 40th Anniversary theme of One Lord, One Faith, One Hope is by joining Bishop Kevin Vann for the Pilgrimage to Rome, Italy Nov. 9-16.

Pilgrimage organizers want to remind Catholics in the diocese that the deadline for signing up, May 15, is fast approaching.

Organizers urge those who are interested to make what they refer to as “the spiritual investment of your lifetime” and contact their parish priest or parish coordinator for full details. Pilgrimage organizers can also contact Barbara Boone, the pilgrimage coordinator at (972)721-4118. Boone says she “will be more than happy to answer any questions.”

In a recent press release to the NTC, organizers emphasized that this special anniversary pilgrimage to Rome will give the priests, deacons, staff, and members of the Fort Worth family of parishes a unique spiritual opportunity to travel, worship, and pray together in Italy and to visit some of the most holy sites in the Christian world.

Bishop Vann will celebrate Mass daily at significant churches in Italy during the Pilgrimage including Orvieto Cathedral in the Umbria region of central Italy not far from Rome. Orvieto’s 14th century Gothic Cathedral is one of the most impressive in Italy, say organizers. Begun in 1290 to commemorate the miracle at Bolsena, the cathedral was built on the orders of Pope Urban VI to house the “Corporal of Bolsena.” In 1263, a skeptical

Bishop Vann outlines liturgical precautions for dealing with Swine Flu outbreak

Editor’s Note: The following statement issued by Bishop Kevin Vann April 30, details steps taken to limit infection from Swine Flu at Mass. In a news release issued May 6, the diocese announced it will continue classes at its 20 Catholic schools as recommended by health officials.

The diocese will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary or recommended by health officials. The diocese will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary, in consultation with health authorities if Influenza Type A is probable or confirmed. Catholic school staffs, students, and parents are advised to take precautionary actions to mitigate the spread of the Swine Flu and other illnesses, as recommended by health officials. The diocese will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary, in consultation with health authorities and local governmental officials.

Because of the concerns regarding the possible spread of the Swine Flu that has been detected in North Texas, the Diocese of Fort Worth, in consultation with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local health authorities if Influenza Type A is probable or confirmed. Catholic school staffs, students, and parents are advised to take precautionary actions to mitigate the spread of the Swine Flu and other illnesses, as recommended by health officials. The diocese will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary, in consultation with health authorities and local governmental officials.

Former U.S. Vatican Ambassador Glendon declines Laetare Medal

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Citing concerns about plans to honor President Barack Obama “in disregard of the settled position of the U.S. bishops,” former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican Mary Ann Glendon turned down the prestigious Laetare Medal from the University of Notre Dame.

In an April 27 letter to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame’s president, Glendon said she will not participate in May 17 commencement exercises during which the award is presented. The letter was posted on the blog of the magazine First Things.

Glendon described Obama as “a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the church’s position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice” and said the decision to present him with an honorary degree violated the bishops’ 2004 request that Catholic institutions not honor “those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles.”

Obama supports legal abortion and his administration recently proposed new regulations that would expand the use of federal funds for embryonic stem-cell research. Both are in direct conflict with church teaching.

The Laetare Medal is presented annually to an American Catholic for outstanding service to the church.
First brick Catholic chapel in English Colonies in America re-created

By Chaz Muth

Catholic News Service

ST. MARY’S CITY, Md. — When Henry Miller was a Catholic schoolboy in Arkansas, he told his mother about the first brick Catholic chapel built in the English American Colonies that he learned about in school.

The 9-year-old then informed her that one day he would find out where the long-demolished building was located.

Not only did he keep that promise, but he also witnessed the building of that chapel’s replica on the very foundation of the early American Jesuit house of worship, in St. Mary’s City, near the shores of the Chesapeake Bay in southern Maryland.

“My third-grade teacher at Our Lady of Holy Souls School (in Little Rock, Arkansas) told me about the beginning of the Catholic Church in America and told me about a priest named Andrew White who started the first church in a place called St. Mary’s City,” said Miller, 59, director of research for the Historic St. Mary’s City Foundation.

“I just had it in my mind that I was going to find out where that chapel was located,” he said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

By the 1980s Miller was an established anthropologist working for Historic St. Mary’s City when archaeologists discovered the foundation of the original St. John’s Chapel in 1983.

By 1988 his organization began planning the rebuilding of the first brick Catholic chapel in the U.S., and 21 years later the work is nearly complete. The first brick was laid for the new St. John’s Chapel in 2003, and its official reopening is scheduled for September.

A notable team of historians, archaeologists, architects, archaeologists, and others worked together to re-create the chapel — originally built in 1667 and known to be the first brick Catholic church in the English Colonies.

The chapel served as the focal point of the Catholic faith in Maryland until 1704, when the royal Colonial governor ordered the local sheriff to lock St. John’s Chapel.

“Peter Rivers, the founder and Maryland Catholics when the royal governor ordered the local sheriff to lock St. John’s Chapel in 1704, she said.

“But the experiment of religious freedom didn’t die and our Founding Fathers saw fit to include it in our (U.S.) Constitution,” Wilkinson said. “So, when I look at the new St. John’s Chapel, I see more than a monument to the Catholic faith. I see it as a symbol of the religious freedom we all enjoy in this country.”

On a chilly March afternoon, Berkley Taylor — a contract worker for the foundation who has worked on the carpentry and the roof of the new chapel for the past six years — packed up his tools and took one last look at the cross-shaped building before quitting for the day.

“We’re in the final stages of the construction. It’s taken a long time,” Taylor said. “We’re building it much like the builders would have been constructing this in the 1660s, so it’s a long and laborious process. But, we’re getting it right.”

The front of the red-brick building is highlighted with a white-stucco rendering to resemble stone, and the roof is the same orange tile that archaeologists found at the site.

When Peter Rivers, the foundation’s historical building curator, has finished installing the diamond-shaped window panes in the chapel, he said the leaded glass would give the structure the same look other buildings of the day would have had.

“The Jesuits wanted the church to inspire light and beauty,” Rivers said. “That’s exactly what this chapel will inspire when it’s all done.”

The new chapel is slated to open Sept. 20, the 305th anniversary of the day the sheriff locked the door of the original chapel.

“We’re hoping to get the St. Mary’s County sheriff to come down here and unlock the door during the opening ceremony,” Miller said. “I think that will show justice has been served.”
Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations, is shown walking out of Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster following his ordination to the priesthood in May 2002. Even then, he appeared to be involved in people to ask if they were being called to a vocation.

Like our Blessed Mother, Mothers should be honored throughout the year

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

A few years back for Mother’s Day, I shocked the congregation by starting my homily off by stating that I was not going to celebrate Mother’s Day. Just as the joy in all the mothers’ hearts began to sink, I then added, “…because we should be honoring our mothers first and foremost the other 364 days of the year!”

Quickly then, all mothers were pleased, with an increased sense of joy, knowing the church they love was about to acknowledge their great contribution to their families and Church through motherhood.

My point is that Mother’s Day is not enough. It is short-lived, and then mothers everywhere have to reenter their hard, day-to-day world of tending to every need in the family, most of the time with little thanks.

But maybe we ought to take a different approach. Maybe we should be honoring women and mothers based on the model of how the Church honors her mother, our most blessed mother Mary. Mary is the model of how the Church, thereby multiplying the presence of tending to every need in the family, most of the time with little thanks.

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But maybe we ought to take a different approach. Maybe we should be honoring women and mothers based on the model of how the Church honors her mother, our most blessed mother Mary. Mary seems to be honored virtually each month of the year. The Church begins things right on the first day of the year as we celebrate, as another holy day of obligation, Our Lady of Lourdes. On Mar. 25, we celebrate the Annunciation to Mary by the archangel Gabriel that she had been chosen by God to be the Christ-bearer and Mary’s sweet response with the words, “Let it be done unto me according to thy word.”

On May 1, we celebrate the month of Mary, as we traditionally honor her the whole month, beginning with the Mary crowning and closing the month with her Visitation to Elizabeth. In June we celebrate the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On July 16, we honor Mary with the celebration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. We celebrate, as another holy day of obligation, her glorious Assumption into heaven on Aug. 15 followed by her Coronation in heaven a week later.

Like all families, the Catholic Church honors her mother, our most blessed mother Mary, the perfect model for mothers, the perfect model for women, the perfect model for all women and mothers, the perfect model for everyone. Blessed are you as mothers, thank you for helping your children concretize their lives to the Lord and consider their options of serving others through the single life, the religious life, and married life. Thank you for encouraging them in realizing their unique gift and talent to serve God and the Church, thereby multiplying your own family many times over!

Blessed is Mary among women, the perfect model for all women and mothers, and blessed is fruit of her womb, Jesus, the Savior of the world. A happy and blessed month to all women, united with Mary, our most blessed mother.

Father Kyle Walterscheid is the director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail to kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

Responding to God’s Call

By Jonath Dycus and Erik Noriega

Texas Catholic Herald

Newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

HOUSTON — A standing-room-only crowd greeted eight U.S. cardinals for the Mass April 24 at Houston’s Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart prior to the annual dinner benefiting The Catholic University of America.

Proceeds from the dinner fund scholarships for students attending the school in Washington.

In addition to Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the Mass and dinner were attended by Cardinals Francis E. George of Chicago; Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles; Sean P. O’Malley of Boston; Justin Rigali of Philadelphia; William H. Keeler, retired archbishop of Baltimore; Adam J. Maida, retired archbishop of Detroit; and Edward M. Egan, retired archbishop of New York.

In his homily at the Mass, Vincentian Father David M. O’Connell, president of Catholic University, said Catholic higher education should work a miracle in its students similar to Jesus’ miracle of the loaves and the fishes.

“Our students should become the bread that is then multiplied and given away, witnessing to Christ, witnessing to the church, the message of the truth — because of what we teach, because of what we affirm, because of what we support,” he said.

“If Christ does not ‘happen’ in their lives, if the church does not inspire them in their lives through our Catholic universities and colleges, Christ hasn’t failed, the church hasn’t failed — we have failed,” Fr. O’Connell said. “We should not fail; we cannot fail; we must not fail even though many things today tempt us to compromise our identity and mission and purpose.”

Other participants in the dinner and Mass included Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, retired archbishop of Galveston-Houston; Auxiliary Bishop JoeS. Vasquez of Galveston-Houston; Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio; Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States; and Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, the university’s chancellor and an alumnus.

Prior to the Mass Cardinal DiNardo and Fr. O’Connell addressed the local media in front of the co-cathedral.

“The news is that we have this celebration today with the cardinals present is so we can raise funds for the scholarship programs at Catholic University of America. It is the one Catholic university in the country that is run by the bishops,” Cardinal DiNardo said.

Noting that it was the first time the dinner had taken place in Texas, he added, “We have a lot of pride in Houston about our new cathedral, and we are happy to show it off to the number of cardinals and people from all over the country who are here for this Mass and dinner.”

During the gala, Angela House in Houston, a transitional housing facility for women after incarceration, was honored with the $10,000 American Cardinals Encouragement Award, which recognizes “faith-based initiatives that reflect Christian values.”

Dominican Sister Maureen O’Connell, director of Angela House, was present to receive the recognition.

“What this (recognition) means to the women is that people care,” she said. “And that a university like Catholic University of America and the archdiocese are supportive of them and want to help them come back to the community. That’s the most meaningful thing about this evening.”

Angela House has served more than 125 women since it opened its doors seven years ago. In that time 68 percent of the women taking part in the program have not returned to prison, which is conversely almost the exact percentage of women who usually are reincarcerated (four percent) after they are released.

“When our women come to Angela House, most are alone or have minimal family support,” Sr. Maureen said. “And for the most part are feeling worthless and ashamed of what they have done. To experience the support and encouragement of such a university and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston encourages them to believe that they can change regardless of poor past choices.”

U.S. cardinals, other church leaders gather for annual dinner, Mass in Texas for first time

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Diocesan / State
Father Al Winshman will speak at Rosary Congress in June

Mariann Renewal Ministry Director, Father Al Winshman, St. Paul the Apostle, White Settlement, will be the keynote speaker at the 20th annual Rosary Congress sponsored by Apostolatus Uniti and hosted by St. Ann Catholic Church in Arlington, June 11-12. Fr. Winshman, is an experienced retreat director and has preached intercessory Masses, including Called to discipleship with Jesus through Mary. Our Lady’s apparitions and her role in the Church today, and The Eucharist through healing Masses.

The Rosary Congress will open with participants attending the Corpus Christi Mass and outdoor eucharistic procession at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, with Bishop Kevin Vann on Sunday, June 14, at 12:30 p.m. Mass. The eucharistic blessing will be given from two altars during the procession with the Knights of Columbus providing the Honor Guard.

The Rosary Congress will also feature the Pilgrim Virgin Statue, a replica, of Our Lady of Fatima, carved by renowned sculptor José Theodim, June 19-20. This statue, as suggested by Sister Lucia after a Youth Congress in Fatima, was blessed by the bishop of Fatima on May 13, 1947, and sent out as a pilgrim statue.

In addition to speaking at the Rosary Congress in Burleson, Fr. Winshman is also scheduled for the first weekly Masses in the diocese: St. Maria Goretti, Arlington June 22-25, St. Paul the Apostle, Fort Worth, June 27-July 1; and St. Peter the Apostle, White Settlement, July 11-15.

For information on the Rosary Congress, call Bonnie Sager at (817) 723-5609 or visit the Web site at www.apostolatusuniti.com.

Regional St. Vincent de Paul Society to meet in Fort Worth May 15-16

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul South Central Region will hold its annual meeting May 15-16 at the South Radisson Hotel in Fort Worth. The registration fee is $180. Registration is available online at www.svdpw.org. The registration form may be mailed to Thomas Loughran at 7917 Cruse Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76137.

For more information call (817) 975-3253. Registration will also be available at the door.

Spring English Cursillo Weekends scheduled for May / June

Have you heard about Cursillo or someone asked you to consider attending a Cursillo Weekend? ’’ asks the Cursillo Center.

A Cursillo is a short course in Christianity, consisting of a series of talks and meditations examining one’s life in relation to Jesus Christ. ’’Cursillo can help you to grow in your relationship with Christ and presents a method of Christian living so we can make a difference for Christ throughout the world around us,’’ Cursillo organizers say.

A Cursillo weekend for men will be held May 21-24, and a Cursillo weekend for women will take place June 11-14. Both weekends will be presented in English and held at the Cursillo Center, 2221 NW 20th St. in Fort Worth. Deadline for the men’s retreat is May 18, the women’s retreat deadline is June 8.

Following a Cursillo experience, participants are encourage to gather in small groups on a regular basis to share with others, to pray, and to offer one another encouragement.

For more information call Susan Urbanek at (817) 423-4095 or e-mail to spjkip@yahoo.com.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet May 28

The Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other sexual minorities, and their families and friends and English Cursillo Center, related to a student that has been a small group for the past 20 years.

The next regular meeting will be May 28 at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center at 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. Father Warren Murphy, TOR, coordinator of the ministry, encourages those interested to come for prayer and sharing. For more information, contact Fr. Murphy at (817) 972-5830 or Sister Dorothy Eggering, SSND, at (817) 283-8601, or Doreene Rine at (817) 329-7370.

Courage group meets twice monthly

Courage (OVK), a spiritual support group for Catholics striving to live chaste lives according to the Catholic Church’s teachings on homosexuality, meets the second and fourth Friday evenings of each month.

For more information, e-mail to courageO VK@Catholic.org or call (817) 938-5345.

SMG Children’s Summer Choir Camp to be held June 8-12

A retreat for families will be held June 11-14 at Tecaboca, a spiritual renewal center located in Mountain Home, Texas. According to the retreat organizers, the week is specially designed for families of all ages, and single-parent and blended families are encouraged to attend, and all are invited to bring extended family members as well.

“We invite you to take a break from the usual hectic activity of your summer and spend some time as a family reflecting on your faith and renewing your family bonds,” said Father Al McMenamy, SM, chaplain for the retreat, which will be staffed by a team of lay and vowed religious Maritans. Daily Mass will be celebrated and the sacrament of reconciliation will also be available daily.

Total cost is $55 per person for participants age eight and older; and $95 for children ages two through seven. Children ages two and under may attend free of charge. The maximum amount per family is $800; all meals are provided.

For more information or to register, visit the Tecaboca Web site at www.tecaboca.com or contact Patti Krasensky at (215) 634-4116 or at pkraresnky@msnusa.org.

St. Maria Goretti Youth Group Concert to be held May 16

The St. Maria Goretti Youth Group will sponsor a live concert “After the Cross . . . A Night of Praise and Worship.” Saturday, May 16, at 7 p.m. in the church’s cafetorium at 1200 N. Davis St. in Arlington.

Matt Warner and the Sunday Night Live Band will perform popular contemporary Christian rock songs. Admission is $5 for adults and free for children 18 years-old and younger with a parent or guardian present. Father David Krager blessed the Mass and was assisted by Deacon Lauro Huerta. Music was provided by Dorothy Steuer and the Praise Band. The First Communions praised God in a special way by singing “The Hands and the Heart of God” for their parents and other worshippers at this special event in their spiritual development.

The children listed in alphabetical order are: Sadie Andler, Jenna Baird, Roselin Burgara, Madison Conradr, Josee Cordova, Braiden Dial, Daisa Galvan, Gustavo Galvan, Claire Henni, Althezry Herrera, Alexa Herrera, Grace Hoeger, Sam Hoeger, Callie Iddell, Jaime Rosas, Jr., Erika Sanchez, Bethany Schlump, Blaire Schreiber, Goli Schroeder, Daniel Turnhardt, Fabian Vasquez, Bryan Wolf, and Hunter Wolf. Clara Vietenheimer is the director of Religious Education and catechists for the second grade class are Ann Hertel and Dorothy Price.

Windhorth First Communians — On Sunday, April 19, 23 young parishioners of St. Mary Church in Windhorth received their first Holy Communion. Father David Krager celebrated the Mass and was assisted by Deacon Lauro Huerta. Music was provided by Dorothy Steuer and the Praise Band. The First Communions praised God in a special way by singing “The Hands and the Heart of God” for their parents and other worshippers at this special event in their spiritual development.

The children listed in alphabetical order are: Sadie Andler, Jenna Baird, Roselin Burgara, Madison Conradr, Josee Cordova, Braiden Dial, Daisa Galvan, Gustavo Galvan, Claire Henni, Althezry Herrera, Alexa Herrera, Grace Hoeger, Sam Hoeger, Callie Iddell, Jaime Rosas, Jr., Erika Sanchez, Bethany Schlump, Blaire Schreiber, Goli Schroeder, Daniel Turnhardt, Fabian Vasquez, Bryan Wolf, and Hunter Wolf. Clara Vietenheimer is the director of Religious Education and catechists for the second grade class are Ann Hertel and Dorothy Price.

FertilityCare Center offers training for NFP teachers

The FertilityCare Center of North Texas will offer an information luncheon May 30 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for individuals interested in teaching a natural form of family planning and women’s health maintenance.

“This is a great opportunity to learn more about what is involved in becoming a FertilityCare practitioner, instructing women and couples in a moral family planning method, as well as an essential tool in infertility and gynecological health evaluation,” says event organizers. “Whether you already use the Creighton Model FertilityCare or another form of natural family planning, or you are just interested in learning more, this is a great way to discern this amazing ministry and no commitment is necessary.”

The luncheon will be held at St. Maria Goretti Church and directed by Father Al McMenamy, SM, chaplain for the retreat, which will be staffed by a team of lay and vowed religious Maritans. Daily Mass will be celebrated and the sacrament of reconciliation will also be available daily.

Total cost is $55 per person for participants age eight and older; and $95 for children ages two through seven. Children ages two and under may attend free of charge. The maximum amount per family is $800; all meals are provided.

For more information or to register, visit the Tecaboca Web site at www.tecaboca.com or contact Patti Krasensky at (215) 634-4116 or at pkraresnky@msnusa.org.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.svdpw.org or contact Mark Cortez at (817) 366-7034, Mike Cook, Jr. at (817) 829-5174, or Grant Thomas at (817) 683-8875.

GIRL SCOUT TROUP #3003 — The 6th grade Girl Scout Troop #3003 of St. Andrew’s in Southwest Fort Worth, purchased 50 board books and 17 puzzles as a service project benefiting Cook Children’s Hospital. The troop spent half of the profits from their annual cookie sales on the Annetta and Team Awards. The event will kick-off at 10 a.m. The registration fee is $15 per player or $600 for a team of four players. Register before May 18 and receive an early bird savings of $100 per team. The fee includes a round of golf, cart, driving range use, golf shirt, drinks, catered lunch, and more. Sponsorships and volunteers are welcome.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.holyfamilygolf.org or contact Matt Cortez at (817) 366-7034, Mike Cook, Jr. at (817) 829-5174, or Grant Thomas at (817) 683-8875.

Holy Family Dads’ Club to host golf tournament May 22

The HFDS Dads’ Club will be hosting its third annual golf tournament benefiting Holy Family Catholic School. The event will be held Friday, May 22, at Hawk’s Creek Golf Club, 6520 White Settlement Rd. in Fort Worth. All net proceeds will help with planned improvements to the Holy Family Catholic School’s athletic facilities.

The tournament format will be a Best Ball, Four-Man Scramble format with food and drink provided. The event will kick-off at 10 a.m. The registration fee is $150 per player or $600 for a team of four players. Register before May 18 and receive an early bird savings of $100 per team. The fee includes a round of golf, cart, driving range use, golf shirt, drinks, catered lunch, and more. Sponsorships and volunteers are welcome.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.holyfamilygolf.org or contact Mark Cortez at (817) 366-7034, Mike Cook, Jr. at (817) 829-5174, or Grant Thomas at (817) 683-8875.
After adapting to a new culture, Alfredo Barba is ordained a deacon, taking his next step toward priesthood

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

When Alfredo Barba decided to be a priest, he knew it would involve discipline and formation. When he decided to be a priest for the Diocese of Fort Worth, he recognized it would also require adaptation and change: to a new culture, country, and language.

Barba was ordained to the diaconate April 18 at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, and, God willing, will be ordained to the priesthood Oct. 30 at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. After that he will minister in North Texas, utilizing his native language in an area that has increasing need for that skill.

A native of Mexico, Barba’s home is in Tlaxcala, where he lived with his parents Sara and Alfredo, two sisters, and a brother. He studied at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico), UNAM, remembering, “It was my life.”

But life led him another way when students from a local parish encouraged him to join them at a retreat, where he experienced parish life, then to a retreat at the seminary, where he met the bishop, other priests, and seminarians, and started a journey of discernment.

Still studying physics at UNAM, Barba began a three-month process of spending every Saturday at the seminary, and also consulting with a priest who was a graduate student in engineering at the same university.

“The father made me confident,” Barba said, “because he could talk with me about both things — engineering and the priesthood. And he prayed with me.”

Barba studied seven years at the Seminario Conciliar (major seminary) of Mexico, then spent his last year at The Hispanic Seminary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a seminary that provides formation for priestly vocations among Hispanic communities in the United States and Canada.

During the summer of 2008, he came to Denton where he is completing his pastoral year at ICC, and studying English at the University of North Texas.

In his ordination homily, Bishop Kevin Vann spoke of Deacon Alfredo’s land and origin, praying the deacon would “show to us the strength, joy, and faith of your parents and your people, their devotion to the Mother of God at Ocotlan and the great strength of God, as your country shows to so many people. “Actually I never intended to work in another country,” Dcn. Alfredo said, “to serve people here, or to speak in English or preach in English. “But in Scripture it says, leave your father, leave your mother, and follow Me, and I felt this was real clear. So I followed Him.”

The ordination was the second public ceremony for the new deacon, the first, April 3 at Immaculate Conception, was the formal promise of faith, obedience to the bishop, and celibacy. “I read and signed my oath in front of the church,” Dcn. Alfredo said. “I promised it was my free will to do this.”

None of the deacon’s family was present for the either celebration, however, helping with his vestments at the ordination were a local family he said “are like parents to me.” Joe and Theresa Escobar, St. Mark parishioners, met the seminarian last July, and have remained in a supportive role with him.

As he spends his final months in preparation for ordination, Dcn. Alfredo said, “I don’t worry about the priesthood, it is coming soon, but I am enjoying this ministry as a deacon.

“I go to the parish and stay there for the people who come to speak to someone if they have problems. I assist at Masses and go around the parish, and if someone needs help, I help them.”

Join other Catholics who want to know.

The Vocation Awareness Program will be held Friday, Sunday, July 17-19 at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving. This weekend of discernment helps single Catholic men and women, ages 18-40, find answers about life as a Priest, Sister or Brother. It includes presentations, panel discussions, question and answer periods and one-on-one personal conferences with diocesan and order Priests, Sisters and Brothers. There are no fees, private rooms and meals are furnished, and no one will pressure you or seek commitment. For more information and to apply, visit vapinfo.org, or contact Fr. Kyle Walterscheid at the Fort Worth Diocese, 817-366-9459, kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.
Holy Trinity School DI team advances to globals

After taking first place at its Destination ImagiNation® (DI) regional competition and second place at the DI state competition in Houston, a team from Holy Trinity School in Grapevine — The PequoDians — will represent the school and Texas at the DI Global Finals 2009 competition. The competition will be held May 20-23 at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, and will include teams from many U.S. states and 45 different countries.

“This is quite an honor,” said Shelly Hickman, one of the team’s managers, and a teacher at Holy Trinity. “This is a first for Holy Trinity and quite a major achievement. Since Texas represents 20 percent of all DI Teams in the world, just making it out of the state is a major feat. We are so proud of these kids!”

The team also includes Teri McCarthy, the other team manager, 8th-graders John McCarthy, and Joanna Coogan, and 7th-graders Erin Cummings, Theresa Guarino, and Haden Hickman.

Holy Trinity has eight other teams that regularly compete in regional competitions. While some of the students on this team have been in DI for up to six years, this team has been together and gone to the state competition for the past four years. Haden Hickman and John McCarthy are the original members of the team. Cummings has been involved in DI since 2003, and she and Coogan joined the team in 2005, and Guarino joined both DI and the team this last fall.

“Our practices were innu-
merable and sometimes seemed endless, but it was definitely worth it,” said John McCarthy, Teri McCarthy’s son who will attend Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth next fall. “Nolan doesn’t have a DI program, so I knew this would be my last year. This really motivated me to do my best so we could advance to the global tournament.”

Through Destination ImagiNa- tion, students work as a group to take on a challenge that develops their critical thinking, teamwork and creative problem-solving skills. This team chose the “VIDLo LitHitChallenge” and converted the classic novel Moby Dick into a clever music video.

In addition to writing their own lyrics and designing an elaborate set and props, the team dramatically portrays the key characters in Moby Dick and retells the story in a song to the tune of Michael Jack- son’s “Thriller” and other popular tunes. The students named their team after the Moby Dick whaling ship “The Pequo.”

Coogan says being in DI has made her more confident in her sense of humor, writing, artistic performance, and problem-solv- ing abilities. She feels accepted and appreciated by her coaches and her friends and says she feels free to be herself. Team member Theresa Guarino agrees.

“The best part about this is being able to be creative and not worry about what anyone else thinks,” Guarino said.

“The kids never cease to amaze me with their creativity and I am forever thinking, “How did they come up with that?”” Shelly Hickman said. “I underestimate them all the time, even though I know they’re exceptional. They always come together to support and cheer each other on to a posi- tive end.”

“I always hoped I would someday make it to globals,” said Erin Cummings. “All our work is finally paying off.”

Haden Hickman’s son, Haden, couldn’t agree more.

“I’m so excited to have finally reached my goal of going to globals and meeting kids from all over the world,” Haden said. “This is a great experience for us all.”

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The vacations for two school principals in the Diocese of Fort Worth have been filled.

Edward Noll has been named principal of St. Andrew School in Fort Worth for the 2009-10 school year. He succeeds Lynn Day, who announced his retirement in December after 10 years as principal of Holy Rosary.

For the past four years, Riley has served as the principal of Sacred Heart School in Muenster. He has a bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Dallas in Irving, a master’s degree in pastoral studies from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, and a certificate in Catholic school leadership earned at the University of Dallas.

Prior to moving into administra-
tion, Riley taught history in public schools in Denison and Arlington from 1998-2000 and at Holy Rosary School in Arlington from 2000-2005. Chad and his wife, Caryn, are the parents of four children.

Principals hired to fill vacancies at St. Andrew and Holy Rosary Schools

The vacations for two school principals in the Diocese of Fort Worth have been filled.

Edward Noll has been named principal of St. Andrew School in Fort Worth for the 2009-10 school year. He succeeds Clarice Peninger, who announced her retirement in October after 24 years as principal of St. Andrew.

Noll has a bachelor’s degree in speech and English from Fort Hayes State University in Kansas, and a master’s degree in educational administration from the University of Kansas at Lawrence.

He is a veteran Catholic school administrator having served as a Catholic school principal for 14 years at various schools in Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois. In addition to many years of Catholic school teaching, since 2003 he has been teaching speech and debate at William B. Travis High School in Richmond, Texas. Noll will assume his new duties July 1.

Chad Riley has been named principal of Holy Rosary School in Arlington for the 2009-10 school year. He succeeds Lynn Day, who announced his retirement in December after 10 years as principal of Holy Rosary.

For the past four years, Riley has served as the principal of Sacred Heart School in Muenster. He has a bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Dallas in Irving, a master’s degree in pastoral studies from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, and a certificate in Catholic school leadership earned at the University of Dallas.

Prior to moving into administration, Riley taught history in public schools in Denison and Arlington from 1998-2000 and at Holy Rosary School in Arlington from 2000-2005. Chad and his wife, Caryn, are the parents of four children.
Diocesan

NCHS to host middle school summer band camp

Middle School band members from across the Metroplex are invited to attend the Nolan Catholic High School’s ninth annual Middle School Summer Band Camp June 8-12 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Summer band camp provides opportunities to bring together young musicians from across the Metroplex and learn from some of the best music teachers in the area, according to a press release.
“Participants will be able to perform in both concert and jazz bands as well as attend master classes,” said Camp Director Chuck Compther. “Summer band camp is a great way to help motivate students to practice during the summer months.”
The camp is geared toward private and parochial school students who have completed at least one year of band and are entering the fifth grade through completing the eighth grade. Band members from public schools are welcome to attend.
Camp will be held in the Music Hall of the Multi-Purpose Activity Center at Nolan Catholic High School located at 4501 Bridge St. in East Fort Worth. An end-of-camp concert will be held on June 12 at 11 a.m.
Cost of the camp is $75 which includes five days of group, ensemble, individual instrument instruction, and a concert experience. The cost is $65 for those who register and pay by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 22, and an additional $10 can be saved for each new student referred to this year’s camp.
For more information and to register, visit the “Band” page on the school’s Web site at www.nolancatholichs.org or contact Melissa Kozekka at mkozeka@nolancatholichs.org, or at (817) 457-2920 ext. 1733.

Peter Kreeft to discuss proof of God May 16

World-renowned theologian Dr. Peter Kreeft will give two talks at St. Maria Goretti Church, located at 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday, May 16.
The topics covered will include “A Refutation of Moral Relativism,” and “Proofs of God’s Existence.”
“Both of these powerful talks will give the philosophical and theological arguments on how to refute the modern errors of moral relativism and atheism and help you develop sound reasoning and logic on how we can know God’s existence with certainty, and also be certain about his moral truths,” say event organizers in a press release.
Kreeft is a professor of philosophy at Boston College and is considered one of the best Catholic philosophers currently residing in the United States. He is a regular contributor to several Christian publications, is in wide demand as a speaker at conferences, and is the author of over 45 books including Fundamentals of the Faith, Everything You Ever Wanted to know about Heaven, and Back to Virtue.
His ideas draw heavily from religious and philosophical tradition, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, Socrates, G. K. Chesterton, and C. S. Lewis.
The event is free, but donations will be accepted. For more information, contact Lucas Pollice, director of the Office of Adult Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 560-3300 ext. 260 or lpollice@fwdiocese.org or John Cox at (817) 274-0643 ext. 226 or jcox@smgparish.org.

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Retired ecology teacher Joe Kuban honored at Nolan Earth Day celebration

Story and Photos by Kathy Crisari Hamer
Correspondent
“I was a student at the University of Texas at Arlington on the first Earth Day,” Dr. Joe Kuban told Nolan Catholic High School students at their Earth Day celebration April 22.

“I learned about some illegal tree cutting at the Big Thicket, east of Houston; I went with some other students, and we chained ourselves to a tree.”

The students were arrested and soon released, Dr. Kuban said, speaking through a keyboard controlled communication device. The respected and loved teacher, who taught ecology at Nolan for more than three decades, has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

At the Earth Day celebration, Nolan planted an evergreen tree in Dr. Kuban’s honor. “As we open the Christmas season on campus each year,” Principal Cathy Buckingham told the assembled students, staff, and supporters, “it will be an opportunity to remind ourselves of the need for Christ Eucharistic Living, and to remind us of Joe’s dedication to helping make the environment on our campus and around our world a constant priority.”

The Nolan ecology program, thought to be the longest-running high school ecology program in the nation, is unique, said Ellen Browning, who succeeded Dr. Kuban at Nolan, because “these kids are given the chance … to not just study it in a textbook or in a classroom but to experience it, to smell it, to feel it, to touch it, to hear it, to sleep in it, camping for days on end without showers, to get rained on in the rainforest, stung by mosquitoes and all kinds of cool stuff.”

Also during the ceremony was the unveiling of a panoramic photograph of the approach to the Chisos Basin of Big Bend National Park, donated to Nolan by 1984 alumnus Sean Fitzgerald. Alumni relations coordinator Patricia Pierret presented the painting, reading Fitzgerald’s message. “This is in appreciation of Dr. Joe Kuban’s introduction of his and to others,” he wrote, “of the wonders of the natural world. I would like to donate this print of the dunes at Big Bend, to Nolan Catholic High School, for display in the ecology classroom.”

FROM PAGE 1
Disease Control (CDC) and the Tarrant County Health Department, is asking all our parishes and schools to take precautions to help mitigate its effects. This applies to the entire diocese.

I have recommended that all priests and deacons as well as members of our diocese exercise common sense precautions when it comes to the liturgy. Influenza is often spread from person to person through contact with coughing and sneezing of an infected person. Simple hygiene such as washing hands and using alcohol-based hand sanitizers at appropriate times can prevent the spread of influenza. If a priest, altar server, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is sick, whether it is the flu or the common cold or whatever, then he or she should not serve until the sickness has passed. Likewise, if members of the faith community are not feeling well, especially during this period, please stay home and do not risk the possibility of spreading infections to others.

The following precautions should be followed concerning the celebration of Mass:

• The faithful should be encouraged to not hold hands during the reciting of the Our Father.

• The faithful should be encouraged to share the Sign of Peace without touching hands or kissing. This can be done with meaningful eye contact, smiles, and a bow of the head in reverence to one another.

• The faithful should be encouraged to receive Communion in their hands and not on their tongue.

• The cup is not to be shared with the faithful during Mass. Communion is only to be given in the species of the consecrated bread.

• Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be especially reminded of the need to practice good hygiene. Ministers of Holy Communion must be encouraged to wash their hands before Mass begins, or even to use an alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion. A good practice is the distribution of alcohol-based antibacterial solution by the Eucharistic Minister Captain or to other ministers while the priest is preparing for distribution of Communion.

The Diocesan School Superintendent’s Office is coordinating with each school concerning precautionary actions in schools. Let us all pray for our community and the families who are affected by this disease that they suffer minor effects and recover promptly. And pray for those who have died. May their souls rest in peace.
The students involved in the faith-nourishing work of the Catholic Campus Center at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls have made service to their community their No. 1 priority.

This year marks the fourth out of the past six years that the CCC at MSU has been recognized with the James L. Stewart Service Award at the school’s May leadership banquet.

Campus Ministry Director Debra Neely said service became the group’s focus seven years ago during her second year as director. She asked the students what they wanted to do at the beginning of the year, as she does every year, and a large number of them were interested in community service.

“It’s a part of our Catholic faith, and now it’s something we’re known for on campus,” Neely said.

Francisco Salas, a 23-year-old senior accounting and Spanish major and the CCC’s student assistant, said the group’s service projects over the years have included collecting food for the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank, building houses for Habitat for Humanity, playing bingo with senior citizens at Texoma Christian Care Center, and hosting events for children from the North Texas State Hospital in Wichita Falls and the Arc, formerly known as the Association for Retarded Citizens.

“We don’t stay here with each other. We go out and have fun with other people,” Salas said.

The Catholic Campus Center students have also facilitated confirmation retreats and other events for high school students from Wichita Falls area Catholic parishes.

“I love the confirmation retreats,” said Michele Pisciotano, a senior education major.

“The high school students get to see college kids who still have a strong faith in Christ. You’re able to share your journey in faith. You don’t have to be perfect all the time,” she said. “You’ve got God there to help you through the rough patches.”

Josh Loeffler, an 18-year-old sophomore math major who just started his first year at Midwestern this fall, said that all of the activities he has participated in during his first year with the CCC, the service activities are his favorites.

“That’s one of my passions. That we can go out and be a positive impact on our community — that’s something special that we do,” he said.

Encouraged by his high school youth minister to take part in the CCC, Loeffler says, “I came to the first Mass of the year. There is something special about the CCC Mass.”

Neely said on average, 60 people, including a few Wichita Falls community members who are not students, attend the CCC’s Mass at 6 p.m. Sundays during the school year. Six priests from parishes in Wichita Falls and surrounding areas take turns presiding at the Masses.

Salas said that a large number of the students who participate in the MSU CCC are from the Caribbean, and they lead the music for the center’s weekly Mass. He said some of their songs are very lively and upbeat, while others are meditative and soulful.

Caesarina Paul, a 34-year-old freshman sociology major from Dominica, an island nation in the Caribbean Sea, sings and plays a traditional drum from her country called the tabou during CCC Masses.

“We try to make the music Caribbean, but we also recognize the American style. It is toned down a bit,” she said.

Neely said the Midwestern Campus ministry is able to embrace a significant international population, with students from the Caribbean, and other parts of the world.

Paul said she joined the Catholic campus ministry because of her faith foundation and because she was a very active member of the Catholic Church in her home country of Dominica.

“It (CCC) was very welcoming, very warm, and a safe haven,” she said.

Paul said it can be difficult to adjust to a new culture and environment as she and other Caribbean students have had to do, but CCC has really helped. Pisciotano, who is also a member of the national sorority Alpha Phi, said that while her sorority offers her the social aspects of the college experience, the CCC helps her grow as a woman of God. She said she would encourage college students to get involved with their Catholic campus ministries.

“It’s a family away from home. They embrace your whole heart the way you are. It’s important for them to have people they can count on and hold them accountable,” she said.

Neely said the MSU Catholic campus ministry has an ecumenical aspect, as well. They have joint activities with other campus ministries including groups from the Methodist, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, and Baptist denominations.

At the beginning of each school year, they collaborate on a picnic to invite all new students to get involved in the campus ministry centers. This year, they also had a day of prayer together on the Tuesday during Holy Week called, “Journey to the Cross,” she said.

“All the directors get along. We look for what we have in common instead of what is different,” she said.

Churches of different faiths in the area also provide the Catholic campus ministry with lunches on Mondays during the school year. Neely said: They call the gathering, “Dollar Lunch” because students can eat for a dollar and enjoy fellowship with one another.

Neely said besides Dollar Lunch and service projects, one of the students’ favorite activities is called “Theology on Flap.” Neely explained that it is called that because the students meet with Father Hoa Nguyen at the International House of Pancakes near his church, Sacred Heart, and have the opportunity to ask him anything they want.

Fr. Nguyen said he enjoys spending time with the MSU CCC students, and also said that a Catholic Campus Center is important on any college campus.

It is especially important for faith formation in a segment of the Church, post high school graduates, whose percentage for nonattendance is high, roughly 80 to 90 percent.

They are growing from their teen-aged faith into adult faith, he said. “The transition is very difficult. The CCC is available to guide and help them grow into ownership of their faith,” he said.
Youth people growing up in today’s world live in a culture that too often celebrates individualism.

During the annual Eighth Grade Mass, Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann offered the assembly of graduating students a countercultural view, telling them it’s more important to serve God and others as they move forward through life.

“In your years attending our Catholic grade schools, you have studied not only the subjects needed for life, but also your Catholic faith,” he said to the throng of young people and their teachers who filled St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller April 22. “You know what it means to always be people of hope. Pray to find the presence of Christ in the world around you and extend that to others.”

The bishop challenged the graduating Eighth-graders to persevere in being Christ-like as they live out their faith.

“It’s our prayer that all the graduates of our Catholic schools will show the love of Christ to those they meet along the way and persevere in service to one another,” he added.

“Not because it’s a nice or good thing to do but because it’s a reflection of Christ himself. It’s a command we take on by virtue of who we are.”

A total of 460 eighth-graders are expected to graduate in the diocese this year. The annual liturgy, which brings together students from across the diocese, is held to mark the milestone, while providing an opportunity to ask for God’s blessing as students take on new and exciting responsibilities. Bishop Vann concelebrated the liturgy with several church pastors and other members of clergy.

Looking over the crowd of soon-to-be graduates, School Superintendent Don Miller expressed hope for the Church’s future.

In your years attending our Catholic grade schools, you have studied not only the subjects needed for life, but also your Catholic faith,” he said to the throng of young people and their teachers who filled St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller April 22. “You know what it means to always be people of hope. Pray to find the presence of Christ in the world around you and extend that to others.”

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— Bishop Kevin Vann
Loreto House ministry opens doors to offer women contemplating abortion

When Gabriel the Archangel told Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God, her parents, Saints Ann and Joachim, provided a safe haven for her in their home. It is in this tradition that Randy and Laurie Bollig started the Loreto House ministry in Denton, named for the home of Mary’s parents.

Loreto House, a ministry dedicated to promoting the “Culture of Life” from conception to natural death, opened its doors March 29 with an open house. The public presentation of the ministry came after two years and more than 100 volunteers worked to lay its foundation. During the come-and-go event, ministry directors led visitors on tours of the new facility, located at 913 Ave. C in Denton.

According to its Web site, www.loretohouse.org, the center will primarily serve women facing unplanned pregnancies by providing baby and maternity items, and Catholic parenting assistance. They plan to offer sonograms of the developing children. In addition Loreto House will provide prayerful support for families dealing with end of life issues.

“We focus on the woman, walking through her pregnancy with her, loving her, helping her understand God’s love for her and loving herself and her body,” says Laurie Bollig, executive director for Loreto House. “Just like Mary carried Jesus to see Elizabeth when she was pregnant, we want to bring Jesus to women. That’s been our motto, ‘What would Mary do?’”

The facility’s prayer chapel is dedicated to the original Loreto House, which is now located in Italy, and is decorated with donated stone walls and tiled floor. The new facility also has a welcome area with couches, and two visitation rooms with chairs rather than desks or tables. There is also an office and kitchen area for staff, and a conference room where meetings and classes such as Natural Family Planning, and other topics related to the ministry will be taught.

“Ann and Joachim welcomed everyone… we want this to be a welcome center, as if you’re coming home,” says Michael Demma, a member of the ministry’s board of directors. The new facility also has a medical room where volunteer nurses, doctors, and professional counselors will provide assistance. Demma also says the ministry is seeking a sonogram machine to provide free sonograms to women.

“Ninety percent of the time, once they [women] see a picture [of their unborn child] they won’t abort,” Demma said.

Visitation Volunteers

Visitation volunteer serves women in unplanned pregnancies, according to Laurie Bollig. Volunteers are not trained counselors, but provide an ear to listen to the women they serve.

“A Visitation Volunteer must realize that we are not there to ‘fix’ a woman, or to try to change her behaviors. We are there to serve her, and to love her. By doing this we are showing her the love of our Lord. We must help the women we serve to see her own value and dignity as a child of God. By doing this, she will be able to love her child and choose life,” writes Bollig in the information provided.

Saint Ann and Joachim Foster Grandparents

According to Bollig, “foster grandparent” volunteers act as a listening ear for the women by calling and encouraging them by “doing things grandparents do, like sending a holiday card or birthday card, maybe [buying her] lunch or a small gift, praying for her, and letting her know that [their] prayers are with her.”

Training will be offered every few months in a one-time session of several hours designed to help build relationships between volunteers and the pregnant women they will serve.

Saint Joseph’s End of Life Ministry

End of Life Ministry volunteers work with the family, priest, or minister of a dying loved one to offer prayer and support to the patient and family, according to information provided at the open house. Loreto House provides resources and educational materials to help volunteers in this ministry. Volunteers accompany a dying patient, showing them they are not alone. “It is building a relationship. It is a matter of seeing the face of Christ in this patient who is sick or dying,” writes Laurie Bollig in a flyer about the ministry.

Holy Family Thrift Store

The ministry is supported by the nearby Holy Family Thrift Store at 1103 Ave. C, which collects donations of used items and is staffed by volunteers from St. Mark and Immaculate Conception churches and students from the Catholic Campus Ministry in Denton. In the fall of 2008, the youth groups from both parishes ran a clothing drive and collected 4,500 pounds of clothing for the thrift store.

Volunteers typically hang, size, price, and steam clothes in a warehouse in the back of the store. Non-clothing items are dusted and cleaned, and media such as books, movies, and music, are also offered for sale. According to information provided at the open house, Holy Family Thrift Store seeks volunteers to help sort and price items and coordinate other volunteers.

“We start the day with prayer here,” says Loreto House Director Laurie Bollig. “We know all of this belongs to God, and he’ll lead us in a way to use it best.”
Adult stem cells offer safe, moral alternative to embryonic research

By Lucas Pollice

On March 9, President Obama signed an executive order allowing federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research. This caused a firestorm of controversy and opposition, especially from many religious groups including the Catholic Church.

This once again raised many questions about the morality of stem-cell research: What exactly is stem-cell research and does the Church condemn all forms of stem-cell research? These are important questions that we as Catholics need to know the answers to, if we are to be informed participants in the public square regarding these important moral issues.

What is stem-cell research?

A stem cell is a “blank” cell that has not yet made up its mind as to what it is going to be. Very early in embryonic life, the embryo is filled with these stem cells that have not yet determined what type of cell and tissue they will become. The idea behind stem-cell research is that if we can get these stem cells, we can manipulate them to become the kind of tissue that is needed, such as brain tissue, heart tissue, lung tissue, and so on. These healthy tissues can be transplanted into someone with an illness or disease to bring about a cure.

The real moral question behind stem-cell research is how we get them. The retrieval of stem cells from embryos results in the violent destruction of the embryo and the direct killing of a new human being. Embryos are not the only source of stem cells, and embryonic stem-cell research has yet to be proven successful, while using stem cells obtained from adults has been proven to be quite successful.

Different types and sources of stem cells

Embryonic stem cells: These are the stem cells taken from the embryo conceived through in vitro fertilization. As the cells continue to divide, they become what we call a blastocyst, which is filled with hundreds of these stem cells. These cells will eventually become bone tissue, heart tissue, brain tissue, pancreas, spinal cord, etc. There are 220 total cell/tissue types that these cells can become. Once they are retrieved, they can continue to grow and grow into what are called stem-cell lines. The goal is to place the cells into humans to grow new and healthy tissue that is needed to cure disease.

Adult stem cells: Adult stem cells are stem cells that are taken from an adult. Umbilical cords, placenta, and amniotic fluid can be saved after birth, and adult stem cells can be retrieved from them. Adult stem cells can also be retrieved from bone marrow, from the hipbone, liposuction, and from the nasal epithelium (neutral stem cells) from cadavers within 20 hours of death (with full, informed consent of family). However, adult stem cells cannot become all 220 cell/tissue types. They are more restrictive and not as flexible. This is why embryonic stem cells are so coveted.

Moral problems with embryonic stem-cell research

The central issue is the destruction of human embryos. The Church clearly teaches that life begins at the moment of conception. One can never destroy human life for therapeutic reasons, no matter how good the reason, no matter the benefit. Thus, any form of stem-cell research that results in the destruction of human life in its embryonic form is absolutely morally unacceptable.

In addition, the use of stem cells for medical research that have been obtained from the deliberate and violent destruction of human life is also absolutely morally unacceptable. Therefore using stem cells from aborted fetuses and from already destroyed embryos is immoral. As Pope John Paul II forcefully states:

This evaluation of the morality of abortion to be applied also to the recent forms of intervention on human embryos which, although carried out for purposes legitimate in themselves, inevitably involve the killing of those embryos. This is the case with experimentation on embryos, which is becoming increasingly widespread in the field of biomedical research and is legally permitted in some countries. Although “one must uphold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but rather are directed to its healing, the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival,” it must nonetheless be stated that the use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings who have a right to the same respect owed to a child once born, just as to every person.

This moral condemnation also regards procedures that exploit living human embryos and fetuses, sometimes specifically “produced” for this purpose. 

MEDICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH EMBRYONIC STEM-CELL THERAPY

In addition to embryonic stem-cell research being morally unacceptable, there are also significant medical difficulties involved. Although embryonic stem cells can become all 220 cell/tissue types, they are very powerful and grow very quickly. Because they grow so fast, when they are placed in the body they very often grow tumors. In addition, since embryonic stem cells come from another person, they are almost always rejected. To date, there has been no success in using embryonic stem cells in curing any disease.

SUCCESSFUL AND MORAL USE OF ADULT STEM CELLS

Quite different from embryonic stem cells, adult stem cells can be morally retrieved from umbilical cords, placenta, and amniotic fluid. They can also be morally retrieved from one’s own or another person’s tissue as long as there is informed consent. These cells can be retrieved and used in research without the killing of an innocent human life. In addition, there has been great success using adult stem cells to cure disease. Because these cells can be retrieved from your own body they are much less likely to be rejected. Here are some recent examples of the successful use of adult stem cells:

• A mother was cured of leukemia using the umbilical cord stem cells from the birth of her daughter.

• An 11-year-old boy was cured of sickle-cell anemia using an umbilical cord stem-cell implant.

• Six Texans were cured of spinal cord injuries by using neural stem cells retrieved from their nasal epithelium.

The stem cells were used to grow tissue to bridge the injury site on the spinal cord.

• Some cases of Parkinson’s disease have been successfully cured using these same neural stem cells.

• In addition, some adult stem cells from the marrow of the hipbone have been discovered to be immunologically privileged, that is, they can be placed in anyone and not be rejected. Thus, a generic stem cell can be used to cure many diseases in anyone!

Therefore, since research using adult stem cells does not result in the destruction of innocent human life, the Church supports and encourages adult stem-cell research. In fact, the Church loves, praisles, and promotes science and scientific research that helps to better our society and the human condition. God has blessed us with our reason to learn and discover marvelous things about the world and about human nature. However, science is not autonomous and must always respect the life and dignity of the human person in all of its stages from the moment of conception to natural death.

In conclusion, while science is a gift from God and can be used in many ways for the good of humanity, it must always halt before the sacredness of human life so as not to destroy life or the source of life and love. The Church will continuously defend the sacredness of all human life, from the moment of conception to natural death, from any form of science and technology that results in harming or destroying human life and dignity. Catholics and all Christians should make our voices known to bring the light of Christ into the area of biomedical research and preserve human life from the very moment of conception. For more information on stem-cell research please visit the USCCB Web site at www.usccb.org/profile/issues/bioethic/stemcell/index.shtml for a great deal of additional resources, pamphlets, church documents, and articles on this important topic.

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 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, Christopher, and Julia.
Plan B for minors
a bad prescription

By Susan Wills

Plan B’s side effects and risks are not trivial. One dose is the equivalent of taking 40 Ovrette contraceptive pills in 12 hours! Use of Plan B can result in bleeding disorders, extreme menstrual cycle irregularities, soaring STD rates, and increased risk of potentially fatal ectopic pregnancies.

The reaction of the press to the FDA’s decision has been predictable and dead wrong. Editorials declared it “a long-overdue triumph of science over politics” (Baltimore Sun) and “not only good science but smart policy” (San Jose Mercury News).

The scientific literature, however, shows that FDA’s move was based on wishful thinking, not science. Plan B’s claimed effectiveness has been debunked — both for individuals and populations. And while advocates encourage unnecessary and repeated use, science shows that young women are being put at risk, while the drug’s mode of action and side effects are downplayed.

One of Plan B’s earliest champions, Princeton’s James Trussell, Ph.D., widely promoted claims that it was 89 percent effective in preventing pregnancy and would reduce abortions in the U.S. by half. But in January 2007, Trussell and others published a review of 23 studies evaluating Plan B effectiveness. They found that “no study has shown that increased access to [Plan B] reduces unintended pregnancy or abortion rates on a population level.” They concluded that individual use of Plan B may reduce pregnancy risk by “more than 23 percent,” but that efficacy claims of 80 percent “may overstate actual efficacy, possibly quite substantially.” In short: Plan B works poorly in the individual woman and not at all in large groups of women!

So when are women advised to take this wonder drug? Plan B’s 20-page product insert says that it is meant for “infrequent emergency” use. But Barr, its manufacturer, and others describe an emergency as any “unprotected intercourse or a known or suspected contraceptive failure” (e.g., torn condom) or missing one’s birth control pills for two days. According to Managing Contraception, a woman using a daily progestin-only pill should take Plan B if she is even three hours late in taking one pill! All these recommendations disregard the fact that women are naturally infertile three out of every four weeks of the menstrual cycle and so have no “need” for Plan B 75 percent of the time.

Pharmacists in many countries report that some young men, as well as girls, are buying Plan B many times a month. The possibility of coercion, abuse of a minor, and cover-up of statutory rape cannot be ignored. Plan B’s side effects and risks are not trivial. One dose is the equivalent of taking 40 Ovrette contraceptive pills in 12 hours! Use of Plan B can result in bleeding disorders, extreme menstrual cycle irregularities, soaring STD rates, and increased risk of potentially fatal ectopic pregnancies.

There is also evidence that, depending on the timing of Plan B relative to ovulation, the drug may act as an abortifacient by indirectly altering protein levels in the uterine lining so the week-old embryo cannot implant to receive nutrition from him or her mother.

Girls and their parents deserve the truth about Plan B — not more deception and wishful thinking.

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Let’s just say right off the bat that I don’t advocate mind reading at all.

I think it would be intrusive, uncomfortable, and confusing most of the time, especially if you were in a foreign country. And even if you could mind read in your native tongue, everything would depend on the composition and literary skills of the thinker, wouldn’t it? And I’m just not that interested in spending my time on endless thought editing.

So let’s agree to let the mind reading option rest. But here’s the thing. This morning at a dental appointment, I realized there is potential benefit in thought bubbles.

My dentist is friendly, and we love to chat. Today he was talking about his stepchildren, affectionately referring to them as “my sons,” as though the 20-year-olds had been his own since birth, instead of since the turn of the millennium. We were discussing his familial attitude and how his boys adjust to him as their dad. Valuable conversation, I thought.

Then suddenly the really-nice-guy dentist interrupted my train of thought, asking me to “open wide” (how gauche), so he could start his oh-so-important drilling.

But I had one more question: “Do your stepsons call you Dad?” Seven syllables wouldn’t have mattered; let’s face it. But he opted to work on tooth number 28 (yes, teeth have official numbers) instead of finishing our chat, giving me the respite of that one last detail.

It was agonizingly suspenseful. Not only was my mouth gaping, there was a big hole in my equanimity. Now I had anxiety not just because of the mini vacuum cleaner in my cheek and that annoying desire to swallow, but my reporter’s quest for information.

Thought bubbles would be useful at times like that. I would have been able to think my question, and then, like a Peanuts or Doonesbury comic strip, it would have popped up printed on a white cloud-like bubble that settled above me, connected to my head by three small white dots.

The dentist wouldn’t have had to stop his work to listen. He wouldn’t have had to struggle through my brain, tripping over jumbled meanderings I myself can’t understand sometimes.

The thought-bubble skill would be a combination of metaphysical text message and real-world comic book, but very, very convenient.

I think bubbles in father- and mother-hood might be useful for recurring conversations. I can imagine revising...

Sci HAMER, p. 26
In a beautifully orchestrated liturgy April 25, Bishop Kevin Vann dedicated Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish in Aledo’s first permanent church, a 25,000-square-foot facility with seating for 500.

“A parish church is what can be called the front line of faith,” said Bishop Vann, “where people, day in and out, bring their joys and sorrows, ups and downs, to meet the Lord Himself present in word and sacrament, to be nourished then and forever.”

The site for the $4.9 million Salado stone and stucco, red-roofed building is surrounded by acres of ranchland softened by the springtime crop of Texas wildflowers whose blooms covered the ground and medians in the newly-paved parking lot, an ideal backdrop for the church’s mission-style architecture.

With 700 worshipers gathered outside the church, Bishop Vann and seven concelebrating priests approached. After describing the parish’s dream to have a Catholic church in Aledo, Bishop Vann’s Pastoral Assistant Judie Woodall said to Bishop Vann, “We respectfully ask you to accept this key and dedicate our new home to the honor and glory of God.”

On behalf of the parish’s 370 families, Woodall thanked Martsolf Architecture, FPI Builders, and all subcontractors and artisans who helped make the parish’s dream become reality. The key was ceremoniously handed from the builder to the architect to the bishop, who asked Father Jenny Ruiz, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Juticalpa, Honduras, Holy Redeemer’s sister parish, to unlock the doors. This role is normally reserved for the dedicating parish’s priest; however Father Robert Wilson, Holy Redeemer’s pastor, died unexpectedly on Christmas Day. Parishioners were shocked and saddened, yet determined to complete the dream Fr. Wilson lovingly guided them toward for nine years.

Worshipers entered the breathtaking 10,000-square-foot church with light interior walls, dark walnut-stained woodwork, and gray slate flooring, filling it to capacity. Another 200 filled an overflow area in the adjoining parish hall. As parishioners assembled to celebrate 10 years of dreams, prayers, and hard work, the setting sun brilliantly illuminated the western-facing stained glass window depicting Christ’s ascension. The striking image projected onto the church’s opposite wall, reflecting the hope of resurrection.

“Wash us in rivers, O Lord,” sang worshipers lead by a multidimensional choir and the orchestra, as the bishop blessed the water of the baptismal font. As a reminder of baptism, the water of the baptismal font was carried to the eucharistic reservation chapel in a procession. The chapel was augmented, placing the sacrament in the tabernacle and lighting the perpetual candle to indicate the presence of Christ.

The service concluded with the presentation of a memorial plaque for Fr. Wilson from Holy Redeemer’s Honduran sister parish. “We want to express our gratitude to Fr. Robert, who from heaven is here with us,” Fr. Jenny said through a translator. “And we want you to know that in Juticalpa, we have a home for you also.”

Symbolic of the close relationship between the two parishes is the tabernacle and the stations of the cross carved of mahogany by a Honduran artist who travelled to Aledo for the dedication. The ambo and cover for the lower baptismal font are made of Honduran mahogany by Texan woodworkers, and the cover’s centerpiece is Texas mesquite. The corpus on the crucifix was carved of linden wood in Italy.

The long-awaited service concluded. Worshippers proceeded to the 300-person parish hall and some of the facility’s eight religious education classrooms for fellowship and a celebratory meal.

“Today is a day of celebration, yet with a touch of sadness,” said Woodall. “We are absolutely thrilled to fulfill this dream within our parish. Still, while Fr. Bob is with us in spirit, we miss his physical presence and the supportive, spiritual role he played in our lives.”

Holy Redeemer focuses its ministries on its Honduran sister parish and local outreach programs. Over its brief history, Holy Redeemer has also received extensive support from others. Before Saturday’s dedication, the parish held Mass and other activities at Aledo High School and Aledo Community Center. Its administrative offices were at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Willow Park. Members of Aledo United Methodist Church joined Holy Redeemer creating an impressive choir and orchestra for the dedication with an impressive performance.

Holy Redeemer Parish is located in Aledo at 16250 Old Weatherford Road.
Huddled together on the floor of Nolan Catholic High School’s Hartnett Arena, the group of 17- and 18-year-old boys watched intently as the man in the white cowboy hat pulled a simple, brown rosary out of his pocket. Fingering the dull beads, the local rancher explained to his riveted audience how he used the prayer tool at the scene of his best friend’s suicide.

“I had to take control of the situation,” said Todd McCartney, who arrived moments after his buddy shot himself in the head.

The Weatherford rancher moved the victim’s young wife and baby to safety and then approached the blood-soaked body.

“I’m not a trained psychologist, police officer, or priest. I’m just a guy, but I had a rosary, and I knew I had Christ right there with me,” McCartney said, recalling the summer tragedy. “He was deceased — I could tell by the wound — but God doesn’t work on timelines.”

The St. Stephen parishioner placed the rosary on his friend’s body and prayed for his soul.

“If I didn’t love my faith, I couldn’t have done that,” he added. “I would have been a wimp.”

It’s personal testimonies from average, faith-filled Catholics like McCartney that help make Youth 2000 a life changing event for hundreds of young people. This year’s April 17-19 event on Divine Mercy weekend brought together 1,200 teens, young adults, and their chaplains from 30 different youth groups across the state of Texas.

The three-day retreat is designed to expose young people to the power of the Holy Spirit and help them form a stronger bond to their faith. Started in 1990, the Youth 2000 initiative answered a challenge from Pope John Paul II to become “shining heralds of the re-evangelization and generous architects of the civilization of love.” More than 40 Youth 2000 gatherings are held in the United States each year.

Sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth, the North Texas retreat is led each year by the Franciscan Friars who use inspirational talks, upbeat music, small group conversations, and adoration to help the impressionable audience recognize God’s love in their lives. A strong visual tool used to reinforce that belief is a tiered, wooden platform illuminated with a collection of lighted votive candles, with a golden monstrance on the top. This “burning bush,” as the friars refer to it, teaches young people to focus on Christ’s presence in the Holy Eucharist.

Annual Youth 2000 retreat encourages Texas youth to Trust in God

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

North Texas Catholic, May 8, 2009  Page 15
Cardinal Rigali urges House members to co-sponsor Pregnant Women Support Act

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Barack Obama’s recent move to open a new round of nuclear arms reduction talks this year represents the best opening since the presidency of Ronald Reagan to make meaningful cuts in the world’s nuclear weapons stockpiles, according to faith-based disarmament advocates. Speaking in Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, Obama called for a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia to replace the 1990s-era START, which expires Dec. 5. A new treaty, the president said, would be a step toward the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The president said he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev broached the subject during the economic summit in London in early April. Obama told his Prague audience that he and his Russian counterpart agreed to seek a treaty by the end of the year that is “legally binding and sufficiently bold.” Bold indeed, and his Prague audience that he and his Russian counterpart agreed to seek a treaty by the end of the year that is “legally binding and sufficiently bold.” Bold indeed, and

“Hope for avoiding mutual annihilation grows with U.S. proposal to reduce nuclear arms”

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Barack Obama’s recent move to open a new round of nuclear arms reduction talks this year represents the best opening since the presidency of Ronald Reagan to make meaningful cuts in the world’s nuclear weapons stockpiles, according to faith-based disarmament advocates. Speaking in Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, Obama called for a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia to replace the 1990s-era START, which expires Dec. 5. A new treaty, the president said, would be a step toward the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The president said he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev broached the subject during the economic summit in London in early April. Obama told his Prague audience that he and his Russian counterpart agreed to seek a treaty by the end of the year that is “legally binding and sufficiently bold.” Bold indeed, and his positive step, said Ronald E. Powsaski told Catholic News Service. Obama’s offer is being embraced by long-standing nuclear disarmament proponents, such as Pax Christi International and its affiliate Pax Christi USA, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

New play, ‘The Vitae Monologues’ offers hope for healing after abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A play created by a member of a Minnesota theater company aims to be an alternative to “The Vagina Monologues,” a popular campus play but one that is often criticized for its sexual explicitness. Jeremy Stanbary of Epiphany Studio Productions says his play, “The Vitae Monologues,” portrays powerful stories of hope and healing from women who have suffered from the psychological and physical effects of abortion. Stanbary, founder and executive director of the Minneapolis-based Catholic production company, was inspired to write this play a few years ago after hearing women and men and speak of their experiences dealing with post-abortion syndrome at a Silent No More event in Minnesota. Sarah Preissner and Stanbary star in the one-act play designed for performance particularly on college campuses or at high schools. “These personal and very real testimonies are unfortunately often dismissed by the secular, medical community,” said Stanbary in a telephone interview with Catholic News Service. “The Vitae Monologues” or “The Monologues of Life” opens with a scene in a therapist’s office, where several people talk about seemingly unrelated problems they’re having in their lives. Each one has experienced trauma in the aftermath of an abortion.

Disability doesn’t limit possibilities for Massachusetts athlete born without legs

CHICOPEE, Mass. (CNS)—A few weeks ago, a friend came to Gina Gilday’s Elms College dorm room and asked to borrow a pair of socks. Gilday’s friends seem to forget that fact as they watch the 21-year-old in the classroom, dorm or on the softball diamond. A lot of people see her as, “Oh, she has no legs, and that must be hard.” I tend to forget that she doesn’t have legs because I’ve never heard her complain once in her life about it,” said teammate and friend Ally Graffum. Cheryl Condon, softball coach at Elms College, recalled that she was a bit surprised and anxious when she heard the news that a player with no legs wanted to join her team. “For every one of us who doesn’t think we can do something because it gets a little hard, I think Gina inspires all of us every day to keep on keeping on. She leads us,” said Condon. Gilday’s love for softball came early in life. She started with T-ball and continued playing. “I remember telling my mom that I was going to try out for the softball team” in high school, she said, adding that her mother was nervous but encouraged her to go ahead. “My parents, they are amazing. And they always brought me up to have strong faith and believe that God gives you certain things to deal with because you can handle them. He would never give you anything you can’t handle,” said Gilday, who has bilateral lower limb deficiency. Gilday’s lack of limbs is not much of a hindrance for her position as a catcher. Instead of squatting behind home plate, she hops out of her chair and scoots to the spot. Batting is a challenge. Without her prosthesis she has a very small strike zone. She could bat that way and did in high school. “However, it’s not fair to the other team because I am so low to the ground,” she said. “And if I did hit it, I would have to crawl to first and then have a pinch runner. I would really have to hit it pretty far because I am not very fast,” she said. Gilday said she wears her artificial limbs for special occasions. “When I wear them I get really tired and I am not as energetic as I normally would be,” she said. “I really feel even down, she said, “I think everybody has a dark moment, but I actually, surprisingly, didn’t have a lot. I think I have just really lucked out with the people I have in my life.” She especially credits her mother, Eda, with supporting and guiding her. “She would tell me you can go one of two ways. You can be OK with it and do something with yourself or you can sit back and feel bad for yourself,” said Gilday.

Gilday. Eda Gilday’s face lights up when she begins to talk about the youngest of her four children. Gina’s siblings are Candace, 28; Ricky, 25; and T.J., 23. “When Gina was born it was a very hard time,” she said. Father Edmund B. Walsh, longtime pastor at St. Mary Parish in Hampden, the Gilday’s home parish, helped Eda Gilday. “I was so down, and I told (Father Walsh) that I don’t know if I have any faith. And he said this time your faith should become the strongest, and your faith will carry you. And it did,” she said. Gina Gilday said her parents “raised me to focus on what you do have, not on what you don’t have. So I just kind of stayed with that. I still have my voice. I can still talk. I can communicate. I can hear. I can see. I have my arms. I work with what I have and go with that.” She described the Elms College community as “a big family” that has boosted her confidence. “It has become a new home for her. When Gilday is not playing ball or studying, she volunteers at Homework House in Holyoke and works in customer relations at Peter Pan Bus Lines. She drives a car with hand controls and wants to be a high school teacher. But for now, she just enjoys sitting up for her softball games and sharing a laugh and a cheer with her fellow Blaziers. 
Vatican diplomat Archbishop Silvano Tomasi: Despite extremist speech, UN draft text on racism recognizes Holocaust

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — An international conference dedicated to combating racism unfortunately was used as a platform for taking “extreme and offensive political positions the Holy See deplores and rejects,” said the chief Vatican representative to U.N. agencies in Geneva.

The Durban Review Conference was meant to be an “occasion to set aside mutual differences and mistrust; reject once more any theory of racial or ethnic superiority; and renew the international community’s commitment to the elimination of all expressions of racism,” said Archbishop Silvano Tomasi.

While the work of the April 20-24 conference took a step forward in combating racism, it “has unfortunately been used to utter extreme and offensive political positions,” which do not contribute to dialogue, “provokes unacceptable conflicts, and in no way can be approved or shared,” he told conference participants in Geneva April 22. The Vatican released a copy of the archbishop’s remarks late that day.

The archbishop was referring to remarks Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made about Israel in the U.N-sponsored conference April 20.

Ahmadinejad said that Israel had “resorted to military aggression to make an entire nation homeless under the pretext of Jewish suffering” and had established a “totally racist government in the occupied Palestine.” His comments prompted a temporary walkout by dozens of diplomats in attendance.

The U.N. conference, which was a follow-up meeting to examine a statement adopted in 2001 at the U.N.’s first conference on racism held in Durban, South Africa, was being boycotted by the United States, Canada, and several other Western countries. The boycott stemmed from fears the Geneva conference would provide a platform to critics of Israel.

Archbishop Tomasi underlined the Vatican’s position, which also had been expressed by Pope Benedict XVI April 19, that participation in the conference was an important way to promote concrete measures to prevent and eliminate every form of racism and intolerance.

The reason most countries chose to participate in the conference and not walk out was a desire to make progress in eliminating old and new forms of racism, said the archbishop.

U.N. officials said that the text under consideration in Geneva was revised in recent months, and the latest draft does not include references to Israel or Zionism. Archbishop Tomasi told Catholic News Service April 20 that much more significant than Ahmadinejad’s speech were the real advances made in the draft conference document, which recognizes the Holocaust as something not to be forgotten and condemns anti-Semitism as well as intolerance against other religions.

In his speech April 22 to U.N. delegates, the archbishop said that racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance “are evils that corrode the social fabric of society and produce innumerable victims.”

“Combating racism is a necessary and indispensable prerequisite for the construction of governance, sustainable development, social justice, democracy, and peace in the world,” he said.

Coming together to share ideas and implement recommendations “is the duty and responsibility of everyone,” he said.

Archbishop Tomasi said education, the media, and faith-based communities play an instrumental role in helping shape mentalities and consciences that are free from fear and prejudice against others.

He also expressed the Vatican’s alarm at “the still latent temptation of eugenics that can be fueled by techniques of artificial procreation and the use of superfluous embryos.”

“The possibility of choosing the color of the eyes or other physical characteristics of a child could lead to the creation of a ‘subcategory of human beings’ or the elimination of human beings that do not fulfill the characteristics predetermined by a given society,” he said.

He also warned against the introduction of “excessive measures and practices” in the legitimate fight against terrorism.

Efforts for greater security should never exacerbate people’s irrational fear of foreigners or undermine the protection and promotion of human rights, he said.

Irish parishes report increase in Mass attendance since recession

DUBLIN, Ireland (CNS) — Many Irish parishes have reported an increase in Mass attendance in recent months, with some parishes reporting increases of up to 30 percent. Bishop Joseph Duffy of Clogher, Northern Ireland, said it is not just the older people who are attending Mass in greater numbers. “There are a lot of people with young families who have been absent from the church who are now returning,” Bishop Duffy said.

“It’s been happening for a little while now — people are seeing the need for deeper values, for moral values that lead on to a search for spiritual values; people are certainly searching for something deeper,” he said. After a period of unprecedented economic growth, Ireland’s economy has been in dire straits in recent months. In a work force of 2 million, approximately 1,000 people lose their jobs every day. “People are experiencing deep crisis for the first time in their lives,” Bishop Duffy said.

“The pace of this economic collapse has been so swift, I think it is causing people to stop and search; this naturally finds a home in coming back to church.”

Smiles, kisses, and therapy: Haifa home offers care for disabled kids

HAIFA, Israel (CNS) — The creamy stones of the Sacred Heart Home gleam in the sun, and squeals of delight echo in the corridors when Sister Pascale Jarjour enters a room. When she talks about an individual child’s case, tears fill her eyes. But when she’s with one of her 60 little charges, it’s all smiles, caresses, and kisses. Sister Jarjour is one of four members of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and 105 staff members who care for the 60 severely physically and mentally disabled children who call Sacred Heart their home.

Two hundred children attend the day care center in the same compound. Like the inhabitants of Haifa itself, the residents and staff of the home are Muslims, Jews, Druze, and Christians. Some parents arrange for their children’s baptisms or bar mitzvahs while they are at the home, and several take their children home briefly for their own religious holidays, Sister Jarjour said. During Passover this year, one couple brought everything needed for a Seder and celebrated with their 1-year-old son who suffered severe brain damage as a result of choking.

“Whether we are Christians, Muslims, Druze, or Jews, suffering is the same and the small joys are the same,” Sister Jarjour said.
Pope says greed – the root of all evil – triggered economic crisis

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY — Greed lies at the root of all evil and is the source of the current global economic crisis, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“It is precisely greed that in-sinuates to us that having is the highest good” in life, and yet it is greed that distorts the purpose of material goods and destroys the world, he said April 22 during his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

The pope’s catechism dealt with early Christian writers of the East and West, and his talk focused on a little-known, eighth-century Benedictine monk, Abbot Ambrose Autpert.

This French-born abbot lived during a time marked by strong political tensions, nationalism, and tribalism, which affected life within the monasteries, he said.

“Titled Conflict Between the Vices and the Virtues as a way to help his monks combat temptation and face their daily spiritual struggles.

As we go through life, we discover that Jesus is many things to us. Who he is to us and the role we see him in varies with our need. Sometimes we need him as our Lord, such as when we really need someone to take care of us. Other times we feel our need for a savior or a healer. Sometimes we revert back to those early adolescent days of greatly needing a friend. It is this last aspect of Jesus that we zero in on at our overnight retreat.

In this week’s Gospel, Jesus reveals the depth of his friendship when he says, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends.”

Armored with these words we lead the youth through a series of reflections, activities and testimonies aimed at helping them see the love Jesus has for them and the lengths to which he will go to be their friend. The evening culminates with a chance for them to sign their name on a large wooden cross as a sign of accepting Jesus’ offer of friendship.

Whether we are in eighth grade or 80 years old, we all need a reminder from time to time that Jesus is not only the God who created everything seen and unseen, but he is also the God who is a friend who loves us to death.

QUESTIONS:
What characteristics of a true friend do you think best describe Jesus in his role as a friend? In what ways do you experience Jesus’ friendship? How does it feel to know that Jesus calls you a friend?

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I am writing this days after celebrating the sacrament of confirmation with 15 young people in our parish. For me, as coordinator of their sacramental preparation, the confirmation Mass is always a spiritual and emotional “high.” This one was no exception.

By Jeff Hedglen

Recently spent an afternoon with a group of friends from high school, some of whom I had not seen since we graduated. Over the past few months we had reconnected via Facebook. One person suggested we get together for dinner, and before I knew it, we were having a party with our spouses and children.

Amidst the great food, mud pies, and laughter, I thought about the people I had not seen and the entire “confirmation community” mix so freely — and this in a group where three of the families spoke little English. The mood was total joy and fellowship.

I recalled how Kane had deftly, compassionately encouraged a reluctant candidate from another parish on our retreat; how Sandi had decided to go play chess every week with an elderly nursing home resident; how Elizabeth had become a confident cantor; how Erin always had thoughtful words of encouragement for me.

In retrospect, I think it was my looking for purpose — a sense of connection — that Jesus is always present to us in a very real way. We just need to be resurrection moments for us. We can experience the Resurrection at every celebration of the Mass. For any of these experiences to be resurrection moments for us, we have to be conscious of the moment and reflect on how we are meeting God in the here and now. One of the key attributes to the triumph over the grave is that Jesus is always present to us in a very real way. We just have to tune in to this truth.

All over the country there are high school seniors savoring each moment spent with friends, dreaming up new and random excuses to get together with them, and working very hard to not miss a single moment of the next few weeks. If we can take this attitude with us in our daily walk with Jesus, every step we take will be done fully immersed in the power of the Resurrection.

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.
Católicos y musulmanes esperan que el viaje del Papa a Jordania y la región inicie renovadas relaciones

AMMÁN, Jordania (CNS)—Algunos analistas musulmanes y católicos creen que la visita del Papa a Jordania, que se llevará a cabo del 8 al 11 de mayo, podría iniciar una renovación de relaciones entre personas de diferentes credos.

“Viene después del 11 de septiembre, después de la invasión de Estados Unidos en Irak; tantas cosas han cambiado en esta región (el Medio Oriente)”, dijo Farouq Jarar, director interino del Instituto “Royal Aal al-Bayt” para pensamiento islámico en Ammán. “El entendimiento mutuo entre musulmanes y cristianos es mucho más importante ahora de lo que había sido antes”.

El instituto, fundado en 1980, es una organización internacional que utiliza investigaciones y conferencias para ayudar a aclarar formas de pensar equivocadas con respecto al Islam, y para difundir la verdadera imagen del Islam de hoy.

Jarar dijo que espera que la visita del Papa sea “un nuevo comienzo, un nuevo puente para un mejor entendimiento, mayor coexistencia, más respeto y más aceptación”.

“Creo que su visita enviará un fuerte mensaje para todos los musulmanes, especialmente después del discurso del Papa en Alemania”, dijo Jarar, en referencia al discurso del Papa Benedicto en el año 2006 en Regensburg, que causó protestas por parte de los musulmanes en todo el mundo. La mayor parte de las críticas se centraron en la citación del Papa de un emperador medieval bizantino, que había dicho: “Demuéstreme algo que Mahoma haya traído nuevo, y sólo encontrarán cosas malas e inhumanas tales como su mandato de difundir la fe, que utiliza investigaciones y conjeturas para dar lugar a creencias entre personas de diferentes credos. El entendimiento mutuo entre musulmanes y cristianos es mucho más importante ahora de lo que había sido antes”.

El Papa pronunciará un discurso frente a la mezquita. El padre Imad Alamat, quien dirige el comité responsable de la preparación de los textos litúrgicos de la visita del Papa, ve la visita como algo que le dará a la región “una nueva visión”.

“El Papa les dará a las relaciones entre cristianos y musulmanes una nueva visión y les dará la fuerza para seguir adelante. Nosotros (musulmanes y cristianos) tenemos muy buenos entendimientos en Jordania, pero su visita nos ayudará en seguir adelante”, dijo Jarar.

Después de su visita a Jordania, el Papa Benedicto viajará a Jerusalén el 11 de mayo. Jarar también expresó su esperanza de que el Papa “ayude a promover el proceso de paz en la región para resolver el conflicto, haciendo evidente a todos los involucrados sus derechos legales y legítimos”.

Esta visita del Papa “se considera como un nuevo horizonte de colaboración entre musulmanes y cristianos, no solamente en Jordania, sino en todo el mundo”, dijo el padre Rif'at Bader, director del Instituto “Royal Aal al-Bayt” para pensamiento islámico en Ammán.

Los críticos de la visita del Papa, ve la preparación de los textos litúrgicos de la visita del Papa a Turquía, cuando el Papa visitó una mezquita más reciente y grande de Jordania, la Mezquita que lleva el nombre del rey Hussein. Con más de 1,500 yardas cuadradas (1254.181 metros cuadrados), tiene cupo para 6,000 devotos.

“¿Qué hará el Papa en esos momentos? Pienso que le rezará a Dios, en una oración en silencio. La presencia del Papa en la mezquita es señal de respeto mutuo. Con el hecho de estar allí, no se necesitan palabras”, añadió el padre Bader.

El Papa asistirá a una Misa el 12 de mayo en el Valle de Josafat en Jerusalén. El 9 de mayo, el Papa visitará la ciudad de Ammán. “El entendimiento mutuo entre musulmanes y cristianos es mucho más importante ahora de lo que había sido antes”.

Farouq Jarar — el Instituto “Royal Aal al-Bayt” para pensamiento islámico en Ammán
El Papa dice que las Sagradas Escrituras deben de interpretarse dentro de la comunidad de la Iglesia

Por Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

El Papa Benedicto XVI dijo que las Sagradas Escrituras no pueden ser interpretadas de una manera superficial o simplemente como un análisis de sus palabras, sino que deben ser interpretadas en el contexto del pueblo entero de Dios durante el curso de los siglos, dijo en un discurso ante los integrantes de la Comisión bíblica pontificia, el 23 de abril.

La comisión de eruditos bíblicos es un cuerpo consultivo de la Congregación de la doctrina de la fe; y su presidente es el cardenal de los Estados Unidos, William J. Levada, prefecto de la congregación.

Durante su reunión, llevada a cabo del 20 al 24 de abril, los integrantes de la comisión se concentraron en el tema “Inspiración y Verdad en la Biblia”.

El Papa Benedicto dijo que el tema trata de “una preocupación que reside muy cerca de mi corazón, pues la interpretación de las Sagradas Escrituras es de fundamental importancia para la fe cristiana y la vida de la iglesia”.

Para tener una interpretación correcta de las Sagradas Escrituras, los eruditos deben seguir el criterio fijado por el Concilio vaticano segundo, dijo. Primero, “se debe dar gran atención al contenido y a la unidad de toda la Sagrada Escritura”; y segundo, “las Sagradas Escrituras deben de leerse en el contexto de la tradición viva de la iglesia entera”, dijo.

Por último, los eruditos deben prestar atención “a la cohesión de las verdades individuales de fe, tanto una con otra como dentro del plan total de la revelación”, dijo.

Sin embargo, no es suficiente aplicarse solamente al estudio de las Sagradas Escrituras en un estudio académico, que podría conllevar el riesgo de verlas solamente como un trabajo de literatura, dijo el Papa.

¿Por qué ser católico? ofrece talleres de lanzamiento y de evangelización, el 23 de mayo

El Padre Carmen Mele, coordinador de ¿Por qué ser católico? por la diócesis, ha anunciado que Padre Alejandro López-Cardinale regresará a Fort Worth para dar una vez más los talleres de lanzamiento y de evangelización, el sábado, 23 de mayo, de 10 a.m. a 12:30p.m. (lanzamiento) y de 1:30 a 4 p.m. (evangelización).

Todas están invitados. Por favor llame al Padre Carmen (817-560-3300) para indicar si va a presentarse.

El Padre Carmen dice que “Si necesita ayuda con la planificación del programa de ¿Por qué ser católico? en su parroquia, por favor llaméme póngase en contacto con el Padre Alejandro.”

El encuentro para comprometidos, del 24-26 de julio

El encuentro para comprometidos es una preparación matrimonial de fin de semana para parejas de novios que desean contraer matrimonio. Está diseñado para dar a las parejas la oportunidad de dialogar intensamente y honestamente sobre su futura vida como pareja.

Es presentado por un equipo de parejas casadas. El próximo fin de semana se llevará a cabo del 24-26 de julio, en el Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth.

Para inscribirse, favor de hablar con Suzanna Ordóñez al (817) 560-3300 ext. 256.

Clases del método natural para la planificación familiar empezarán el 17 de mayo

La planificación familiar es 99 porciento efectivo, 100 porciento natural.

La fertilidad es un regalo de Dios que nos permite ser co-creadores de nuevas vidas con nuestro Padre Celestial. Si desea o aplazar o lograr el embarazo, la planificación familiar natural puede ser un método muy útil para vivir su vida en armonía con las leyes naturales de Dios.

A la vez, le permite fortalecer las lazos de unión con su familia y profundizar su relación con su pareja. Las clases en español empezarán el domingo, 17 de mayo, a las 4 p.m. en el Centro católico, 800 W. Loop 820 S., Fort Worth. Es muy importante que se registre lo más pronto posible. Si desea más información, favor de hablar con Suzanna Ordóñez al (817) 560-3300 ext. 256.

Retiro sobre el Espíritu Santo en el Centro de Cursillos

Todos están cordialmente invitados a un día de retiro llamado El Espíritu Santo: su misión en nuestra vida, en la Iglesia y en el mundo, mayo 31, domingo, de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m. El retiro en español será para adultos, hombres y mujeres, solteros o casados, en el Centro de cursillos, 2221 N.W. 26th St., Fort Worth. La donación es $25. Si no puede dar esa cantidad, le ayudaremos. Además de pláticas y reflexión, habrá Misa, oportunidad de confesarse, y de dialogar con líderes. Para más información, llame al Centro (817) 624-9411 o a Martha Galván (817) 770-6522. No hace falta reg-istación previa. Venga a pasar un día con el Espíritu Santo.
El Papa visita zona de temblor para fortalecer la fe, esperanza de futuro de sobrevivientes

Por Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

ONNA, Italia — En una visita orientada a fortalecer la fe y la esperanza de la gente para el futuro, el Papa Benedicto XVI hizo un llamado a medias concretas e inmediatas para reconstruir los pueblos y las villas devastados por un terremoto mortal.

Las autoridades nacionales y las religiosas continúan estando designadas como “países de especial preocupación”. Esta designación se reserva para países donde se lleva a cabo las más notorias violaciones en contra de la libertad religiosa y para gobiernos que toleran tales abusos.

La comisión, cuerpo independiente, le entrega sus recomendaciones al presidente, a la secretaría de estado y al Congreso.

Durante la rueda de prensa en donde se dio a conocer el informe, Talal Eid, que es imán, encargado de presidir la oración musulmana, de Boston, y miembro de la comisión, dijo que en Venezuela se ha aumentado sin descanso la tolerancia de los abusos en contra de católicos, judíos y grupos protestantes, cuyas oficinas principales están en Estados Unidos. Aunque no hay restricciones oficiales en contra de la libertad religiosa, dijo, la “cruda retórica” usada por parte del gobierno venezolano y la impunidad han creado “un ambiente hostil” para ciudadanos católicos y judíos.

Los obispos católicos de Venezuela han denunciado las acciones políticas del presidente Hugo Chávez, diciendo que detenta demasiado poder en las fuerzas armadas y viola los principios democráticos.

En su recomendación de que Cuba sea puesta en la lista de observación, la comisión dijo que “las creencias y prácticas religiosas continúan estando controladas en forma muy apretada” en la nación caribeña.

Sueño estadounidense todavía brilla para mujeres detenidas en redada de Postville

Por Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

POSTVILLE, Iowa — Cuando Marta Verónica Cúmez Solovi fue llevada a la plantación empacadora de carne Agriprocessors en Postville, donde una vez trabajó, dijo que tenía un sentido de pavor al regresar.

“Yo estaba pensando otra vez más sobre todas las cosas que habían sucedido”, dijo Solovi, nativa de Guatemala, mediante un intérprete.

Solovi, de 33 años de edad, quien ha estaba en los Estados Unidos durante tres años, fue una de 389 personas arrestadas por el Servicio de inmigración y control de aduanas de los Estados Unidos el mayo pasado, en una de las redadas más grandes en un lugar de trabajo.

Ella fue detenida y procesada, pero, después de casi un año, todavía no ha sido enjuiciada. A cambio de cierta medida de libertad mientras espera el juicio, Solovi debe usar una pulsera de tobillo que tiene un sistema GPS dentro, de manera que las autoridades federales puedan supervisar sus movimientos. Pero a ella no le permiten trabajar.

Solovi y docenas de otros han tomado refugio, a veces físicamente y a veces espiritualmente, en la iglesia St. Bridget en Postville. La parroquia ha intentado racionar casi $1 milión en donaciones recibidas para ayudar a los trabajadores de Agriprocessors, arrestados o no, a pagar alquiler, servicios públicos, y costos de vida.

En gratitud, Solovi, miembro de la parroquia, y otras mujeres inmigrantes, preparan el almuerzo diario para el personal y los voluntarios de St. Bridget. De esa manera, ellas agradecen a quienes les han ayudado a sobrevivir estos tiempos difíciles.

Janet Rafael, otra ex trabajadora, no estuvo involucrada en la redada. Ella no estaba programada a trabajar durante esa mañana.

Sin embargo, su esposo fue arrestado y programado para deportación hacia su Guatemala natal. Aunque Rafael continuó trabajando, la planta Agriprocessors cerró abruptamente el 14 de noviembre, aplastada bajo el peso de investigaciones en cuanto a sus prácticas de trabajo y financiar, además de una multiplicidad de acusaciones criminales contra los dueños.

Rafael, de México, con 25 años de edad, y su esposo, se conocieron en la planta. Han estado casados tres años y son padres de un hijo de 2 años de edad, Yordi, ciudadano nativo estadounidense.

“Mi hijo está lleno de energía”, dijo a Catholic News Service mediante un intérprete el 22 de abril, mientras Yordi corría por la casa parroquial.

El personal de St. Bridget también ha ayudado a la familia Rafael. Quizás las mejores noti- cias para Janet Rafael han sido que la deportación de su esposo se retrasó y podría ser cancelada. Restituyeron a su esposo a Iowa como testigo federal en los procedimientos criminales contra Agriprocessors.

Rafael dijo que el matrimonio ha conversado sobre las opciones que tienen de mudarse a Guatemala o a México. Sin embargo, si ella tuviese la opción, permecería en Iowa, pero quizá no en Postville. “En algún lugar más grande, donde haya más trabajo”, dijo. También quisiera mudarse a un apartamento más amplio, y no a uno como el en el que viven ahora.

Lloró mientras hablaba de la esperanza que el regreso de su esposo para testificar le otorgara inmunidad contra la deportación, de modo que ellos pudiesen permanecer en los Estados Unidos.

La comisión recomendó la CECA le observe cerca de Venezuela y a Cuba

Por Regina Linksey
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Una comisión del gobierno de los Estados Unidos le ha recomendado al presidente Barack Obama que su administración coloque a Venezuela y a Cuba en la lista de países que deben ser observados cerca por sus violaciones en contra de la libertad religiosa.

En su informe anual, dado a conocer el martes, la Comisión de libertad religiosa internacional de los Estados Unidos también recomendó que otros 13 países, incluyendo Irak, Irán, Saudi Arabia y Pakistan, fueran designados como “países de especial preocupación”.

La designación se reserva para países donde se lleva a cabo las más notorias violaciones en contra de la libertad religiosa y para gobiernos que toleran tales abusos.

La comisión, cuerpo independiente, le entrega sus recomendaciones al presidente, a la secretaría de estado y al Congreso.

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Special Collection: National Collection for the Retired Religious

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pope witnessed the miraculous appearance of drops of blood on a Host that he was consecrating. The traveling priest had doubts about the truth of transubstantiation and found that his Host was bleeding so much that it stained the altar cloth.

Today, in the Eucharistic Chapel (The Chapel of the Corporal of St. Mary Major) in the Vatican, in a large silver shrine contains the Holy Corporal (linen altar cloth) from Bolsena. The Corporal of Bolsena, which is preserved in a rich reliquary in Orvieto Cathedral, is one of the many relics the group will see during the pilgrimage as well as the major holy sites in Rome. Home to St. Peter and his successors, including, of course, Pope Benedict XVI. Rome and especially St. Peter’s Basilica, the Vatican, is one of the most important centers in the Christian world — the second most visited site in Christendom after Jerusalem.

The group’s full program also includes a visit to Assisi, the ancient holy town of St. Francis. Bishop Vann will travel with the Fort Worth group from DFW International Airport to Rome on Monday, Nov. 9, arriving in Rome on Nov. 10. On arrival the group will enjoy a panoramic tour of Rome before checking into a first class hotel near the Vatican, Rome, six nights in a four-star hotel (each room with private facilities) with buffet breakfast and dinner daily (including wine and bottled water at dinner). All transfers in Italy and applicable sightseeing and entrance fees with local professional guides, daily motorcoach, gratuities for drivers, guides, and escorts are included. Each motorcoach will have its own priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth and/or co-ordinator, local escort, and driver throughout the program. A dedicated information desk will be located in each hotel and staffed by special personnel to answer any questions.

Medical and cancellation insurance is also included in the package price as well as a special commemorative T-shirt, dedicated name tags, luggage tags, and a detailed information booklet with all program details, destination information, contacts, terms, conditions, Rome map, and more. The only extra cost will be for a sandwich or pizza and soda for lunch.

Pre- and post-extensions will also be offered, enabling participants to spend three days and nights before or after the main Pilgrimage to Rome visiting other historically and religiously significant Italian cities: Venice, Florence, Verona, Padua, Milan, and Turin, depending on program choice.

For more information or questions, parishioners from the Diocese of Forth Worth are asked to contact Barbara Boone, the Pilgrimage coordinator at (972) 721-4118 for diocesanpilgrimage@gmail.com.

Make the spiritual investment of your lifetime

Join Bishop Kevin Vann

On a Journey to Rome, Italy

Nov. 9-16, 2009

To Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Worth

Spend 6 nights in Rome — the Eternal City

Walk in the footsteps of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul

Enjoy Mass daily with Bishop Vann at some of the most holy sites of the Christian world:

• St. Peter’s Basilica
• St. Mary Major
• St. Paul Outside the Walls
• St. John Lateran
• St. Francis Basilica — Assisi
• Orvieto Cathedral

This unique Anniversary Pilgrimage led by Bishop Vann includes the weekly Papal Audience in Rome, a visit to the Vatican Museums including Michelangelo’s awesome Sistine Chapel, a day in Assisi visiting the holy sites of St. Francis and a day in Orvieto and Bolsena. In Rome, visit the Christian Catacombs and a chance to kneel at the Holy Stairs at the Chapel opposite the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

Deadline for sign up is May 15

The Pilgrimage is open to all members of the parishes of the Catholic Church of Fort Worth.

Contact your Pastor and/or his designated Rome Pilgrimage Coordinator for the detailed itinerary, price, registration form, and all the inclusions — air and taxes from DFW, 6 nights first class hotel near the Vatican, Rome, breakfast and dinner daily fully escorted; all applicable entrances, sightseeing, transfers, and insurance.

Or call the Diocesan Pilgrimage Coordinator Barbara Boone at (972) 721-4118 or Pilgrimage Director Father J. Michael Holmberg (972) 625-5252.

The Pilgrimage ends with a welcome dinner — a great way to end a trip that is sure to be a highlight of your life.
**Duty to God**

**Bishop honors scouts from throughout the diocese for fulfilling their Duty to God**

**Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer**

Correspondent

**Uniformed Scouts and leaders embodied the blend of scouting and faith at an award ceremony April 19 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller.**

The 200 youth and their adult leaders had come together to receive Catholic diocesan awards in recognition of excellent work in religious programs.

Bishop Kevin Vann, who presided at the ceremony, told the assembly the religious scouting programs value hard work in and of itself, and also in the context of faith.

"In this octave of Easter, each day is a celebration of the resurrection of Christ," the bishop said. He explained that in the context of Easter, and of the day’s Gospel reading (John 20:19-31), “Catholic Scouting becomes a place that says, ‘Do not persist in your unbelief.’”

“Diocesan scouting,” he said, “is a place where children learn not only what it means to be a Scout, but what it means to be a person of faith.”

Presented this year were the Family of God award, for girls 7 to 9 years old, designed to help discover the presence of God in their daily lives; and the Hail Mary award, for first and second graders, who worked to recognize God’s presence in home and community.

Third and fourth grade girls received the Holy Family award, for learning to recognize God in the home and community. Girls 9 to 11 years earned the I Live my Faith award, which teaches appreciation of God and religion in daily life, and encourages participation in the community of faith.

The Marian Medal, for young women aged 12 to 15 years, recognizes active involvement in understanding Mary as the model of openness and spirituality, and development of a Christian spirit of hope, faith, and joyful Christian community.

Boys who are Tiger and Wolf Cub Scouts earned the Light of Christ award, for studying the sacraments, while Cub and Webelo Scouts received the Parvuli Dei award, a national emblem that recognizes advancement in religious knowledge and spiritual formation.

Sixth to eighth-grade Boy Scouts earned the Ad Altare Dei award, preparing to take their places as maturing Catholics and Americans; and the Pope Pius XII award recognized scouts’ potential to develop as leaders in church and community events.

This year the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award was given to Patricia Glasgow, for her work helping youth develop their spiritual lives. That award was inaugurated in 1980 to recognize the meritorious contributions of adults who serve Catholic youth through Girl Scouts and Camp Fire.

The Bronze Pelican, a diocesan recognition presented to those who have made significant contributions to Catholic Scouting, this year went to Terry Bachman, of Troop 32 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Victor Nguyen, of Troop and Crew 304 at St. Ignatius College Preparatory School in Fort Worth.

In recognition of outstanding contribution to the spiritual development of Catholic youth in the Boy Scouts of America, the St. George Emblem was given to Bill Bellman of St. Jude Parish in Mansfield; John Houters of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington; and Richard Mathews of St. Francis of Assisi Parish at Grapevine.

A National Catholic Quality Unit Award, Pope Paul VI, was presented to Pack 32, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. Qualifications for that honor were adult leadership response to training, with Scouts participating in the religious emblem programs of their particular levels in scouting.

The prestigious Gold Medalion Award, with its distinctive banner, was presented this year to Crew 304 of St. Ignatius School. Accepting the banner were Oanh Nguyen, founder of the school, and Victor Nguyen, principal.

The Gold Medalion was established to identify and recognize the outstanding Catholic Cub Scout Pack, Boy Scout Troop, and Venturing Crew in each of the 15 episcopal regions of the United States. Winners are chosen because they excel at providing youth with quality religious activities, religious emblem participation, outdoor activities, and special events that encompass the religious, vocational, and educational aspects of Catholic Scouting.
Cutting U.S. poverty rate in half by 2020 seen as vital for country

By Julie Carroll
Catholic News Service

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Father Larry Snyder admits it’s a daunting challenge: starting work on cutting the U.S. poverty rate in half by 2020 at a time when thousands of Americans are drowning in debt and organizations that serve the poor are straining to meet their clients’ needs.

Not only is Catholic Charities USA, which Fr. Snyder heads, attempting to do more with less, but he and the organization are convinced that it’s vital for the country.

On April 20 Catholic Charities hosted the first of 10 summits to be held at sites across the nation in 2009 and 2010 to give social service providers, health care providers, educational leaders, and others an opportunity to discuss the needs of the poor in their communities.

Catholic Charities plans to use the information to craft anti-poverty legislation that it will propose to Congress next year.

“Our plan is simple,” Fr. Snyder told more than 100 people gathered at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul.

“Earlier in our history,” he said, “Monsignor (John) O’Grady joined with the Roosevelt administration in crafting the New Deal and the largest anti-poverty program in our nation’s history: Social Security. It is time for the New Deal of our time.”

Msgr. O’Grady headed the national Catholic Charities operation for more than 40 years.

The organization is one of the largest networks of social service providers in the nation. It serves nearly 8 million people annually through more than 1,700 local agencies and institutions nationwide.

Catholic Charities USA launched an anti-poverty campaign in 2006 after publishing a policy paper titled “Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good,” which called for the creation of more livable-wage jobs and a greater investment in social policies that support the poor.

In 2007, according to the most current data available, more than 37 million Americans were living below the official federal poverty level, which was $22,050 for a family of four. Some have predicted that by the end of this year, that number will climb to more than 50 million.

Catholic Charities and other organizations that serve the poor also have been scarred by the troubled economy.

In a 2009 survey conducted by Catholic Charities USA, the organization’s agencies around the country reported an increase in demand for nutrition, housing, and direct-assistance services coupled with a decrease in donations.

The latest recession statistics coming back to us are disturbing,” Fr. Snyder said at the St. Paul summit.

Eighty-two percent of the 50 agencies that responded to the survey reported an increase in requests for rent or mortgage assistance, and 90 percent reported an increase in requests for financial assistance.

“The demographics of people seeking help have also changed and are now including people who consider themselves middle class as well as senior citizens,” Fr. Snyder added.

Anecdotes from the front lines are even more revealing.

Father Ragan Schriver, executive director of Catholic Charities of East Tennessee in the Knoxville Diocese, reported to Catholic Charities USA: “Through October, November, and December all family shelter beds were full. We had to ask our United Way to allow us to spend some of their money on lower-end hotel rooms to put families who were homeless into a place until something opened up.”

Laura Opelt, executive director of Catholic Charities of Rochester, New York, said: “We are seeing more working poor who have never accessed services before and are not eligible for traditional programs. They are in need of food and emergency assistance.”

At the same time that demand for services is increasing, Catholic Charities agencies are experiencing a sharp decline in philanthropic giving and government funding, according to the survey.

As a result, 20 percent of agencies reported making reductions in programs that provide basic needs. Sixteen percent made reductions in housing assistance programs. Of the agencies reporting program reductions, 56 percent cut staff and 44 percent made service delivery cuts.

In 2006, Fr. Snyder said, “we never imagined that we would be facing in 2008 and 2009 a housing crisis, a financial crisis, a nation in crisis.”

“But this crisis presents us with the opportunity to change a nation,” he said, adding that the aim should not be “to look around for signs of hope” but to be determined “to be signs of hope.”

In an interview with The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Fr. Snyder said Catholic Charities will propose “landmark legislation” that would enable Catholic institutions to call the “Corporal Works of Mercy Legislation.”

The legislation will focus on five “pillars” outlined in “Pov- ert y in America”: hunger, health care, poverty, security, housing and education and workforce development.

To eradicate poverty, Fr. Snyder said, nonprofit organizations and government must work together.

“Catholic social teaching, we would define the role of government as providing for the common good,” Father Snyder said. “A lot of people on Capitol Hill would not agree with that. They would say government’s business is to maintain the security of our borders and maintain law and order.”

“These are important things,” he said, “but they’re pieces of the common good. We would say the other pieces are, if there are people who are not able to live independently, then somehow the government has a responsibility to be a part of the solution.”

Glendon points out Notre Dame placed her in role of balance to Obama

From Page 1

A Catholic Church and society.

A spokeswoman for the Indiana university confirmed April 27 that Glendon, who served as ambassador from 2007 until earlier this year, was the first person to accept and then later decline the award.

Jennifer R. Psaki, a White House spokeswoman, said Obama also was disappointed by Glendon’s decision, “but he is at a loss to understand why a Catholic university should disrespect it.”

Glendon was also concerned that the university had issued “talking points” that implied that her acceptance speech for the award would “somehow balance the event.”

She quoted two statements from the university:

— “President Obama won’t be doing all the talking, Mary Ann Glendon, the former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, will be the voice of the recipient of the Lucretia Medal.”

— “We think having the president come to Notre Dame, see our graduates, meet our leaders and hear a talk from Mary Ann Glendon will be a big good thing for the president and for the causes we care about.”

Glendon wrote that a commencement is supposed to be a joyous day for the graduates and the university.

“It is not the right place, nor is it a brief acceptance speech the right vehicle, for engagement with the very serious problems raised by Notre Dame’s decision — in disregard of the settled position of the U.S. bishops — to honor a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the church’s position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice,” the letter said.

In light of reports that other Catholic institutions also are choosing to disregard the bishops’ request, Glendon expressed concern that Notre Dame’s example “could have an unfortunate ripple effect.”

Father Jenkins in a statement posted on the university’s Web site April 30, sought to fill the gap left by Glendon’s rejection of his request by offering those interested in who could bring a compelling voice, a passion for dialogue, great intellectual stature, and a deep commitment to Catholic values to the speaking role of the commencement. “We would define the role of government as providing for the common good. We would say the other pieces are, if there are people who are not able to live independently, then somehow the government has a responsibility to be a part of the solution.”

Ronald Reagan and has been a consultant for the Presidential Commission on Population, the National Institutes of Health, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the American Law Institute, and served on the Eisenhower administration’s National Security Council.

He is the author of numerous books, including A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching and Contraception: A History of Its Truths and Lies by Catholic Theologians and Canonists.

Since Noonan, 82, has served as a consultant for several agencies in the Catholic Church, including Pope Paul VI’s Com- mittee on the Problems of the Family and several U.S. bishops’ committees, Father Jenkins said he would send Notre Dame graduates “into the world with sound advice and affirmation.”

Saying announcing March 20 that Obama would speak at the commencement, the university has been criticized by some U.S. bishops, including Fort Wayne- South Bend Bishop John M. D’Arcy, leader of the diocese where Notre Dame is located, who announced plans to boycott the event.

Other clergy, alumni and conservative Catholic organizations have mounted a campaign seeking to have the university revoke the president’s invitation.

Anti-abortion activist Ran- dall Terry has vowed to protest Obama’s scheduled address every day leading up to the May 17 ceremony and has suggested that protesters may disrupt the commencement.

 Asked for a response to Terry’s plans, Bishop D’Arcy said, “As you know, we have distanced ourselves from him.”

The bishop reiterated that he had asked “Catholics and others of good will not to join in unseemly protests, which attack the president of the United States or Father Jenkins or the University of Notre Dame.”

The spokesman said Bishop D’Arcy “has urged everyone to cooperate, so Notre Dame will host an announcement that everyone can cooperate.”

Though some Notre Dame students have participated in campus protests against Obama’s scheduled appearance, others have voiced their enthusiasm and support of the president’s upcoming commencement address.
Pacheco... 

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On the search committee that selected him. “Walking away from TCU, I sensed I had helped make it a better police department,” Pacheco said. “And I enjoyed myself there all the time.

“The kids would come to the university as freshmen, sort of intimidated,” he said. “Then four years later you’d see how much they had matured. I have a soft spot in my heart for TCU.”

Pacheco’s priestly vocation, from the first hint at age four to the seminary 49 years later, was book-ended by his mother, he who said, “knew me thoroughly.” He remembers traveling to Mexico City with his parents Adam and Mary, and his grandparent, when he was 4, and holding his mother’s hand at a Mass in front of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

“My mother had a ‘death grip’ on my hand,” he said, laughing, “as we watched all the people walking on their knees to where Mary had appeared to Juan Diego. I asked my mother what they were doing, and she said, ‘They are showing our Blessed Mother how much they love her.’”

—Deacon John Pacheco

Deacon Pacheco offers a blessing to St. Mary of the Assumption parishioner Brigit Conders. Looking on are her sister, Caitlin Conders, and Dr. Frank McGehee.

Hamer...

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able thought-bubbles suitable for moms: “Don’t even ask,” or “Not after midnight.”

For younger children you could use: “In a minute,” “Hush,” “Go to sleep.”

Bubbles wouldn’t be necessary all the time. For example in teenager carpool conversation, which is the closest thing we know to mind reading, thought bubbles would be irrelevant. “How did your research paper turn out? “Okay.” Did the teacher say anything?”

“Not much.” What kind of grade did you get?” “Dunno.”


In moments of household mayhem, when all the kids are talking at once, and you are mentally working on something else (dinner, a phone call, or your check book), thought bubbles might not work. At those times you’d still have to go with the tried-and-true option of empathetic grunts: “Huhmm..” “Arghhh.” “Uh huh.” “Awwww.”

Spoken with the correct emphasis and pitch, those four can get you through a six-year-old’s retelling of the story of Noah’s Ark or a seventh-grader’s description of the mean human hydraulic power lock that was holding my mouth open. I had not forgotten my question: “What do the boys call you?”

“Dad,” he said. “At first it was awkward, but one day I answered, ‘Your priesthood starts now, in the seminary. God wants you here now. When you are ordained, that’s where God will want you.’”

“I am really looking forward to my life as a priest,” Pacheco said. “We all feel apprehension and confusion when we start here, but God asks us to try. This is what God called me to do. I know it. Being a priest serving the Body of Christ.

“The moment I stand before God,” he said, “I split second before I die — I want to know that I tried. That I did the best I could.”

John Pacheco’s parents shared with his devotion to our Lady of Guadalupe, where he first saw pilgrims demonstrating their faith.

“When I got to the seminary, there was a picture of the tilma, with the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and I prayed that if she helped me, I would make a pilgrimage back there to where it all started.”

For his ordination day, Pacheco asked the bishop’s permission to wear a gold chasuble with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the front.

“And at my first Mass,” he said, “I will be looking up and saying, ‘Mom, Dad, I’m here. I’m doing it.’”

Julie said it was a good idea, “But can we also have subtitles under everything we look at — like when we’re looking out the window on car trips. And can we add pop-ups with additional information?”

Meredith’s idea was pragmatic. “I’d like thought-bubbles,” she said. “But I’d need a pin, so if I didn’t care what someone was thinking, I could pop their bubble.

“And of course I’d want to make the bubblewrap popping sound.”

Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrea Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrea; and Abby, Last May, her column received the second place award for best family life columns by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto. In 2005, Kathy’s column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.
To Report Misconduct
If you or someone you know is a victim of abuse, contact a trusted person whom you believe serves the church, you may:

• Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@sihdallas.org.
• Or call the Sexual Abuse hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
• Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 162 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart

To Report Abuse
Call the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (TDFS) at (800) 252-5400 or visit dcfp.texas.gov.
After 21 years of service with the TCU police force, Deacon John Pacheco trades in his badge for a Higher Calling

John Pacheco wore purple for 21 years, but not as a liturgical color. The purple was a badge on his sleeve, the formal insignia of Texas Christian University. He was a TCU police officer.

Soon, however, whenever Pacheco wears purple, it will be on the chasuble of a Catholic priest. The newest priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth will be ordained at 11 a.m. May 23, at St. Patrick Cathedral.

“Thanks be to God he didn’t have anything in his hand, but it was a scary feeling. I remember pulling my gun and holding it,” Pacheco said, “but I didn’t raise it.”

During his more than 20 years of work in TCU law enforcement, the police department changed and flourished under the direction of a new chief, and Pacheco had served

Deacon Pacheco joins the congregation in prayer at fellow seminarian Alfredo Barba’s ordination to the diaconate on April 18. Also pictured are Deacon Simón Tórrez of Holy Cross Church in The Colony (center), and Deacon Bill Beaton of St. Mark Church in Denton.

Deacon Pacheco embraces the diocese’s most recently ordained deacon, Alfredo Barba, at Immaculate Conception Church in Denton on April 18.

Deacon Pacheco pours water into the chalice during Mass at St. Mary of the Assumption Church.

Dee Sweeney, a parishioner at St. Mary of the Assumption, receives a greeting from Deacon Pacheco after Mass.

An engaging homilist, Deacon Pacheco was a communications major during his college years at UTA.

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