Pope says Eucharist essential for Christians in often-hostile world

By Cindy Wooden

ROME (CNS) — Before leading a Corpus Christi procession with the Eucharist through the streets of Rome, Pope Benedict XVI said the sacrament is essential nourishment for Christians walking through an often-hostile world.

“For every Christian generation, the Eucharist is the indispensable nourishment that sustains them as they cross the desert of this world,” he said in his June 7 homily for the solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The world is “made acid by ideological and economic systems that do not promote life, but rather mortify it,” he said during the Mass celebrated outside Rome’s Basilica of St. John Lateran.

Ours is “a world where the logic of power and possessing dominates more than that of service and love; a world where often the culture of violence and death triumphs,” the pope said.

“But Jesus comes to meet us and reassure us: He himself is the bread of life,” Pope Benedict said.

The pope’s security team and Italian police, who are responsible for papal safety outside the Vatican, were extra attentive June 7. A day earlier, a mentally disturbed man jumped a barricade in St. Peter’s Square in an attempt to reach the pope as he rode through the crowd at his weekly general audience.

Because the Mass was considered a Rome diocesan event, despite the thousands of foreigners present, Pope Benedict celebrated the liturgy, including the eucharistic prayer, in Italian rather than Latin.

The pope told people gathered for the Mass that they should not be surprised that many people have difficulty accepting church teaching that Jesus is truly present in Eucharist.

The real presence is a mystery, and “a God who becomes flesh and sacrifices himself for the life of the world puts human wisdom in crisis,” he said.

But Catholics continue to proclaim the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and, in traditional Corpus Christi processions, they bear witness to their faith by carrying the Eucharist through their cities, the pope said.

Pope Benedict said Luke’s Gospel account of the miracle of the loaves and fishes emphasizes the fact that everyone present ate and was filled.

See Eucharist calls..., p. 25

Immigration bill stalled, not dead, backers say

By Patricia Zapor

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With the June 7 failure of a procedural vote intended to bring the bill to a vote, the Senate’s attempt to pass comprehensive immigration reform went back behind the scenes, though the bill’s backers in both parties vowed to bring it to the floor again.

After the failure of a second cloture vote to cut off debate, Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, said he would take the bill off the floor to allow other legislation to move along, though he did so without closing the door to reviving its consideration.

By the June 9-10 weekend, Reid and Republican leaders were saying the bill was not dead and debate would reopen, possibly before the Independence Day recess that begins July 2.

Analysts on all sides have said that if immigration reform legislation is not passed before the end of 2007 it is unlikely to get a serious shot at passage again until after the 2008 general election.

Immigrant advocates including Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, and Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony emphasized that the June 7 cloture vote was simply intended to cut off debate.

“Immigrants know that if they don’t pass this year, they could be more vulnerable next year,” Snyder said.

See Catholic leaders..., p. 24

In historic moment for diocese, four to be ordained as priests

By Nicki Prevou

Staff Writer

The excitement within the Diocese of Fort Worth is palpable as July 7 approaches. Like proud extended family, parishioners claim the Diocese of Fort Worth.

“We are being blessed again by God as four more men have been accepted and will be entering the seminary this fall, studying in five seminaries in the United States and Mexico.”

The growing interest in vocations to the priesthood is cause for rejoicing across the region, said Fr. Walterscheid. “Most of the dioceses in Texas are beginning to see an increase in the number of men entering the seminary,” he noted. “Today six dioceses in the state have 20 or more seminarians, including the Diocese of Fort Worth. I believe this is only the beginning of a great trend.”

Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, where Deacons McDaniel, Wallis, and Kennedy, and several other priests of the Diocese of Fort Worth have completed their studies, had 84 seminarians, representing nine dioceses in Texas and seven in other states, enrolled in the spring of 2007. For the second year in a row, seminarians from the Diocese of Fort Worth were extra attentive.

More information about the July 7 ordination Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral may be found on p. 13.
Bishop Vann reminds us of the value of carrying Christ into the world; looks forward to ordination of four to priesthood

Dear Friends in the Diocese of Fort Worth,

This past weekend, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ ("Corpus Christi"). I had the privilege to celebrate Mass and lead Corpus Christi processions in three locations: St. Peter’s in Lindsay, St. Patrick’s Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth, and St. Mark’s in Denton at the evening Mass for “Life Teen.”

The response of all of those who attended, and especially the young people, was very edifying. I believe that the Solemnity of Corpus Christi is especially relevant for today, as it is a visible reminder of the presence of Christ in our daily pilgrimage of life. It is an occasion to reflect on the reality of the Real Presence of Christ and offers all of us the occasion for contemplative prayer and active liturgical participation.

In Rome, during the Corpus Christi procession there (which I had the chance to participate in when I was a student priest years ago), Pope Benedict XVI said the Eucharist passing by “between houses and through the streets of our city is for those who live in them an offering of joy, of eternal life, of peace and of love.” He further stated that he wanted “to put Christ in the midst of our daily lives, so that he walks where we walk, so that he lives where we live.”

While the liturgical celebration of Corpus Christi traces its immediate roots to the life of the Church in Belgium and Italy in the 1200s, it is a clear echo of “This is my Body and this is my Blood” for the Church of all times and places to hear. I truly believe that the celebration of Corpus Christi and its history and solemn liturgy, with the opportunity for accompanying eucharistic adoration, is complementary to our necessary and active participation in Mass itself. It is a chance for a real encounter with the Lord, so that we may know Him personally as we continue to live the Gospel and bring Him into our daily lives in the world in which we live.

Commenting on this reality some years ago, Father Richard McCullen CM, who had been the Superior General of the Vincentians (The "Congregation of the Mission") said, at the conclusion of his 12 years as Superior General, that as he made his visitations around the world, “Many times during these years I have asked myself and others if we have not been too busy, too active, and too horizontal, in our approach to the problems of society today. It may be that we are so busy about the work of the Lord that we forget the Lord of the work. I would like to see in our communities a greater sensitivity to the presence of Christ; not only in the poor but in our tabernacles....

I have heard it said that we cannot really recognize Christ in the poor if we have not first recognized him in the Eucharist. In a word, we may be overactive, hence less contemplative, and action that is not rooted in contemplation of God and the humanity of Christ will inevitably be shallow and not fruitful for eternal life.” (From Deep Down Things, 1995).

Reflecting on the Eucharist leads us to look to the weeks ahead when on July 7 four priests will be ordained for the Diocese of Fort Worth at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. This is the greatest number of ordinations in the nearly 40-year history of our local Church! This is a great blessing for all of us, and more will follow on this in the North Texas Catholic. As we approach this day and celebration, we can keep in mind the words of Pope Benedict XVI at ordinations in St. Peter’s Basilica on April 29: “On today’s World Day of Prayer for vocations, whose theme this year is ‘The vocation to the service of the Church as communion,’ let us pray that all who are chosen to such a lofty mission may be accompanied by the prayerful communion of all the faithful. Let us pray that in every parish and Christian community attention to vocations and to the formation of priests will increase: It begins with the family, continues at the seminary, and involves all who have at heart the salvation of souls.”

God bless you and your loved ones always. Thank you for all that you do and for your faithful witness of the love of Christ.
PAPAL BLESSING — Father Joseph Scantlin, pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington, receives a papal blessing on the anniversary of his 48th year as a priest. He is joined by Deacon Jim Blackmore and members of St. Bernadette’s Guild, a parish volunteer organization in support of families, which had arranged for the blessing from the Vatican. (Photo courtesy of Sue Child)

Andrew Hill is named assistant director for UD School of Ministry

The University of Dallas School of Ministry has announced that Andrew Hill has been named as its assistant director. Hill, a parishioner at Holy Redeemer Church in Aledo, will manage the school’s academic and administrative affairs, coordinate its marketing outreach, and support the strategic growth goals of the ministry programs.

Hill’s higher education professional background began in enrollment management at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio and at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. His experience later expanded into student affairs, when he served for four years as associate dean of students at St. Mary’s University. From 2003 through 2006, Hill served as director of the university’s Service Learning Center, as a senior lecturer of law and ethics in the graduate school at St. Mary’s, and as a professor of undergraduate and graduate courses in the university’s theology department.

Hill earned an undergraduate degree in English and philosophy from St. Mary’s University and a juris doctor degree from Loyola University. He is currently a canon law student at Cardiff University’s Centre for Law and Religion in Wales. He and his wife, Mary Lynne, are parents of a young son, Andrew Jr.

The University of Dallas School of Ministry (formerly the Institute for Religious and Pastoral Studies) celebrated its 20th anniversary this year and, according to press materials, is one of the fastest growing graduate schools in ministry in the United States.

For more information about the School of Ministry, visit online at www.udallas.edu/ministry.

Vocation awareness — Mission: Daily prayer is important in discerning God’s will for you

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

What is my mission in life? How can I be more certain that I am heading in the right direction with my life?

Several essentials are reading the Bible daily, having a daily prayer life, learning and following the teachings of the Church, and receiving the sacraments to be in communion with God and neighbor. In this column, I will cover the need for having a daily prayer life.

Praying is not a seasonal thing. It is not, for example, something we pack into the 40 days of Lent and then abandon the rest of the year. Let’s compare for a moment our spiritual life with our physical life.

Every New Year you see fitness and aerobic centers promoting their 30-minute workouts to help people keep physically fit. Normally, when individuals add physical exercise to their daily routine, they begin to feel more energized as stress levels decrease. But to be a top contender, an athlete can’t put in a 30-minute workout and expect to reach the summit of his or her profession. Most likely, that will take several hours of daily exercise.

Now I ask you, which is more important, your mortal, physical body, or your immortal soul? One need not be physically fit to enter into heaven, but one must be spiritually fit to do so!

Part of your mission in life then, is to establish a high standard for your spiritual life, to keep holy the one and only soul that God has given you. One’s prayer life brings the individual into contact with the Creator, the Divine, the Holy of Holies, our Lord and Savior, and helps us build a solid foundation on Jesus Christ, enabling us to live a holy, joyful life.

A daily 30-minute spiritual exercise is a good beginning.

The Catholic Church has official morning and evening prayers called the Liturgy of the Hours that all religious brothers, sisters, and priests pray daily. Before his death, Pope John Paul II recommended that all married couples pray the Liturgy of the Hours, too. My response was to introduce it as part of the marriage preparation program when I was serving in a parish.

The Catholic Church has hundreds of other kinds of prayer to choose from, like the rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet. When spouses are united in prayer, their souls are being nourished by God, and they will soon find themselves in harmony. No prayer, no peace. No peace, no harmony. No harmony, no understanding of one another. Ergo division, divorce, and destruction.

But is 30 minutes of prayer enough?

Certainly not for either those responsible for leading the flock nor for a strong marriage or family life. If the pastor is lost and out of touch with God, his sheep will be too. If parents are lost and out of touch with God, their children will be too. The parish life for the priests laboring in our diocese is very demanding, yet our prayer life is to take priority over all our labor. Anyone who says that their labor is their prayer will soon find their lives spinning out of control. You can’t give what you don’t have! Praying and praising God brings us into contact with our Lord as he replenishes our soul with bread from heaven that we may then serve others with great joy and zeal.

COME AND SEE

Single Catholic men and women, ages 18 to 40, are invited to attend the 2007 Vocation Awareness Program to be held at Holy Trinity Seminary, 3131 Vince Hagan Drive in Irving, July 13-15. The weekend is sponsored by the Serra Clubs of the Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses, in partnership with the diocesan vocation offices.

The Vocation Awareness Program (VAP) offers single young adults the opportunity to participate in a weekend of vocational discernment and reflection. The weekend will include presentations on the process of discerning a religious vocation; panel discussions on the lifestyles of clergy and religious men and women; question and answer sessions; and the opportunity for private conversations with the priests, sisters, and brothers who serve as leaders during the weekend.

There is no charge for the program, which includes accommodations in private rooms and meals at the seminary.

For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 366-0439, or by e-mail to kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.
Beginning Experience offers help to those grieving loss of spouse

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or abortion. The next weekend session will be offered July 27-29 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in Fort Worth. Those who are interested are invited to call 817-451-6005.

More information is also available at www.udallasconference.com, or call the conference registration line at (972) 385-3000.
Montserrat to offer program on healing, forgiveness

Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, located at 6686 S. Shady Shores Lane, Lake Dallas, will offer a Forgiving and Healing Retreat Workshop July 6-8.

The program, led by Elizabeth Moulin and Father Joe Tetzl, SJ, is described in a press release as an opportunity for participants to focus upon the process of healing and forgiveness as they “deepen their knowledge and maturity in their faith” through prayer, study, silent reflection, lectures, and small and full group discussions.

All adults and young adults who are serious and desiring to learn how to grow in their life and faith are welcome to participate,” according to the release.

Moulin is a therapist and experienced retreat leader. Fr. Tetzl, director of Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, is an author, spiritual director, and retreat leader with 40 years of experience.

The retreat house offers private and double room accommodations with air conditioning. The cost for the program is $300 which includes all materials, accommodations, and meals. A $50 registration deposit is required. For more information about the program, call Nicole Foster at (817) 283-8746 ext. 52; visit the retreat house’s Web site at www.montserratretreat.org, or e-mail to nfoster@mcschurch.org.

Midwest Catholic Family Conference set for Aug. 3-5 in Wichita, Kansas

Catholics representing dioceses from across the country will gather at the Midwest Catholic Family Conference to be held Aug. 3-5 at the Century II Convention Center, located at 255 Douglas Avenue in Wichita, Kansas.

The conference, which will include presentations by EWTN program host Father Benedict Groeschel, CFR, Catholic author Michael Barber, screenwriter Barbara Nicolosi, and others, will also provide inspirational daily Masses and devotionals such as eucharistic adoration, confession, and Benediction.

“It is a good program to support and strengthen family life, which is itself crucial to the life of the church and society,” a vibrant family is so often the source of religious vocations and of serious and voted vocations,” wrote Bishop Michael O. Jackels of Wichita in a letter to Bishop Kevin Vann, asking that the conference be promoted within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Conference fees, including meals and lodging, range from $15 per child or teen to $90 for families, registering prior to the early registration deadline of July 22. For more information about the conference, visit the Web site at www.mwcfamilconf.org or call the MWCF office at (703) 224-0990.

NCCW to hold 53rd convention in Columbus, Ohio, this fall

The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW), a women’s service organization comprised of more than 5,000 affiliated Catholic women’s organizations in parishes and dioceses throughout the United States, has announced that the NCCW’s 53rd national convention, “Reaching Out to Our Global Society,” will be held Sept. 20-22 in Columbus, Ohio, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

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

For more information about housing costs, registration fees, and the conference schedule, visit the NCCW Web site at www.nccw.org or call the NCCW office at (703) 224-0990.

Grief ministry offers peer support for the divorced, widowed, and separated

Help is available for those whose marriage has ended through death, divorce, or separation. Starting a New Life, a structured and confidential peer ministry sponsored by the church’s Lay Life Group, is created to help persons work through the stages of grief and pain that accompany the loss of a spouse. A new session will begin Tuesday, Aug. 28, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 816 W. Pleasant Ridge Road in Arlington.

All faiths are welcome for information, registration, or to register, contact Helen Engle at (817) 261-9706 or e-mail to hengle@sbcglobal.net, or call Kevin Gamble at (817) 626-9382.

San Mateo Church plans fundraising event June 29

San Mateo Church will host an enchilada dinner fundraiser Friday, June 29, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at San Mateo Hall, located at 2950 Polkio Street in Fort Worth. The parish community is raising funds in order to build offices and classroom space for religious education programs.

Dinners consisting of two enchiladas, rice, beans, and a drink may be purchased for a $5 fee. To go orders will be available for purchase by calling (817) 994-6228. For more information about the event, contact Rachael Rodriguez at (817) 994-6228 or by e-mail to rachael.rodriguez@lmc.com.

Two Sisters of St. Mary of Namur to celebrate significant jubilees Aug. 18

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur will be celebrating the significant jubilees of two of their congregation with a Mass Saturday, Aug. 18, at 2 p.m. at St. Andrew Church, 5171 Stadium Drive in Fort Worth. Sister Mary Mediocrum, SSNM, will be marking her 50th year of religious life, and Sister St. John Begnaud, SSNM, will be celebrating her 65th year as a religious sister.

For more information, call Our Lady of Victory Center at (817) 925-3091.

St. Michael Church to mark 30th anniversary

The parish community of St. Michael Church, which was established in Bedford in 1977, is planning the church’s 30th anniversary celebration. Bishop Kevin Vann will preside at the anniversary Mass to be celebrated at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 1, at the church, located at 5713 Harwood Road in Bedford. A reception will follow.

For more information, contact Nicole Foster at (817) 283-8746 ext. 52 or by e-mail to nfoster@sccmch.org.

St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group meets weekly

The St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 4914 Lakeview Lane in Keller, in Room 213, and on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. at the Padre Pio House, 1801 Paxton in Arlington.

For more information, visit the group’s website at www.samp.org or e-mail to Mark at wmaepungret@yahoo.com or call the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish office at (817) 451-3857.

ADDITION

In May 25 Good News supplement to the North Texas Catholic, the article on Bill Hardisty’s retirement contained an omission regarding the names of the founders of Cassata High School. The last line of the article should have read, “Bill Hardisty led the school by following the mission, philosophy, and the ‘heartbeat’ of Cassata established by Sister Boutaventure Mangan, SSFSP, and Sister Mary Venad Fullbright, SSFM, the school’s founders.” We apologize for this oversight.

VICTORY GARDENERS — (L to R) Bernice Dohun, Joshua Ford, Sarah Elizabeth Oldhickah, and Rebecca Castillico release ladybugs to the roses in front of Our Lady of Victory School in April. The students are among the members of Victory Gardeners, a garden club affiliated with the Junior Master Gardener program out of Texas A&M University. The after-school program, which is in its second year at OLV, is open to second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The Victory Gardeners have also planted and cared for a vegetable, herb, and flower garden behind the school building. “The entire school community has enjoyed observing the growth of the plants,” according to faculty moderator Judy Winaski, “as well as the numerous butterflies it has attracted.”

LADY KNIGHTS WELCOME TROOPS — Members of the Lady Knights of Council #9884, St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville, recently gathered for their monthly trip to DFW Airport to greet the troops coming home on leave from Iraq. With their banner in hand, along with flags and flowers, they lined the northern runway with a warm welcome back to the United States. The members make this trip on the third Saturday of each month if a flight is expected, many carpooling and caravanning so that all arrive at the airport at the same time. Some of those greeting the troops this time were (l. to r.) Brenda Walker, Claire Walker, Patty Osborne, Pat Miller, Dors Urban, Becki Goby, Jan Dutying, Juliette Kealerting, and Mary Jo Kermitz. (Photo by Jeff Foster)

Spanish Pastoral Musicians Conference set for July 26-29 in Albuquerque

The fifth annual Hispanic Pastoral Musicians Conference sponsored by the Southwest Liturgical Conference Region X and hosted by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe’s Office of Worship, will be held July 26-29 at the Wyndham Albuquerque Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The cost for the conference and banquet, not including accommodations, is $110. The cost for accommodations at the Wyndham hotel is $69 per night and includes breakfast.

For more information, visit the conference Web site at www.swlc.org or e-mail to worship2@archdiocesasantafe.org or call (505) 831-8494.

Lay Carmelites invite others to join twice monthly gatherings

“Would you like to deepen your relationship with Jesus and Mary?” ask the Third Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel (Lay Carmelites). The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of this deeper relationship to join them for the second and fourth Sundays of the month for a time of prayer and fellowship. The next scheduled gatherings will be June 24 and July 8.

Those interested are asked to gather at 1-1:45 p.m. in the rectory chapel of St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia Avenue in Fort Worth.Formation will take place from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the school building. For more information, call Phyllis Poth at (817) 457-1746.
In a town of fewer than 3,000 people, the Catholic parish’s goal was to build a facility that would reach out to the whole community, and that is exactly what happened.

Five years after the planning began, and eight months after groundbreaking, Sacred Heart Church in Seymour gathered May 7 to dedicate its new pastoral center. The 8,700 square-foot building houses administration and education facilities, and will double as a resource for community activities.

“It’s state of the art,” according to Deacon Jim Novak, parish director of mission and ministry, and faith formation. “It will offer us an opportunity for catechesis for adults and youth, and for the community. That’s the key issue.”

Finished at a cost of about $600,000, the facility holds classrooms, a conference room, library, supply room, kitchen, and offices for the pastor, secretary, director of religious education, and youth directors. A point of pride in this rural community with strong ministries for young people is that the bathrooms have showers to accommodate overnight retreats for youth from other counties.

“We called it building for the future,” Deacon Novak said. He received a $50,000 grant from the diocese, with additional financing coming from fundraising and donations. “Now the people do have a vision for the future — and it is completely paid for.”

Every step of the way, construction plans had an extended goal of serving the greater community, with that mission originating from Pastor Father Richard Eldredge, TOR. Both Fr. Eldredge and Deacon Novak are members of Seymour’s Ministerial Alliance, a league of 15 Christian churches who work on social issues. “There are six or seven of us who are most active,” Deacon Novak said, “and I am the coordinator of social ministry funds, which mostly serve people who are un-churched.”

Indicating that the Ministerial Alliance would be able to work from this building, Sharon Hertel, long-time active parishioner, liturgist, and musician, described their charitable work as involving “benevolence issues, like paying utility bills, buying clothes, or paying for hotel rooms for transients.”

“For Richard’s hope has always been that the community would use this,” Hertel said. “It’s kind of exciting to think of what could be done and what could happen.”

“For me this is a dream come true,” Deacon Novak said. “I feel we can be a center for the surrounding counties — a hub for the rural community.”

“It was one of Fr. Richard’s goals to make this building available to others,” said Laurie Poin Dexter, coordinator of religious education for pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. “Private individuals or churches can lease part of it for a small fee. The whole project has been ecumenical. The community helped us raise funds, and Fr. Richard wanted them to be connected with the building and enjoy it as well.”

Much of the Seymour community was present at the dedication, which was also the parish’s confirmation Mass, celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann. “Because we have confirmation once every two years, and because of Bishop Delaney’s illness, this was the first time in six years a bishop was here to celebrate,” said Donna Carver, coordinator of youth discipleship for seventh through 12th grades.

“The kids were impressed. They felt so comfortable with Bishop Vann. When we were gathered in the hall with sponsors, he came in and chatted with them, and said, ‘Let’s ask the sponsors some questions.’

“It was nice that the building was finished in time for confirmation,” Carver said, “because a lot of families were there, and many of them had been instrumental in getting the building done.”

After seeing his construction mission completed, Fr. Richard recently announced his reassignment to Collegeville’s Good Shepherd Parish and Deacon Novak’s assignment to be pastoral administrator at Sacred Heart. While parishioners expressed sadness at their pastor’s departure, they were happy he stayed until the building was finished.

“I’m pleased the bishop let him stay,” Carver said. “It’s his ‘baby’! We need to get him a picture so he can carry it in his wallet.

“He has done so much for our parish community and for our community as a whole,” Poindexter said. “The parish will be proud of this building.”

Deacon Novak, who grew up in Seymour, will take over parish administrative duties in August. “I’m giving up my love for farming,” joked the deacon, who was ordained in 1995, and in 2005 completed a master’s degree in theological studies at the University of Dallas.

“I had thought I was over the hill,” said Deacon Novak, 55, of being asked to study for the master’s degree. “I even took a summer course in Rome!”

Deacon Novak and wife Rilda will continue to live “on the old family farm,” 10 miles out in the country, and the rectory will stay as is, Deacon Novak said, for sacramental priests who travel to Seymour to celebrate Mass. He is training son Bobby to take over the farm, where they raise wheat, hay, cattle, and cotton. The Novaks have two daughters, Pam Martinez, who runs Seymour’s flower shop, and Jennifer Kloke, who is studying for a doctorate in mathematics at Stanford.

At the confirmation Mass, Bishop Vann joked with students during his homily, bringing two huge books and remarking, “See these? These are the questions I have for you. Who wants to go first?”

In observation of the sacrament, the bishop congratulated each of those confirmed, telling them that in all puzzles of life, “whatever questions you have, those answers will come to you through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“God has great plans for you,” he said. “We are proud of you, and as we send you out, we pray you will be symbols and samples of the Holy Spirit, to help others in their struggles.”

Congratulating the parish and adjoining to the new hall for the blessing, Bishop Vann said, “Please know of my affection and foundation in the sacraments. The building reflects your faith and the heritage you pass on.”

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**Diocesan**

**Building for the community**

**Building for the future**

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Correspondent
Look for the image of God
in the face of the incarcerated

When Andy Rivas first became interested in criminal justice issues, he harbored a stereotypical view of prisoners.

“I see movies. I see television. I thought people in prison were big, hulky men with pock-marked faces and lots of tattoos, who were dangerous,” said the executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference.

A visit to a medium-security prison in New Hampshire quickly changed that perception. As he walked through the cell-lined corridors, guided by a Catholic nun who was the prison’s chief administrator, Rivas observed a sea of ordinary looking faces. “I was taken aback,” he remembered. “I was convinced these dangerous men would be larger than me, but they were just guys. And they were guys who looked lost and tired.”

Visits to other prisons exposed him to similar populations of discouraged inmates. So today, when the peace and justice advocate talks about crime and punishment in America, his first order of business is to remind audiences that incarcerated people are no different from everyone else.

“They are neighbors, family members, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews,” he told participants at a diocesan symposium on prison life and its aftermath, offered May 19 at All Saints Church in North Fort Worth. “That is the first thing we try to tell people as a church. Those who have done something wrong and those accused of doing something wrong are part of our community.”

More than 100 people attended the daylong seminar, sponsored each year by the diocesan Office of Peace and Justice Ministries. Rivas’ keynote speech was followed by a panel discussion, and testimonials from a former inmate and family members of individuals currently in jail.

“This is an opportunity to come together to pray, reflect, and affirm a ministry that can be stressful, difficult, and isolating,” said event organizer Ralph McCloud, diocesan director of Peace and Justice Ministries. “We try to look at issues that affect prison ministry as a whole and develop strategies that will help us become better advocates.”

And one staggering statistic is central to any discussion of the criminal justice system. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 95 percent of incarcerated individuals are eventually released from jail. Within three years, 67 percent will commit a crime that puts them back behind bars.

Rivas blames the high rate of recidivism on a lack of rehabilitation programs and support for the newly released. After serving a sentence, most inmates leave jail with $50 and the instruction not to break the law.

“We have a moral obligation to deal with those folks and help them integrate back into society in a good and healthy way,” he asserts. “In our society, we are so focused on incarcerating people, we forget to help them integrate back into society.”

During his talk, Rivas advised the audience to read the U.S. Catholic bishops’ statement on crime and the criminal justice system, entitled “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration.” Published in 2000, the booklet was written with input from judges, attorneys, prison guards, police, and others involved in the judicial process.

“At the heart of our Christian faith is the belief that everyone is made in the image of God,” he explains. “He who created us gave us value and dignity that we as people can never take away and, as a sinner, can never diminish. That’s why we’re always advocating on behalf of rehabilitation, redemption, and restoration.”

In closing, Rivas told the peace and justice advocates to continue the fight against the death penalty and other injustices by contacting members of the Texas Legislature.

“You have the network in place to shut the phones down and get their attention,” the speaker said, referring to previous lobbying effort that affected a legislator’s communication system. “Ask for better sentencing reform, better lawyers for indigent prisoners, and cheaper phone rates for inmates. Get involved. Fight for their rights.”

God, family, and skills learned in a prison leather shop helped Mark Herrera survive 12 years of incarceration. The 42-year-old Texan, who was paroled three years ago, gave symposium participants a first-hand account of the challenges facing newly released inmates.

“I received a 20-year sentence, but in reality I have a life sentence,” says Herrera, who must satisfy a string of requirements that include meetings with his probation officer, home visits, fee payments, drug tests, and proof of employment to keep his freedom. “I applaud the people in this room. I had no idea there were people out there trying to help us guys. It’s lonely inside prison.”

George Toledo, who visits inmates housed in a private facility in Bridgeport, tries to ease those feelings of isolation.

“I bring in Communion and the word of God, and we sit down and talk,” the prison minister says of his Wednesday trips to the jail. “We don’t discuss crimes or sentences. They have other issues.”

Prison ministry does not attract many volunteers, but it’s a needed service that makes a tremendous impact.

“I started doing this to bring Jesus to the inmates, but after talking to them, I realized Jesus was already there,” Toledo explains. “They just need to know he hasn’t abandoned them. If they repent, Jesus will forgive them.”
**Bishop Vann sees GRACE’s work as invaluable to community**

By John English

Correspondent

Grapevine Relief and Community Exchange (GRACE) received a very special visitor May 21 when it welcomed Bishop Kevin Vann to tour its facilities in Grapevine.

Among the highlights of the tour were visits to the organization’s transitional housing units and outreach clinic. GRACE Executive Director Shonda Schaefer felt that the bishop’s visit was a good opportunity for GRACE and the Catholic Church.

She described GRACE “as Northeast Tarrant County’s largest social service agency and one that is incredibly well-supported by the Catholic Church here. I think he wanted to come out and take a look at what’s going on,” Schaefer said. “He’s heard good things about GRACE and wanted to come out and see how we operate.”

GRACE is a faith-based, non-profit agency which provides food, clothing, financial assistance, and transitional housing and other services to people with limited resources.

Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, according to Schaefer, has been a major contributor to GRACE for years. Good Shepherd also provides the largest number of GRACE volunteers from a single church.

“They have provided over 16,000 hours of volunteer work over the last four or five years, Schaefer said, “and have over 100 active volunteers representing the church.”

In addition to a tour of the transitional housing and outreach clinic, Bishop Vann visited the food pantry and clothing sections, both of which are a part of their emergency assistance program.

The key to GRACE’s success over the years, Schaefer said, has been networking with area churches.

“This is all about communication,” she said. “There isn’t one of us that could do this on our own. We need the support of the church, and the church needs the support of GRACE and the community here, so this is just about keeping everybody on the same page. Sharing a vision with people is the only way it is going to become a reality.”

Deacon Rick Gregorio of Good Shepherd Parish said his church was impressed with the work of GRACE.

“Good Shepherd is actually a core sponsor of GRACE,” he explained, indicating that they have been a sponsor since 1998. “Two of my hopes are to give Bishop Vann exposure to outreach in our community and to see how more involved the churches themselves could be. GRACE was founded on the principle that the churches were the foundation of the community, and we want to get back to that.”

Transitional Housing program manager Deborah Lyons said most of the GRACE clients are single mothers who tend to be served by the organization for about two years. GRACE urges all residents of the housing units to attend church in some form or fashion, according to Lyons.

“We believe that internal positive change is the only thing that will keep people from repeating their behavior,” Lyons said. “That is why we encourage spiritual growth.”

Bishop Vann, who decided to take part in the tour at the request of Deacon Gregorio, said he is pleased with the local churches’ participation.

“We have a number of parishes in the archdiocese such as Good Shepherd and St. Francis of Assisi, that are involved, so I thought this would be a good opportunity for me to come up and see this,” Bishop Vann said.

The bishop indicated that he was very encouraged by what he saw from GRACE and feels that the organization’s work is invaluable to the community.

“This certainly fits in with the mission of Christ — to reach out to those in need,” he added. “This is also very much in keeping with the Catholic Church’s mission to the poor and marginalized. It is a very important function, and I hope this tour provides a greater awareness of what GRACE does for the community.”

Learn more about GRACE online at www.gracegrapvine.org.

**North Texas Catholic garners CPA awards for 16th consecutive year**

For the 16th consecutive year, the North Texas Catholic (NTC) diocesan newspaper has achieved recognition at the national level. NTC Editor Jeff Hensley accepted three Catholic Press Association awards — two in English-language categories, and one in a Spanish-language category — at the May 25 Catholic Media Convention held in Brooklyn, New York.

The NTC was awarded second place honors in the “General Excellence” category for diocesan newspapers with circulation of 17,001-40,000. Judges praised the overall quality of the paper, calling the paper “very reader-friendly,” and noting. “Loved the number of local photos and story digests included. . . . You really feel the community’s presence in their pages. While it must be quite time-consuming, their efforts should be applauded. . . . Really enjoyed the story about the careers of friends. . . .”

Joseph Schumacher and Father Wilson with Kathy Cribari Hamer. . . .

Pedro Moreno, director of the Light of Christ Institute for the Diocese of Fort Worth, earned third place honors in the Spanish-language category for “Individual Excellence: Writer/Editor.” Moreno, who has received 10 CPA awards over the past several years, was praised by CPA judges for the quality of his regular NTC column. "Pedro Moreno’s dedication and perseverance to the North Texas Catholic is remarkable. His decision to share with readers the personal heart-wrenching health issues was moving and an example of his commitment and dedication,” commented the judges.

A third award was given to the May 26, 2006, issue of Good News in Our Catholic Schools, a periodic supplement to the North Texas Catholic. The triannual publication, produced under the direction of diocesan Catholic Schools consultant Tessy Ross, was awarded honorable mention in the “Best Regular Special Supplement” category.

Pat Svacina, director of the Office of Communications for the diocese, praised what he described as the NTC’s “long history of communicating information effectively about the broader Catholic Church, as well as the Catholic Church of Fort Worth.” Svacina congratulated Hensley, editor of the NTC since 1988, for his leadership, noting that Hensley “and the entire newspaper staff strive to make the paper interesting and relevant to North Texas Catholics,” and adding, “The 2007 awards confirm once again that Catholics in North Texas are fortunate to have access to one of the best diocesan newspapers in the country.”

Hensley, in accepting the awards on behalf of the NTC, reflected on the special honor of receiving the second place award for general excellence in the newspaper’s circulation category. “The whole team of NTC employees, associates, and freelancers deserve the credit for this achievement,” Hensley said. “The excellence of the work of NTC staff members, Martin, Nicky Pevy, and Judy Russeau, and our associates on The Catholic Center staff, including Pedro Moreno, Dan Luby, and Reyna Castellán, help to explain this award.” The paper’s regular freelance writers, noted Hensley, are often CPA winners themselves.

“We would not be able to function, much less excel, without this great group of freelance writers and photographers who help us capture the life and love and commitment of the People of God in the Diocese of Fort Worth,” he added.

Catholic publications in Texas receive CPA awards

In addition to the North Texas Catholic, three Texas newspapers and one North Texas publishing company were honored at the Catholic Media Convention, held in New York May 25.

**Diocesan/archidiocesan newspapers in Texas receiving awards include:**

Catholic East Texas, Tyler: Best personality profile, first place — circulation 1-17,000.

Today’s Catholic, San Antonio: General excellence, third place — circulation 17,001-40,000.

Best personality profile, second place, Carol Sowa.

Catholic Spirit, Austin: Best regular column, honorable mention, Bishop Gregory Aymond.

Catholic publishers in Texas receiving awards include:

Prayer shawl ministry is offered at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

A local chapter of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, an international, ecumenical organization founded in Connecticut in 1998, has been established by two parishioners at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church (OLQP) in Wichita Falls.

“Care and the love of knitting and crocheting have been combined into a prayerful ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort and solace,” writes OLQP parishioner Jo Ann Brennan in publicizing the ministry. “Many blessings are knitted or crocheted into every shawl or lap robe. Each [shawl is begun] with prayers for the recipient. Intentions are continued throughout its creation. Upon completion, a final blessing is offered before the shawl or lap robe is sent on its way.”

Currently, the ministry is comprised of 48 members who participate in sewing, knitting, crocheting, and quilting blankets for those suffering from a life-threatening illness, facing surgery, or going through medical treatment. The blankets are also made available to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one and are in need of prayerful comfort.

Brennan and fellow parishioner Sharon Kelley invite all who would like to participate in the ministry to contact them. Even those who cannot sew, crochet, or knit can be of assistance in this outreach, notes Brennan, adding that 60 prayer shawls and lap robes have been completed through the OLQP chapter.

For more information, to volunteer, or to request a prayer shawl or lap robe for someone in need, contact Jo Ann Brennan at (940) 691-0460 or Sharon Kelley at (940) 691-6539.

STATE ACADEMIC MEET — Students from St. Mary’s School in Gainesville had the opportunity to compete with students around the state in the Private School Interscholastic Association state academic tournament. The competition was held May 5 at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. To qualify for the state competition, the students had to place either first or second in their event at the district meet held March 31 at North Central Texas College. Among the participating students, many placed in the top three spots in their competition categories, including first place finishes for Alex Sherry in Calculator Applications and for Hannah Gerken in Dictionary Skills. As a whole, St. Mary’s School came in third place in the state in the middle school division and eighth in the elementary school division.

NOTRE DAME CULTURE FAIR — Second graders at Notre Dame School in Wichita Falls, under the direction of their teacher, Jennifer Schlabs, recently hosted a culture fair. Charged with researching various countries of the world, the youngsters, including (l. to r.) Sydney Chapa, Sierra Hodges-Yarbrough, Isabelle Revis, Elizabeth Koch, and Clayton McElroy, conducted a Parade of Nations, displaying each nation’s flag and wearing the native costumes associated with each region. The students gave presentations to all their elementary schoolmates and shared samples of food from their researched countries. (Photo provided by Cindy Huckabee)
**Viewpoints**

The remembrance of things past; the anticipation of serving God in a new place

By Dan Luby

I know the drill. I’ve moved in and out of offices frequently enough to have it down, if not to a true science, then at least a quasi-art.

Pack the books in small, sturdy cartons, so they won’t be too heavy to lift when I have to load them into my trunk. Store the files in those boxes made especially for that purpose and — this is crucial — in the same order as they’ve been in the cabinets. Label everything, thoroughly and consistently. Though it’s tedious now, it will be the difference between order and chaos in the new place.

There are, I’m sure, other rules of thumb I’ll follow when I finally move all my stuff out of my office. The most obvious, however, also proves to be the most bafflingly difficult to do: exercise ruthless in tossing out everything I don’t need.

After almost 25 years working at The Catholic Center, I am moving on. For the record, I am not retiring (despite my long tenure here and my retirement-aged hair color).

When the fall semester begins in August, I will be embarked on a new phase of my ministry and my career as a professor in the University of Dallas’ new School of Ministry. I’ll be teaching full time in the graduate program there, and organizing some programs for the continuing education of preachers.

I’ve been an adjunct faculty member since 1987 in the School of Ministry’s predecessor, the Institute for Religious and Pastoral Studies, so the shift won’t be as traumatic for me as it is for many who make a change after so long a time at one place. I’ve always loved teaching, and the opportunity to do it full time, at such an exciting moment of growth for the university and for the Church fills me with gratitude and anticipation. I can’t wait to get started.

So why am I dragging my feet at packing up my stuff? Why does it seem so hard to go through these drawers and binders and shelves and separate the wheat from the chaff?

Mostly it’s hard to think about leaving because of the people. My colleagues, many of whom have been close friends and collaborators for a decade or more, are a cherished part of my life. I know that not seeing them every day will be hard, that I will miss their inspiration and humor and insight. I fully expect those feelings of loss.

But my resistance to throwing things away is surprising. What could be so hard about pitching all these papers? Why should I feel compelled to hang onto these old calendars? What’s making it so wrenching to delete those folders with details about long finished projects?

The pain — with undertones of rich pleasure — comes from the memories all these things evoke. That stack of little spiral notebooks I’ve used to record years of phone messages? It tracks so many of the conversations I’ve had in this work, the questions posed and answers offered, the complaints voiced and the good news shared, the long discussions illuminating new possibilities and confirming ancient truths.

That quirky array of family photos scattered across the windowsill and bookshelves? It makes my wife and children present in memory. The kids, from charming babyhood to accomplished young adulthood, and my wife, a constant of grace and affection and wisdom; all of them form the deep, nourishing roots of my ministry.

What’s in play here is the very Catholic phenomenon of sacramental imagination.

Much of the richness of our liturgical tradition lies in the Catholic conviction that everything accessible to our senses — people, places, objects, smells, sounds, etc. — have the potential to become symbols of other, invisible realities. Through inspired imagination we recognize a graced Presence, a mysterious Person whose love and healing and empowerment to do his work are more real than anything we can see or touch or hear or smell.

Surrounded by all these symbols, it is a bittersweet place to be, this doorway between the familiarity and comfort of brightly lit memory, and the uncertainty and challenge of the dappled future.

By Mary Morrell

“Dear angel guide my feet, I come each moment closer to the brink, it may be I am nearer home today, dear angel, than I think”

—Carved on an old headstone in an English cemetery

The headstone found in an old English cemetery relayed an incomplete story of a family struck by tragedy — the dad, James, died in 1929; his wife, Margaret, died a year later, and her daughter, Mary, age 22, died the following year. One may imagine any number of stories to fill in the gaps of this family’s losses, and it wouldn’t be hard to imagine a young girl of 22 years succumbing to the pain of a broken heart after losing both her parents so close to one another. She, herself, died just days before the second anniversary of her father’s death.

It seems this story comes to mind for me most often as we approach the date of my own father’s birthday. In some way, I suppose, I have projected on this young English girl my own seemingly unbearable pain at his death, followed closely by the death of my mother, so many years ago. It was a desolate time, one that taught me the cost of loving.

Surely, for those who remain behind, death is the cruellest blow. But it is only so because of the human heart’s desire and capacity to love, and in that truth we have evidence of our maker.

Who, but God, could have created a heart and soul capable of such deep love and such profound grief? And who would be better able to console us than the One who made us as we are?

In all of the significant losses of my life, I have found God in my grieving, or perhaps it is God who found me, and in the finding reminded me that amid every loss there remained abundant blessings.

One such experience, profound in its simplicity, was a monumental step forward in the healing process of grief.

As I often led off to do when pain threatened to overwhelm me, I had escaped to a little cottage at the beach to spend time alone in a place where time was all mine. A small paper journal recalled the day: Here, at the shore, there had been time for making pie, a beautiful thing with golden brown crust and fresh, succulent blueberries. Unfortunately, the cat thought so, too, and in the whip of a tail, the counter was smeared with purple, as a display of childhood’s delight in painting, and the remnants of pie resembled a vast of paw-pressed grapes. I sighed.

Still, it was pie, nonetheless. With my eyes closed, I slipped one salvaged morsel in my mouth, remembering the morning standing at such a rocky bushes, plump with blueberries, and picking until my fingers took on the hue of distant mountains at the close of day.

Death can teach us to treasure our time

By Mary Regina Morrell

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By Mary Regina Morrell is the associate director of religious education for the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey. She and her husband are the parents of six boys and live in Colonia, New Jersey.
The end of the 80th

By Jennifer Carr, associate director, Texas Catholic Conference

The 80th legislative session marked a change in the order of business at the Texas Catholic Conference. It was the first regular session after a changing of the guard of leadership at the conference. The lobbying team for this legislative session was expanded to include Andy Rivas, executive director; Jennifer Carr, associate director; and Margaret McGettrick, director of education. Even Marsha Solana, associate director of education, and our intern, Maria Frederick, got into the action and testified on critical bills. The Texas Catholic Conference actively monitored 260 bills and took positions on 115 of the bills.

Conference actively monitored 108 different pieces of legislation throughout the session. We look forward to continued efforts by the U.S. Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform which will bring our immigrant brothers and sisters out of the shadows and improve our nation’s security. (None of the 7 bills supported by the TCC passed this session; none of the 24 bills opposed by the TCC passed this session.)

It is also helpful to review our outcomes in light of the outcomes of the entire Legislature. 943 of 4,140 House Bills filed passed, or 23 percent; 525 of 2,058 Senate Bills filed passed, or 25 percent.

IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT THE NUMBERS… While these statistics are interesting, they do not capture the full impact of our presence at the Capitol. Our legislative Mass at the beginning of the session and our Respect Life rally day and Catholic Charities rally day were well attended and brought much attention to important issues on our agenda. A clear presence of Catholic school children was seen at the school choice rally day, and our immigration message was heard loud and clear at press conferences. We received feedback that our increased activity at the Capitol was a powerful influence in educating members on our positions and the theology behind them. Our newly revised Web site, www.txcatholic.org, helped grassroots advocates to track legislation with us and be a part of the legislative process. For the first time in many years we had three bishops testify before committees, including one who stayed until midnight to do so.

WHAT’S NEXT? As much as we relish the belief that the session is over and our work is done for 18 months, there is much more to be done. During the interim, TCC staff will track interim committees, including testifying at public hearings and work with state agency staff on implementation of legislation that passed. We will work hard to educate the Church on the policy issues and policymakers on the Church. Our Web site will continue to undergo major improvements. We will research the issues further and build relationships, so that we are even more effective in the 81st Legislative Session.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES: CHIP restoration, foster care system improvements, long-term care insurance improvements, wage and training enhancements for elder care attendants, increase in the personal needs allowance for seniors in nursing care, and legislation aimed at reducing human trafficking in Texas are among the many successful Health and Human Services initiatives of the session. We are pleased to report that legislation (HB709) passed which will improve education on the benefits of adult stem cells and umbilical cord blood.

(8 of the 27 bills supported by the TCC passed this session; none of the 3 bills opposed by the TCC passed this session.)

EDUCATION: Pre-kindergarten for children in foster care was added to other education bills, drop-out prevention programs were funded, and child care reimbursement rates were improved. At first review, it does not appear that initiatives to improve parental choice in education had any major outcomes in this session. In addition, we are disappointed that legislation passed which removes a licensing exemption from many of our Catholic Schools which provide after-school care for students.

(2 of the 8 bills supported by the TCC passed this session; one of the 6 bills opposed by the TCC passed this session.)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: Criminal Justice reform was a major highlight of the session with system-wide improvements for treatment alternatives to incarceration. The scandals of the Texas Youth Commission led to needed reforms in the juvenile justice system. In addition, the budget reflects increased funding for treatment alternatives. We remain deeply disappointed in the passage of “Jessica’s Law” which for the first time allows the death penalty in Texas when the convicted did not actually kill someone.

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We handle questions better when we think of the questioner as One of Our Own like maybe even Howie...

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Because I have five children, it is difficult to establish the stupidest question I ever heard. But I do remember the most endearing question. It came from a son — let’s say Howie.

“Howie,” is a fictitious name, like they used in early black-and-white TV police dramas, in which “the names were changed to protect the innocent.” In this case I am protecting the guilty. But the only guilt my son Howie had, when he asked this question, was the guilt of the guileless. The question came from an innocent and adorable lack of pretense and sophistication. It came from a mind that had been busy playing, laughing, living a life paved with hope and dreams.

Howie’s world was video games, Friday night pizza, no homework, and not sleeping in his bed. Sometimes I’d ask, “Howie, are you going to sleep in your room tonight?”

“ Heck no, Mom,” Howie might answer. “Why would I miss a perfectly good weekend by sleeping in my room?”

Then Howie and his siblings would pull out blankets and snacks, and spend the night on the living room floor watching movies, the Simpsons, or Saturday Night Live. In the morning they would still be there, sound asleep. But when Howie asked me the endearing, unaffected question I am recalling, it was not a weekend, but early morning, driving to school.

“Mom,” Howie said, “when you get your driver’s license, does it have to be at the exact minute you are 16, or just on the same day?”

Howie touched my heart that moment, in a way that still brings a twinge. I wished I could keep him as naive as he was then (that exact minute).

“Does he have to be the time you were born,” I told Howie, “just your birthday.” I was wishing his birthday was far away.

Last week I heard a question that easily could be the stupidest ever, but the hearing of it made me think of Howie.

The phone rang at my university office, where we were preparing to print a face book, with pictures of freshman students. Among requirements I had requested was, “a photograph with identification on the back.”

When the phone rang, it was a student asking for clarification. “What does identification on the back mean?” he asked.

Puzzled by the student’s question, I mused, “Does he mean ‘the last four digits of his Social,’ or his ‘mother’s maiden name?”

Perhaps he was going for the simplistic and wanted

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Field of Dreams
for Our Lady of Grace
High School

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

While attending a Catholic schools banquet in 2000, parents of children enrolled at Immaculate Conception School in Denton realized they faced a dilemma. Opened in 1995, the new elementary campus was welcome to its first class of sixth graders that fall. Decisions concerning high school for these students loomed, and the families had no convenient option for Catholic secondary education.

One ICS parent, Tim Donohue, was already driving his oldest son to Sacred Heart High School in Muenster. The 90-mile round trip was time consuming for the father of six.

“It’s a beautiful school and a beautiful community, but that was something I really did not want to do for the next 18 years,” the American Airlines pilot admitted honestly. “So, a group of us thought we would try and see if the Diocese of Fort Worth would open a high school in our area.”

The magnitude of the project and the associated costs precluded diocesan involvement, but that didn’t deter Donohue, his wife, Denise, and others from pursuing their dream. They formed a corporate board of directors and applied to the Internal Revenue Service for non-profits status.

Despite the small amount of money the diocese was investing in Our Lady of Grace High School, “this is not the development of a new diocesan Catholic high school,” explains Don Miller, diocesan superintendent of Catholic Schools. “Our Lady of Grace is a private Catholic high school operating under the auspices of the Texas Catholic Conference and the Diocese of Fort Worth.”

Its status is similar to the only other private school in the diocese — Our Lady of Victory Elementary School in Fort Worth, which is owned and operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur.

“Many families in northern Tarrant and southern Denton counties never considered sending their children to Nolan Catholic High School because of the distance involved,” Miller said. “This school makes Catholic secondary education available to those people.”

The diocese decided to support the efforts of Our Lady of Grace organizers because, “the people involved are people of good faith who have worked hard and have agreed to meet the requirements of the Texas Catholic Conference,” he added.

Father Mel Bessellieu, who will serve as spiritual director for Our Lady of Grace, has supported the idea of a Catholic high school for Denton residents since his days as associate pastor of Immaculate Conception Church.

“It’s very exciting,” says Fr. Bessellieu, who will visit the school to hear confessions, celebrate Mass, and offer religious guidance. “A second high school north of Fort Worth is something we’ve needed for a very long time now.”

The priest, who will become pastor of St. Ann Parish in Burleson in August, credits the Donohues for continuing to move the project forward.

“The seed was planted long ago, and they’ve been nurturing it,” he said. “There have been many ups and downs, but the Donohues have shown how faithful and tenacious they can be. A lot of people would have given up a long time ago.”

Privately funded, the new school will benefit from several substantial grants. The Houston-based Scanlan Foundation awarded the school a $100,000 matching grant to cover the cost of infrastructure needs at the new site. Other major contributions include a $30,000 gift from the Kenedy Foundation, a $10,000 endowment scholarship from Bill and Ruth Vogel of Denton, and $5,000 from the Strake Foundation for installation of a security system.

Over the years, Our Lady of Grace also received help from members of the Knights of Columbus, Father Besellieu who attended the ground blessing ceremony. With so few families enrolled in the fledgling school, the Knights have assisted with everything from moving furniture to selling raffle tickets.

“We feel proud to be part of all this since the beginning,” says Grand Knight Dennis Pettit. “The school struggled in temporary buildings. It’s nice to see it finally find a real home.”

Tim Donohue believes the Alliance Gateway location, new facilities, and a relationship with the school will help the diocese of Fort Worth succeed and grow. In 2006, the campus was named one of the top 50 high schools in the Catholic tradition nationwide by the ACTon Institute, an international research and education organization. The school was judged on its academic standards, Catholic identity, and ability to prepare students to engage the world.

The average SAT score for a graduating OLG senior is 1247, and students have gone on to higher education at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, the University of St. Thomas in Houston, the University of Dallas, and the University of North Texas.

Graduating senior Samantha Donohue, who will attend Ave Maria University in Naples, Florida, says three years of Latin, courses in classical studies, and a seminar on great books in literature were challenging but fulfilling. She will graduate in August.

More information about Our Lady of Grace High School is available on the school’s Web site at www.olg.org or by calling (940) 231-9333.
Remote parking and viewing arrangements necessary for historic ordination of four priests

For the first time in the history of the Diocese of Fort Worth, four seminarians will be ordained to the priesthood at an ordination Mass to be celebrated Saturday, July 7, at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth. Bishop Kevin Vann will preside at the Mass beginning at 10 a.m.

The historic event is expected to attract large numbers of clergy, dignitaries, family, friends, and interested members of the Fort Worth Diocese. As a consequence, only a very limited amount of general seating will be available at St. Patrick Cathedral.

To accommodate anyone who wishes to participate in the ordination Mass, the liturgy will be shown live at the nearby Fort Worth Convention Center’s Rooms 202 A, B, C, and D, located at 1201 Houston Street.

Downtown parking also will be limited because of the diocesan ordination and a large Jehovah’s Witnesses meeting at the convention center.

A free park and ride service will be available to persons wishing to attend the ordination.

Free parking will be available at LaGrave Field, located at 301 NE 6th Street, which is north of the Tarrant County Courthouse and one block east of North Main Street. The shuttle service from LaGrave Field will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will shuttle between the cathedral and convention center until the start of the Mass. Once the cathedral is full, the shuttle will run only to the convention center.

Following the ordination Mass, Bishop Vann, the newly ordained priests, and those attending the ordination will proceed to the Fort Worth Convention Center, Room 202 for a reception in honor of the new priests.

The return shuttle from the convention center to LaGrave Field will begin at 1 p.m. and will continue until 2 p.m.

Upsurge in vocations may be linked in part to more targeted, local discernment groups, says Vocations Director Father Walterscheid

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, has a plan. A comprehensive plan, that is, to invite single men and women to consider what Fr. Walterscheid calls “a life of fulfillment and joy” as a priest or vowed religious brother or sister.

As part of that plan, Fr. Walterscheid, who assumed his diocesan position in 2006, has been working within deaneries to create Vocation Awareness Programs (VAP).

“We established a four-week program last summer at Immaculate Conception Church in Denton,” he explained. “Each week, a group of 16 men gathered to explore different aspects of religious life. It was a wonderful group, and I continue to be in touch with the individuals who participated. As a result of their reflection, prayer, and discernment, several of them are interested in entering the seminary in 2008.”

Yet another group of both men and women gathered for a VAP weekend in the Wichita Falls area last December, said Fr. Walterscheid, noting that one of the women who participated in the weekend program is currently preparing to enter religious life.

“Also, this past May, we had a truly outstanding gathering with the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur,” he added. “We had a total of 12 young women who participated in that weekend, and then, at [St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth], we hosted a seven-week program during Lent this year. We considered that program very successful, as well.”

All around the Diocese of Fort Worth, says Fr. Walterscheid, more and more Catholics are heeding the call of Bishop Kevin Vann, who has urged parishes throughout the diocese to continue to participate in efforts such as the “Chalice Program” as a way of reminding parishioners to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

In the current online issue of Columbia magazine, Cardinal Sean O’Malley of Boston writes a reminder that the faithful of the Catholic Church are responsible for continually inviting men and women into a role of spiritual leadership.

“In the Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit is the vocation director who plants the grace of a vocation in each person’s heart. ‘Christ wants you!’ ‘The Church needs you!’ God’s people need you!’ Sometimes the Holy Spirit’s promptings are very clear in a person’s mind and heart, but more often than not the Holy Spirit relies on the help of other people to encourage and promote vocations,” writes Cardinal O’Malley.

Fr. Walterscheid agrees, and issues a reminder that single Catholic men and women between the ages of 18 and 40 are invited to attend the upcoming vocation awareness program to be held at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving July 13-15.

The weekend is sponsored by the Serra Clubs of the Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses, in partnership with the Fort Worth and Dallas diocesan vocation offices, and will include presentations on the process of discerning a religious vocation, panel discussions on religious life, question and answer sessions; and the opportunity for one-on-one conversations with the priests, sisters, and brothers who will serve as leaders during the weekend, offered at no charge to participants.

“For many people in our diocese, I believe they are just waiting for an invitation to consider priesthood or religious life,” said Fr. Walterscheid. “It’s up to all of us to extend that invitation, and then to pray for them as they discern their calling.”

For more information about vocation awareness programs within the diocese, or for upcoming vocation events at a parish near you, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 366-0439, or by e-mail to k Walterscheid@ftxdoc.org.
The Journey to Priesthood
Four distinct paths will converge on one special day

Deacon Isaac Orozco
By NICOL NAVARRE
Isaac Orozco

From the age of 10, Isaac Orozco
wondered about spiritual leadership.
Isaac’s upbringing was mainly Pentecostal,
and he had been baptized Pentecostal,
with early curiosity about Mass and Communion.
He longed to be somewhere
where he could pray, worship,
and learn about God.
Yet while he was a young boy,
he sang in a choir, and served as an altar server.
He also spent a lot of time
playing the piano and singing.

Isaac’s family was his support,
and he always knew
that he was loved and valued.
He believed that God was
present in his life, and he trusted
that God would guide him,
and help him make the right decisions.

As a young boy, Isaac
wasn’t a good student.
He felt called
to a life of ministry,
but he didn’t know how to
begin that journey.

He sought the guidance of his pastor,
and he began frequenting
the church where his father was pastor.
He spent time
praying and reflecting,
and he felt a deep sense
of peace and purpose.

Isaac attended
the University of the Incarnate Word,
and he later transferred
to Trinity University.
He studied
social work and music education,
and he also
served as an altar server.

Isaac’s journey to the priesthood
was a long and winding road,
but he knew
that he was on the right path.
He trusted
in God’s plan for his life,
and he knew
that God would guide him
through the challenges.

Isaac is a humble and approachable person,
who is kind and fun-loving.
He is known for his
approachable demeanor,
and for his ability
to connect with others.

Isaac is passionate about
his work as a priest,
and he is dedicated to
helping others find their path
in life.
He is a caring and compassionate person,
who is known for his
kindness and generosity.

Isaac’s family is proud
of him,
and they support
him in his journey.
He is grateful
for their love and support,
and he knows
that he is not alone.

Isaac’s journey to the priesthood
is an example
of how God can
shape our lives,
and how our faith
can guide us
through the challenges.
He is a living testament
of God’s love and grace,
and he encourages
others
to follow their dreams,
and to trust in
God’s plan for their lives.

Isaac is a shining example
of what it means
to be a priest,
and he is a source
of inspiration for
others.
He is a true
servant of God,
and he is a beacon
of hope in our world.

Isaac’s story
is a reminder
that, with faith and determination,
we can overcome
any obstacle,
and find our way
to the promised land.

Isaac’s journey
is a journey of faith,
and it is a journey
of love.
He is a man
who loves
God,
and who
welcomes others
into his life.
He is a man
who gives
without reservation,
and who receives
with open arms.

Isaac is a man
who is dedicated
to his calling,
and who is committed
to serving the needs
of those around him.
He is a man
who is true
to his identity,
and who is true
to his faith.

Isaac is a man
who is a true
servant of God,
and he is a true
servant of humanity.
He is a man
who is a true
servant of love,
and he is a true
servant of life.

Isaac is a man
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and he is a true
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Deacon Thomas Kennedy recognizes God’s hand in ‘markers on the path’ to priesthood

FROM PAGE 15

Experience retreat, which set the stage for his vocation. “The tragedy of divorce became a big part of my life,” Kennedy said. “But it also gave me an opportunity to serve in ways most people can’t. I will be able to say, ‘It’s okay. There is life after divorce. This is something we can all get over, and this is the way to do it.’ A big part of my calling came out of all those things. “This is pure blessing.”

The Beginning Experience brought Kennedy into the church “very strongly,” and he became active in his parish, Holy Family of Nazareth in Irving, as a youth minister, lector, and extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Finally his pastor, Father Jerry Duesman, pointed out, “Look at what you are doing — what the center of your life is.”

“So I went to the Serra Club Vocation Awareness retreat,” Deacon Kennedy said, “and that got me started.”

Deacon Kennedy was working for a car leasing company that handled the pink “Mary Kay” fleet. “Back then I wondered if I even had what it took to get a bachelor’s degree,” he said. “But God is such a lover. He knew where and who I was supposed to be. Now I have a master’s of divinity, when I was content with just being active in the church.

“And God has a sense of humor.”

Left: Deacon Thomas Kennedy proclaims the Gospel at a Mass celebrated at the Catechetical Center for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio. (Photo by Scott Schrader)

People understand God’s compassion and mercy. “Going to confession at the Beginning [Experience] retreat was the most important experience of my life,” Deacon Kennedy said. “You go into confession with the mantra that it is Jesus you are talking to. Msgr. Joe Schumacher was my confessor, and that confession was the life-changing moment for me. “I spent five years discerning. At first I had issues of not being worthy, but because of the Vocation Awareness retreat, I realized it wasn’t what I thought that mattered, but what God was calling me to do.”

Because he lived in Irving, Kennedy first applied to the Diocese of Dallas and was rejected because of restrictions on age, and having been divorced. Then I went to Father Anh Tran, at the Fort Worth Diocese Catholic Center.

“When I got to the candidacy, the first people I saw as I walked in the door were Fr. Phil Johnson, Msgr. Joe Schumacher, and Father Steve Berg — all very important to me. “Okay, I get it,” I thought. The drive from one side of town to the other, and then seeing all three of them there, was like a big confirmation, like God saying, ‘Yeah, this is where you are supposed to be.’ “These markers on the path are always there, but sometimes we see them more clearly. “Receiving Fr. Jerry’s chalice was one of the greatest moments of all,” Deacon Kennedy said. “I will carry it with honor forward, and when I pass on, I hope I am privileged to have someone to hand it down to.”

 Childhood experience of grace takes on new meaning as Deacon Raymond McDaniel approaches ordination

FROM PAGE 14

graduating from Centenary College in Shreveport, I had the privilege of going back to England and studying organ and choral music at the University of York.”

His experiences in England inevitably led him to the Anglican Church, says Deacon McDaniel, and ultimately to St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, where he served as organist and director of music from 1990 to 2000. He was confirmed in the Anglican church in 1991. While continuing to grow in appreciation for and knowledge of the richness of traditional church music and its connection to his own spirituality, he says, he began to attend classes at the College of St. Thomas More in Fort Worth.

“I took four semesters of night classes, and each Tuesday night, I found out something more about the Catholic Church. Throughout those years of work and study, I came to know, more and more, that I was preparing to convert to Catholicism,” says Deacon McDaniel. “I began speaking with Father Allan Hawkins, pastor of St. Mary the Virgin Church in Arlington, which became my home parish. I made my profession of faith on Feb. 1, 1995.”

While continuing to serve on staff at St. Andrew’s, Deacon McDaniel began attending Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth. While assisting as an altar server at the cathedral liturgies, he found himself “continually besieged” with thoughts of exploring the priesthood.

“I remember finally telling God, ‘Okay, yes, I will think about this if you will just leave me alone!’” Deacon McDaniel laughs as he recalls the moment. “And then, later I remember walking to the cathedral and looking at the statue of Our Lady of Victory. It was something about the solidity of the statue…. It was stone, so solid, and I had a deep, deep sense of inner peace about the decision I knew I was making at that point.”

That moment of realization led to his eventual acceptance into Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, which he entered in the fall of 2000. While at the seminary, Deacon McDaniel continued to share his musical talents and leadership abilities by working to form a group of fellow seminarians into the Schola Cantorum, Latin for “School for Singing.” Under his direction, the group learned to sing traditional Latin hymns and Gregorian chant, and eventually sang a Marian hymn for Pope Benedict XVI during a trip to Italy in May 2006.

The connection between the exhilaration of that moment and his long-ago experience in downtown San Antonio is not lost on him as he approaches his ordination. “I have always loved teaching, interaction with people, beautiful music, and I have always loved liturgy,” he says simply.

“I also love the very broad aspects of life as a priest: teaching the faith, celebrating Mass, and visiting the sick. I think it all started there for me, in the quiet and the prayerfulness of that church, all those years ago.”

He smiles. “It took me a long time to get here. But now I’m ready to devote my life to transmitting the beauty and the richness of our Catholic faith.”

Below: Deacon Thomas Kennedy distributes the Eucharist during Mass at the Catechetical Center for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio. (Photo by Scott Schrader)
Deacon Jonathan Wallis feels fortunate to live ‘sacramental life’

**FROM PAGE 14**

remain in the Episcopal Church,” he explains. “However, the way I was raised, I knew that my parents really would support me in doing what I believed was right. They lived up to that. They were both really great about my decision to become Catholic. And I think my mother, from the beginning, knew that for me, becoming a Catholic would also mean becoming a priest.”

An important part of his exploration of the Catholic faith, says Deacon Wallis, was the opportunity for dialogue with several Catholic priests, including Father James Hart, who currently serves as chancellor for the Diocese of Fort Worth. “Fr. Hart and other religious leaders I admired, these men made a big impression upon me,” says Deacon Wallis. “I came to know them, and I knew that their Catholic faith must be something that was very profound.”

After being received into the Catholic Church Feb. 23, 1997, Deacon Wallis began to attend Mass regularly at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth and to think seriously about pursuing his vocation to the priesthood. Less than a month after turning in his application to attend Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, he learned that his father was critically ill. Charles Wallis passed away in January 2000, after himself being received into the Catholic Church on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Wallis’s mother, who had been attending RCIA classes with his father, had also decided to become Catholic.

While still grieving for his father, Deacon Wallis entered the seminary in the fall of 2000. He calls the experience of communal life, immersion in the Hispanic culture and language, and his year of pastoral internship at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Fort Worth “very valuable” aspects of his spiritual journey, which have helped to lead him to his approaching ordination day.

“At the time I entered the seminary, I felt completely convinced that Jesus Christ was calling upon me and inviting me to embrace my vocation to priesthood,” he says. “I still feel that way today. I always expected to get married, to have children.” He smiles, exuding a sense of peace. And yet, he says, he’s looking forward to the life of a priest. “Most of all, I look forward to celebrating the Mass, because the Eucharist is at the center of our life as Catholics. I feel fortunate to be living a sacramental life. It makes everything — everything I’ve gone through — absolutely worth it.”

Encounters with God’s grace led him to the priesthood in a ‘circumtuous way,’ says Deacon Isaac Orozco

**FROM PAGE 14**

Orozco’s path to his future wound through high school and difficult family times when his parents divorced. “My brother and sister did not cope well, and I was far from home. I needed something stable, a new identity and place to belong. The Catholic Church, which for so long was subtly present in my life, took center stage.

“Although I didn’t have the vocabulary or experience to know I was being called to be a priest, I knew God was forming me and speaking to my heart. Just as he piqued my curiosity about the Mass as a child, he sparked a desire for the Holy Spirit in my heart. I soon discovered the Navy was not for me, and was honorably discharged within a year to discern the new direction for my life.”

That direction came through priests at his parish, St. Matthew’s in Arlington, who asked, “What do you want to become?” and Fort Worth Bishop Joseph Delaney, who invited Orozco to study in Rome. “That was sort of ‘unconditional support,’” Orozco said. In his pastoral year, Orozco received training from Msgr. Charles King, at Denton’s Immaculate Conception Parish.

“I don’t think he knew who he was getting,” the priest-to-be joked. “He was a great teacher. He gave me access to any meeting I wanted to go to, and anything I wanted to do. I could make mistakes, but I was always affirmed.”

“Being a parish priest is dynamic — not stagnant, not mundane. I like working in the parish with the people. And I definitely love teaching kids,” Orozco said. “They make me love God more.” Orozco also helped Father Richard Collins at McFadden Ranch Youth Commission, mentoring, teaching, and “giving back.”

Deacon Orozco finished his Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology (parallel to the United States’ master of divinity) in 2005, and will complete a Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) in 2008. His area of specialization for the STL in Dogmatic Theology is “The Doctrine of Grace and Postmodern Thought.”

“I want to learn more about grace,” he said. “Looking back on my history, it is not just dates and facts, it is how God has acted in my life.

“Grace is not a concept, like God is not a concept. They are dynamic events. We manipulate concepts, but we can never manipulate God or grace. You can’t conceptualize him like gravity or the law of supply and demand. God can’t be contained in our lives. God is a subject, not an object, and grace is an event.

“God is an experience. Any conversation about God is an encounter with God. And grace reminds us God is always recharging us, always reforming us.”

Orozco’s family was suffering in many ways when he began his journey to the priesthood. His siblings’ lives were “off track,” and neither finished high school. “But as I went on,” he said, “I think my vocation became an instrument of faith for them. Both are married, and my brother, with an eighth-grade education, wants to study, become a theologian, and work for the church.

“My family has always been very important to me.” Orozco said, explaining that he takes the siblings’ new stability as a statement from God. “They are both doing well. I take that to mean, ‘I am here. And no matter what, I will always outdo you in generosity’,” he said.

“The seminary was a leap of faith for me. I paid attention to my vocation, and God sustained the rest.”
True believers look at life of church seeking God’s love, says pope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — True believers look at the life and history of the Catholic Church seeking signs of God’s love, rather than trying to highlight the curious or being fixed by the scandalous, Pope Benedict XVI said.

When Catholics take church history seriously, they are inspired to live lives that are more Christian so that they, too, may add their own evidence of God’s greatness, the pope said June 13 at his weekly general audience.

As usual, the pope began by riding in an open jeep through St. Peter’s Square, blessing a crowd of about 20,000 people. Although it was just one week after a 27-year-old German man jumped a barricade and tried to get into the jeep, the security detail closest to the pope was not obviously strengthened. However, the number of Italian police patrolling the square’s perimeter appeared to have increased.

At the end of the audience, the pope offered special prayers for young people who have just begun their summer vacations and, especially, for their peers who are in the middle of their final exams.

“May the Lord help you live this period with serenity and experience his protection,” the pope told the young people.

In his main talk, Pope Benedict focused on the third-century Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, the author of a 10-volume history of the church.

“Eusebius set a ‘moral’ standard for recounting church history, the pope said. The aim of a church history “is not just to know the past,” but to prompt reflection leading to “conversion and an authentic witness of Christian life on the part of the faithful.”

“Eusebius questions believers of every age regarding their way of approaching the events of history, especially that of the church,” he said.

Pope Benedict said: “He asks us, too, what is our attitude in the face of events in the church? Is it an attitude of interest motivated simply by curiosity, perhaps going in search of the sensational and scandalous at any cost? “Or is it an attitude full of love and open to mystery,” an attitude that manifests a conviction that “it is possible to trace in the church’s history the signs of God’s love and the great works of salvation he has done,” the pope said.

“This is how we want to read history: seeking the signs of God’s love,” he said. “If this is our attitude, we cannot help feeling called to a response that is more consistent and courageous, to a more Christian witness of life in order to leave signs of God’s love for future generations.”

Eusebius’ approach to history “invites us to be in awe, to contemplate in history the great works of God for the salvation of humanity and, with as much energy, he invites us to the conversion of life,” Pope Benedict said.

“Let us do everything in our lives in order to leave a trace of God’s love,” he said.
Sometimes a dad’s love comes with Wheels

By Jeff Hedglen

When I was in the 8th grade I received a note from the office during fourth period. The note said that I was not to take the bus home that day; my father was going to pick me up from school. On hearing this, sweat beaded up on my forehead, and all the saliva in my mouth went running for its life. Questions began bouncing around in my brain like a superball thrown in a closet by Nolan Ryan in his prime. You see, my father had never picked me up from school, and the only reason I could think of for this visit was that I was somehow in trouble. I spent the rest of the day reviewing the past few months of my life, trying to come up with all the things I had done wrong that, to the best of my knowledge, had remained undiscovered. Which of these things had finally made it to the light of day and was so bad that it sent Dad to pick me up from school?

At the end of the day, I reluctantly made my way to my dad’s car. I closed the door ready with my defense for whatever he brought up. To my surprise he didn’t say much. He just put the car in gear and took a curious right turn out of the parking lot. Our house was to the left; where were we going? My father and I drove in silence with country music as the soundtrack to my fear-filled wondering. I could not for the life of me figure out what was going on. Where was the lecture, the debate, the argument I had been preparing for? The confusion increased when we pulled into the parking lot of the Schwinn bicycle shop. My father turned to me and said: “I understand you have been saving for a new bike. Let’s go take a look.” I got out of the car on shaky legs, reeling from the turn of events. One minute I thought I was in trouble and the next we were looking at bikes.

As we entered the store, my father asked which one I wanted. I wanted to go one called the World Traveler and said that this was the one I was saving for. He asked if it was the one I wanted. I said, “The one I really want is the Le Tour IV, but I can’t afford it.” My dad turned to the salesman and said, “We’ll take the Le Tour IV.” I was stunned, humbled, confused, relieved, and elated all at once. Looking back on that emotional roller coaster of a day I realize that with the simple task of buying me the bike I longed for, I knew my dad loved me, cared for me, and wanted me to be happy. Though there were certainly times that I tested this love, and times he did not express it, the love was there, and it was real.

During a recent visit to New England, my wife and I spent several days in New Hampshire, traditionally home to one of the “make-or-break” primaries in the presidential election cycle. Everywhere we went we found evidence of multiple campaigns in high gear. Every newspaper, every local newscast featured the candidates, household names and long shots, appearing at a dizzying variety of venues. And for every gathering with potential supporters — at pancake breakfasts in diners, giving speeches in VFW halls, shaking hands at “meet and greet” cocktail parties in people’s homes — each candidate was preceded by what political pros call an “advance team.”

Advance teams travel ahead of their candidate to prepare people for his or her arrival and ensure a friendly reception and an enthusiastic turnout on hearing this, sweat beaded up on my forehead, and all the saliva in my mouth went running for its life. Questions began bouncing around in my brain like a superball thrown in a closet by Nolan Ryan in his prime. You see, my father had never picked me up from school, and the only reason I could think of for this visit was that I was somehow in trouble. I spent the rest of the day reviewing the past few months of my life, trying to come up with all the things I had done wrong that, to the best of my knowledge, had remained undiscovered. Which of these things had finally made it to the light of day and was so bad that it sent Dad to pick me up from school?

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The love of a father is so important. Jesus knew this, having had the love of Joseph. He also knew that his earthly father was given to him to model the love of the Heavenly Father. He highlights this when he says: “Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him?” (Matthew 7:9-11)

Jesus is not trying to say, “My Dad is better than your dad;” he is pointing out that if we, who are weighted down by sin, know how to give good things, how much more goodness is flowing from Him who is all love?

Sure, the love of our earthly fathers may fall short of the perfection found in the Heavenly Father, but when it is combined with the love of God, the possibilities of expressing it are endless. Sometimes it even takes the form of a Schwinn Le Tour IV. Thanks, Dad!

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.

Scripture Readings

July 8, Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle C. Readings:
1) Isaiah 66:10-14c
Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20
2) Galatians 6:14-18

By Dan Luby

During a recent visit to New England, my wife and I spent several days in New Hampshire, traditionally home to one of the “make-or-break” primaries in the presidential election cycle. Everywhere we went we found evidence of multiple campaigns in high gear. Every newspaper, every local newscast featured the candidates, household names and long shots, appearing at a dizzying variety of venues. And for every gathering with potential supporters — at pancake breakfasts in diners, giving speeches in VFW halls, shaking hands at “meet and greet” cocktail parties in people’s homes — each candidate was preceded by what political pros call an “advance team.”

Advance teams travel ahead of their candidate to prepare people for his or her arrival and ensure a friendly reception and an enthusiastic turnout.

As we entered the store, my father asked which one I wanted. I went to one called the World Traveler and said that this was the one I was saving for. He asked if it was the one I wanted. I said, “The one I really want is the Le Tour IV, but I can’t afford it.” My dad turned to the salesman and said, “We’ll take the Le Tour IV.” I was stunned, humbled, confused, relieved, and elated all at once. Looking back on that emotional roller coaster of a day I realize that with the simple task of buying me the bike I longed for, I knew my dad loved me, cared for me, and wanted me to be happy. Though there were certainly times that I tested this love, and times he did not express it, the love was there, and it was real.

The love of a father is so important. Jesus knew this, having had the love of Joseph. He also knew that his earthly father was given to him to model the love of the Heavenly Father. He highlights this when he says: “Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him?” (Matthew 7:9-11)

Jesus is not trying to say, “My Dad is better than your dad;” he is pointing out that if we, who are weighted down by sin, know how to give good things, how much more goodness is flowing from Him who is all love?

Sure, the love of our earthly fathers may fall short of the perfection found in the Heavenly Father, but when it is combined with the love of God, the possibilities of expressing it are endless. Sometimes it even takes the form of a Schwinn Le Tour IV. Thanks, Dad!

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.

Scripture Readings

July 8, Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle C. Readings:
1) Isaiah 66:10-14c
Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20
2) Galatians 6:14-18

By Dan Luby

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El Papa: Los católicos deben llevar el Evangelio al mundo
re bajado por pobreza, abusos

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — La tarea primaria de cada católico es llevar el mensaje del Evangelio a un mundo re bajado por la pobreza, la violencia y los abusos de los derechos humanos, dijo el Papa Benedicto XVI.

Mediante su acción misio nera, dijo el Papa, la iglesia puede “dirigir y acompañar” a las comuni dades para hacerse con las formas de trabajo y las transformaciones culturales, sociales y éticas, y ofrecer la salvación de Cristo a la humanidad moderna, que está re bajada y oprimida en tantas partes del mundo debido a la pobreza endémica, la violencia y la denegación sistemática de los derechos humanos”.

Aunque los esfuerzos re novados de evangelización han comprobado ser fructíferos, hay todavía más que hacer para responder al llamado misionero que el Señor le hace ins cri blemente a toda persona bautizada”, dijo el en su mensaje para el Do mingo Mundial de las Misiones 2007.

El Vaticano emitió el mensaje de este año el 29 de mayo, antes del Domingo Mundial de las Misiones, que ha de ser celebrado el 21 de octubre en la mayoría de las diócesis.

Tratando el tema de este año, “Todas las iglesias para todo el mundo”, el papa se enfocó en la necesidad de toda iglesia local de sorprender y vivir su vida a diario para promover el Evangelio.

Lleva el poder salvador de Cristo a toda la gente “verda deramente invulnec a todos”, dijo el.

Los católicos individuales deben verse no como simples “colaboradores” en la misión evangelizadora de la iglesia, sino como “protagonistas” y conjunta mente responsables de realizarla, dijo el Papa.

El dijo que toda diócesis local en cada continente necesita estar consciente de la “necesidad urgente de reforzar la actividad misionera para resolver los muchos desafíos de nuestro tiempo”.

El Papa Benedicto dijo que la creciente secularización ha tenido un impacto en las iglesias establecidas en Occidente.

Los bajos índices de natalidad, las reducidas cifras de voca ciones y un clero cada día con mayor edad promedio ponen las iglesias establecidas en “riesgo de encerrar en sí mismas, de mirar al futuro con menos esperanza y de reducir sus esfuerzos misioneros”, dijo el
Monseñor Vann nos recuerda del valor de llevar a Cristo al mundo; en expectativa de la ordenación de cuatro sacerdotes

Estimados Amigos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth,

Este pasado fin de semana, la Solemnidad del Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo ("Corpus Christi"), tuve el privilegio de celebrar Misa y dirigir una procesión de Corpus Christi en tres lugares: San Pedro en Lindsay, la Catedral de San Patricio en el centro de Fort Worth, y la Misa vespertina para el grupo Life Teen en San Marcos en Denton. (El grupo Life Teen se dedica a promover entre los jóvenes las enseñanzas de la Iglesia a favor de la vida y en contra del aborto.) La respuesta de todos los que asistieron, especialmente la de los jóvenes, fue edificante. Creo que la Solemnidad de Corpus Christi es especialmente relevante para hoy, pues es un recuerdo visible de la presencia de Cristo en el diario peregrinar de la vida. Es una ocasión para reflexionar sobre la realidad de la Presencia Real de Cristo y nos ofrece a todos la oportunidad para la oración contemplativa y participación litúrgica. Este año en Roma, durante la procesión de Corpus Christi, que despertó en mí el deseo de ver en nuestras comunidades una mayor sensibilidad a la presencia de Cristo; no solamente en nuestras casas y las calles de nuestra ciudad es para aquellos que viven en ellos un ofrecimiento de alegría y vida eterna, de paz y amor. "Y mientras que la celebración eucarística de Corpus Christi tiene sus raíces en la vida de la Iglesia en Bélgica e Italia en el siglo XIII, es un claro eco de "Ésto es mi Cuerpo" y "Ésto es mi Sangre" para que lo escuche la Iglesia de todos los tiempos y lugares. Verdaderamente creo que la celebración de Corpus Christi y su historia sigue siendo una oportunidad para la adoración eucarística, que nos ofrece un camino a nuestro mundo, "muchas veces durante estos años me he preguntado y también a otros si no hemos estado demasiado ocupados, demasiado activos y demasiado horizontales, en nuestro acercamiento a los problemas de la sociedad hoy. Puede ser que estemos tan ocupados con el trabajo del Señor que nos hemos olvidado de el Señor del trabajo. Quisiera ver en nuestras comunidades una mayor sensibilidad a la presencia de Cristo; no solamente en los pobres sino también en nuestros Sagrarios… He escuchado el comentario de que no podemos realmente reconocer a Cristo en los pobres si primero no lo hemos reconocido en la Eucaristía. En una palabra, podemos estar sobre activos, por lo tanto menos contemplativos, y la acción que no se arriesga en la contemplación de Dios y la humanidad de Cristo será inevitablemente llana y no fructuosa para la vida eterna." (Tomada del libro Deep Down Things, 1995).

Reflexión sobre la Eucaristía nos lleva a mirar a las próximas semanas. El 7 de julio cuatro sacerdotes serán ordenados para la diócesis de Fort Worth en la Catedral de San Patricio. Éste es el número más grande de ordenaciones en los casi 40 años de historia de nuestra Iglesia local! Esto es una gran bendición para todos nosotros, y más seguirá sobre esto en el North Texas Catholic. Al acercarnos a este día y celebración, podemos tener presente las palabras del Papa Benedicto XVI en las ordenaciones en la Basílica de San Pedro el pasado 29 de abril: "En el día de hoy la Jornada Mundial de Oración por las Vocaciones, cuyo tema este año es 'La vocación al servicio de la Iglesia como comunión', rogugemos que todos los que han sido elegidos para esta misión tan alta puedan estar acompañados por la comunión orante de todos los fieles. Roguemos que de cada parroquia y comunidad cristiana aumente la atención y la formación de los sacerdotes aumente: comienza con la familia, continúa en el seminario e involucra a todos loa que tengan en su corazón la preocupación por la salvación de almas."

Que Dios siempre los bendiga a ustedes y a sus seres queridos. Gracias por todo lo que hacen y por su fuerte testimonio del amor de Cristo.
América

‘Mano a Mano’, junio 9 y 10, fue un éxito

La conferencia anual “Mano a mano caminando juntos” que se llevó acabo el 9 y 10 de junio en la Iglesia de Todos los Santos en Fort Worth fue todo un éxito con la participación de 280 personas. Parejas de matrimonios se reunieron para el evento de dos días con el propósito de mejorar sus vidas matrimoniales y personales al escuchar hablar al Dr. Carlos Barillas, un psicólogo de New York con más de 30 años de experiencia en trabajar con matrimonios y familias.

El fin de semana, organizado por Suzanna Ordóñez de la Oficina de Asuntos Familiares de la Diócesis de Fort Worth y un equipo de 10 parejas ayuda tanto a los matrimonios que hubo personas que viajaron desde Austin, Mt. Pleasant, Wichita Falls, Graham y México para asistir.

La próxima conferencia se llevara acabo en el verano del 2008. Si desea más información favor de hablar con Suzanna Ordóñez al 817-560-3300 ext. 256.

El Papa dice que los católicos deben ayudar a Latinoamérica en forma espiritual y material

Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

LA CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — Frente a la pobreza, la secularización y el esparcimiento de sectas en Latinoamérica, los católicos del mundo deben formar comunidades fuertes en la fe dispuestas a ayudar espiritual y materialmente, dijo el papa Benedicto XVI.

El Papa tuvo audiencia el 14 de junio con miembros del Vaticano de la fundación “Populorum Progressio” (Progreso de los Pueblos, en latín), que proporciona fondos para proyectos modestos de desarrollo, educación y salud, dirigidos a la asistencia de indígenas pobres y comunidades agrícolas de raza mestiza y de color, en Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Desde 1992, por medio de la fundación establecida por el papa Juan Pablo II se han distribuido más de $20 millones en subvenciones, utilizándose fondos allegados principalmente por la Conferencia Episcopal Italiana. El papa Benedicto dijo que al establecer la fundación, el papa Juan Pablo deseaba ayudar “a los pueblos cuyas costumbres ancestrales estaban amenazadas por una cultura postmoderna” y que estaban en riesgo de la destrucción de “sus tradiciones, tan abiertas a aceptar la verdad del Evangelio”.

Con seis obispos latinoamericanos y un funcionario del Vaticano en el consejo administrativo de la fundación, el Papa dijo, las decisiones que se tomen en la fundación están “en las manos de los que conocen mejor los problemas y necesidades concretas de esos pueblos en el mundo”. El Papa dijo que en la fundación también se debe reconocer que la ayuda para el desarrollo debe funcionar a favor de la persona total y no solamente estar dirigida a aliviar la pobreza material.

“Con frecuencia, la verdadera pobreza de la persona es la falta de esperanza” y de fe que le da significado a la vida, dijo.

“Latinoamérica es una parte del mundo que es rica en recursos naturales, en donde las diferencias en el nivel de vida deben dar paso al espíritu de compartir los bienes”, dijo el Papa.

Frente a la amenaza de la secularización, la proliferación de sectas y la indigencia de muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas”, dijo, “es urgente que se formen comunidades unidas en la fe, como la Sagrada Familia de Nazaret, en donde el testimonio gozoso de los que han encontrado al Señor es la luz que ilumina a los que buscan una vida más digna”.

El Teólogo jesuita e hispano experto ocupará la dirección del puesto de diversidad cultural

WASHINGTON (CNS) — El padre jesuita Allan Figueroa Deck, teólogo y experto reconocido nacionalmente en el campo de cultura y ministerio hispano, ha sido nombrado el primer director ejecutivo de la Oficina de Diversidad Cultural de la Conferencia Nacional de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB, por sus siglas en inglés).

Tomará posesión del cargo el 1 de enero próximo, cuando formalmente se establezca conforme un plan de reorganización que se hará sentir de una manera u otra en todos los comités y dependencias nacionales de los obispos católicos.

El padre Deck es originario de Los Ángeles, y nació el 19 de abril, 1945. Entró con los jesuitas en la provincia de California y en el año 1963, fue ordenado sacerdote el 27 de marzo de 1976.

El padre cuenta con títulos universitarios otorgados por la Universidad de San Luis, la Escuela Jesuita de Teología en Berkeley, Calif., y la Universidad Pontificia Gregoriana de Roma; como también un diploma de ministerio pastoral dado por el Instituto Brasileño de Desarrollo en Río de Janeiro. Ha enseñado teología en la Escuela Jesuita de Teología de Berkeley y en la Universidad Loyola Marymount en Los Ángeles. También fue el primer director de ministerio hispano en la diócesis de Orange.

El padre Deck ha trabajado con fluidez el inglés, español y portugués; asimismo, lee italiano y latín.

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Postal rates for nonprofits will take sharp hike, effective July 15
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Truckers and commuters paying more than $3 a gallon for gas can understand what Catholic newspaper and magazine publishers will feel like July 15 when new postal rates kick in for nonprofit mailings. “Any nonprofit publisher should be working with his mailer” to find ways to lessen the impact, said Thomas Schmidt, general manager of the Catholic Standard, Washington archdiocesan newspaper. He said he conservatively estimates an 11 percent postal increase for the Standard. Christopher Gunt, associate publisher of The Florida Catholic, said the paper’s current postal rates run about half a million dollars a year. “We haven’t crunched all the numbers yet,” he said, but in July the paper’s postal costs will go up “something like 12 to 14 percent.” That would be like gasoline jumping overnight from $3 a gallon to $3.36 or $3.42. But for Barbara Stinson Lee, editor of the Intermountain Catholic of Salt Lake City, where the diocese covers the entire state of Utah, the expected increase is a whoppng 35 percent or more — similar to gas skyrocketing to $4 a gallon overnight.

Subcommittee removes abstinence requirement in anti-HIV/AIDS program
WASHINGTON (CNS) — A requirement to participate in a program that promotes abstinence as a way of reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS should not have been removed from an appropriations bill marked up by a House subcommittee, said a statement from Catholic Relief Services President Ken Hackett and Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Florida, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on International Policy. In marking up the appropriations bill for the 2008 fiscal year, the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee June 5 eliminated a requirement that a portion of HIV/AIDS prevention funding be used to promote abstinence and “partner reduction,” or fidelity. “This change could cost lives,” said Bishop Wenski in the June 7 statement. He said it “rejects tried-and-true methods that have proven to actually reduce HIV infections.” Hackett said that in the experience of CRS, which runs programs in the developing world to help millions of people affected by HIV/AIDS, “only an approach to HIV prevention that has sufficient funding for groups to conduct abstinence and faithfulness education has yielded meaningful advances in stopping the spread of HIV.”

Vote to affirm same-sex marriage ignores will of people, bishops say
BOSTON (CNS) — The Massachusetts Legislature’s June 14 vote to reaffirm same-sex marriage thwarts the will of the citizens and undermines efforts to protect children, families, and society, the four Catholic bishops of Massachusetts said. The bishops made their statement shortly after the Legislature voted 151-45 to reject a proposed constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman. At least one-fourth — or 50 — of the legislators had to affirm the proposed amendment for it to be placed before voters on the 2008 ballot. But only 45 legislators voted in favor, 17 fewer than the 92 who had supported it on Jan. 2, 2007, the final day of the 2005-06 session of the Legislature. “Today, the common good has been sacrificed by the extreme individualism that subordinates what is best for children, families, and society,” said Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston and Bishops George W. Coleman of Fall River, Timothy A. McDonnell of Springfield, and Robert J. McManus of Worcester.

Pope: Adults owe young people values that give foundation for their lives
ROME (CNS) — Adults have a debt to pay to today’s young people; “we owe them real values that will provide them with a foundation for their lives,” Pope Benedict XVI said. In a June 11 evening address to participants in the Diocese of Rome’s annual pastoral convention, the pope said all Catholic adults have a role to play in addressing the “education emergency” found in Italy and in other developed nations. For parents, teachers, and religious educators “a growing difficulty is encountered in transmitting to new generations the basic values of existence and of correct behavior,” he said. “It is an inevitable emergency in a society and culture that too often makes relativism its creed. Relativism becomes a dogma in such a society. The light of truth fades, or in fact it is considered dangerous to speak of truth,” because a claim of truth is seen as “authoritarian” or intolerant, he said. In response to such claims, the pope said, many schools and universities focus on transmitting information and technical skills while many parents seek to ensure their children’s happiness by giving them material goods and pleasant experiences.

The Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco will celebrate 100 years in the U.S. in 2008!

We want our alumni and friends to come “home” and help us commemorate this beautiful and historical time in our shared Salesian history during 2008 and 2009!

We’re extending an invitation to our friends all across the U.S. who would have attended or participated in our Salesian mission to children and education over the past 100 years:
• Resident Program
• After-School Program
• Parish
• Summer Camp
• Catholic School
• Volunteer Group
• Before-School Program
• Youth Center
• Salesian Family Member

We would love to hear from you, share memories and photos, and keep you informed of our Centennial activities. We would also like to send you a special medal and prayer card!

Please call us toll-free: (877) 687-6867 or visit www.salesiansisters.org

SALESIAN SISTERS ST. JOHN Bosco

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USA 1908-2008

We hope to hear from you soon!!
Pope, Bush discuss wide range of issues, including Christians in Iraq

By John Thavis

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Meeting for the first time, Pope Benedict XVI and U.S. President George W. Bush spoke about the precarious situation of Christians in Iraq and a wide range of other foreign policy and moral issues.

The pope and president looked relaxed as they greeted each other and spoke briefly before reporters before their 35-minute private encounter June 9. Bush later held a separate 40-minute meeting with the Vatican’s top foreign policy officials.

A Vatican statement described the meetings as “cordial” and said they had focused in part on “the worrisome situation in Iraq and the critical conditions in which the Christian community finds itself.” Tens of thousands of Christians have fled Iraq over the last four years to escape violence and discrimination.

The talks also touched on the overall situation in the Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and developments in Lebanon.

“The Holy See again expressed the hope for a ‘regional’ and ‘negotiated’ solution to the conflicts and crises that are tormenting the region,” the Vatican statement said.

Bush and the pope also discussed problems in Africa, the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, and developments in Latin America, it said.

“Finally, there was an examination of current moral and religious questions, including those related to human rights and religious freedom, the defense and promotion of life, marriage and the family, education of new generations, and sustainable development,” the Vatican said.

Before the president’s visit, the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, went out of his way to praise Bush for his position on abortion and for “positive initiatives in favor of the defense of life from conception.”

Bush arrived at the Vatican under very heavy security. His motorcade entered St. Peter’s Square from a side street instead of Via della Conciliazione, the wide avenue leading to the Vatican, which had been cleared of cars and was lined with curious onlookers.

In the sunny St. Damasus Courtyard, the president was greeted by U.S. Archbishop James Harvey, one of the pope’s private secretaries, who escorted him past a piglet of Swiss Guards and up an elevator to the fourth floor of the Apostolic Palace for the papal audience.

The pope smiled broadly as he greeted Bush just outside his private library. The two men shook hands, and the pope ushered the president to a large desk.

Reporters and photographers were allowed to stay for the first minute of the encounter.

“It’s good to be with you, sir,” Bush said as he sat down opposite the pope, crossing his legs and leaning back in a white chair.

“You come from the conference in Heiligenrand?” the pope said, referring to the G8 meeting in Germany.

“I did, your old country. And it was successful,” Bush replied.

“Successful? You had some decisions? It’s not so easy,” the pope said. He said it was important for humanity that conferences like this produce decisions.

“It was, you know, a lot of different opinions. But it was good. It was good,” Bush said.

The pope asked whether Bush’s dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin was also good.

The president paused as photographers kept snapping photos and said: “I’ll tell you in a minute. Both men laughed. Putin and Bush had spared over a U.S. proposal to build a missile defense system in Europe.

Bush then went on to tell the pope that he had recently asked Congress for $30 billion toward fighting the global AIDS crisis, a doubling of the previous U.S. commitment.

After reporters left, the two leaders met privately without aides or interpreters.

“Congratulations,” the president also exchanged gifts. Bush gave the pope a long wooden stick with a design representing the Ten Commandments. When the pope picked it up, Bush told him it had been made by a former homeless man in Dallas.

“The Ten Commandments?” the pope asked, looking at the inscription.

“Yes, sir,” Bush answered.

The pope presented Bush with an engraving of St. Peter’s Basilica and a gold medallion of his pontificate. The president put on his glasses to give it a closer look and remarked: “It’s beautiful, thank you very much.”

Afterward, Bush and several top aides met with Cardinal Ber- tone and other Vatican foreign policy officials.

At the Vatican’s concern about Iraq was underlined in another way during the Bush visit. As the president and the pope ended their meeting, the Vatican released a statement by the prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, who said many Eastern-rite Catholics were suffering in Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere because of “war, violence, or fear of an uncertain future.”

“I think of those who must leave their homeland and everything they own,” Archbishop Sandri said. Church officials have been increasingly distressed at the exodus of Iraqi Catholics following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.
Faith leaders urge quick action to expand children’s health insurance

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic representatives joined with Jewish and Christian faith leaders in calling for quick action by Congress to fund health insurance coverage for the nation’s 9 million uninsured children.

“We speak from a broad range of religious traditions representing many millions of people, calling for swift passage of SCHIP legislation that will help our nation see a day when no child goes without treatment or relies on an emergency room for his or her primary health care,” the leaders said in a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, and Sen. Max Baucus, D-Montana, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

SCHIP is the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. The committee was expected to take up in June the budget resolution that calls for spending $50 billion over five years to expand the program.

“The faith community worked extraordinarily hard to see that the Senate and House included $50 billion in new funding in the budget resolution,” said the June 7 letter to Baucus and Reid, made public June 12. “We want to see these funds used to support a strong SCHIP reauthorization.”

The leaders also called for giving greater flexibility to states under the program, allowing said states to expand income-eligibility levels and to cover pregnant women and legally documented immigrant children under their plans.

“States that see covering parents as a way of covering more children should not be undermined,” the letter added.

The religious leaders pledged to continue an “unprecedented grass-roots campaign to rally people of faith” around the issue of SCHIP reauthorization.

“Through hundreds of local events, tens of thousands of contacts with members of Congress, and scores of Op-Ed pieces and letters to the editor, people of faith are making their voices heard on the need for a strong SCHIP reauthorization,” they added.

Catholic leaders signing the letter included Jesuit Father John Baumann, executive director of PICO National Network in Oakland, California; Kevin E. Lofton, president and CEO of Catholic Health Initiatives; and Good Shepherd Sister Gayle Lwanga Crumbley, national coordinator of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Eucharist calls Christians to give themselves to others, says pope

FROM PAGE 1

The same way, he said, the public procession “calls attention to the fact that Christ sacrificed himself for all humanity,” the pope said. “His passage between the houses and along the streets of our city will be an offering of joy, of eternal life, peace, and love to those who live there.”

Pope Benedict said Luke’s Gospel story also emphasizes the fact that the bread and fish multiplied by Jesus were offered by people in the crowd.

“The five loaves and two fish indicate our contribution, poor but necessary, which he transforms into a gift of love for all,” the pope said.

The Eucharist, he said, calls Christians to give themselves to others “because the vocation of each of us is to be, like Christ, bread broken for the life of the world.”

Eucharist calls Christians to give themselves to others, says pope

T he theme for this year’s Collection is Let us make sure that none of God’s children ever feels alone. The theme is based on a September 2006 homily given by Pope Benedict XVI, in which he explained how those who are baptized create one family of believers who are never alone. Your contribution to the Peter’s Pence Collection allows the Holy Father to respond with timely and effective emergency assistance to our suffering brothers and sisters throughout the world. Thus, in solidarity with the Pope, we Catholic participate in works of goodness that distinguish us as followers of the Gospel.

Please pray for the Holy Father, and please give generously in your parish.

For more information, visit www.usccb.org/ppc.
**Abbot Wolf finds the rhythm of work and prayer similar across the world**

**FROM PAGE 28 another,** he says of the high emotional toll of dealing with disease. “We are all about consolidating. There are some fragile communities. In South Africa also there are two Anglican Benedictine communities.”

Since the time of the Reformation, Anglican Benedictine communities maintain official friendly relations with the Benedictine Confederation. Abbot Wolf reaches out to them as well.

“I saw also Anglicans and Episcopalians [on this visit] here in the States,” he says of this effort. “…And they say, ‘We feel at home with you.’”

Abbot Wolf finds the rhythm of work and prayer similar across the world, according to Abbot Wolf, whether the religious community is in South Africa or Alabama. “They are living together,” he says. “They are trying to strengthen each other. They are praying together, but they are also working together because they have to survive somehow. They are real monks when they are living from the income of their work.

“And then they can also do something good for other people.”

The abbot estimates Benedictines the world over are educating some 150,000 students, from elementary age through university. The monasteries are frequently home to both boarding schools and day schools.

“In my own monastery [St. Anselmo] we have 700 boys and girls. It’s a high school. Only about 30 of them are boarders.

“At Addis Ababa, we have two houses for the many people who are coming for retreats — and they are always full. This is not just for the weekend. They come for spiritual guidance, courses in spirituality, for direction. I myself am giving twice a week, weeklong retreats.”

But it is the work of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at St’ Anselmo, for which the Abbot Primate seeks support. Also located on the Aventine Hill, the institute promotes the study of liturgy, a mission entrusted to the Benedictines by the pope. It trains seminarians and academics alike to help all Catholics understand the importance of liturgy throughout the Church — not only in Mass but in every aspect of life. The institute has an impressive list of alumni, among them Archbishop Wilton Gregory.

The St. Benedict Foundation supports the institute’s work, and, in order to more fully understand its role, Abbot Wolf encourages visits to the Web site at http://www.stbenedictfoundation.org.

The abbot enthusiastically embraces the Internet as a tool of his work. He speaks nine languages — and communicates daily by e-mail in at least five of them. German is his native tongue.

Like the Holy Father, Abbot Notker Wolf grew up in Bavaria — and the two have known each other since seminary days. They were both doctors of theology who taught in Rome and have shared a friendship since they were young men. The abbot regularly provides commentary on Pope Benedict’s travels for a German TV station and other media outlets.

In April 2005, Abbot Wolf was at the Benedictine Monastery in Tepeyac, Mexico (Our Lady of Tepeyac), when he learned Joseph Ratzinger had been chosen as the new pope. He was preparing to lead a conference when he heard a cry of “The smoke is white! The smoke is white!”

“We all went to the TV so we could see it,” he recalls of the live coverage and Cardinal Ratzinger’s appearance on the papal balcony. “I dropped my conference license. When I think of Howie, I feel warm and loving. So when I think of that freshman boy — from now on I’ll identify him as Howie.”

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

**Hamers…**

**FROM PAGE 11 to know if he should turn the snapshot over and identify it with the word “picture.”**

“Stifling a giggle, I answered, “Write your name on the back.”

“Thank you!” the boy said, and I was happy I had answered.

“Do you have more children?” I asked. “Yes,” she replied, “four.”

“When I think of Howie, I feel warm and loving. So when I think of that freshman boy — from now on I’ll identify him as Howie.”

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

**Umbert the Unborn**

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San Mateo Church will host an enchilada dinner fundraiser June 29 from 5 to 8 p.m. at 306 S. 16th St., Fort Worth. Diners will choose tilapia, steak, or beans and rice for $5. Tables may be available by calling (817) 994-6228.

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**Bridge**

*By Barbara Griffith Correspondent*

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When Abbot Notker Wolf, abbot primate of the world’s Benedicines, came to Texas recently, he spoke of his order’s mission and how his role is to act as something of a bridge to re-enter our communities.

Abbot Wolf shared the idea with Benedicines in South Africa, who face constant challenges of how to best utilize their resources. “Benedicines are teaching the South African tribes how to live together and how to work together so that HIV/AIDS patients don’t become outcasts but rather live inside the family unit. They help family members find medication,” he says. “That is a long project for them.”

Abbot Wolf, elected to his role seven years ago, travels almost weekly to a different country to visit fellow Benedicines. “It’s amazing. It’s simply a bunch of men or women, fascinated by the Gospel, by Jesus Christ. They are in search of God, as St. Benedict says.”

Recently he witnessed an effective and economical approach to monastic teaching by the Benedicines of India. It was dubbed ‘Mobile Monastic Institute.’

“Every year after Easter, they have a crash course of eight weeks, each year for three years,” he explains. “And each year they do it in a different monastery, and that way it doesn’t get too expensive or too big a burden for a single monastery because they are moving around.”

When Abbot Notker Wolf, OSB, appropriately dedicated a new pastoral center for the diocese, it caused him to reflect on God’s presence in the work — and in his life.

**Above:** Abbot Notker Wolf, OSB, appropriately dedicated a new pastoral center for the diocese, it caused him to reflect on God’s presence in the work — and in his life.

**Right:** Abbot Wolf (right) and Father Cajetan Homick, OSB, president of the Saint Benedict Educational Foundation, confer over notes in Arlington. (Photo by Steve Moffett)

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**Inside... This issue of the NTC**

Sacred Heart Church in Seymour dedicated a new pastoral center May 7, with an eye to its serving a number of needs for the church and the surrounding community.

The diocesan Prison Ministry Symposium at All Saints Church brought home our need to see prisoners as being like ourselves — and in need of more support as they re-enter our communities.

As Dan Luby prepares for a transition after nearly 25 years working for the diocese, it causes him to reflect on God’s presence in the work — and in his life.

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