Cardinal DiNardo praises HHS for reiterating abortion exclusion in health plans

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien  
Catholic News Service  
WASHINGTON — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Pro-Life Activities praised the Department of Health and Human Services July 15 for reaffirming that no federal funds will be provided to cover elective abortions under state-run health insurance plans.

The statement came from Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston after HHS spokeswoman Jenny Backus said that “in Pennsylvania and in all other states, abortion will not be covered in the Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan except in the cases of rape or incest, or where the life of the woman would be endangered.”

The cardinal said the statement asserted what could have been an “alarming precedent” and pointed up the need for a permanent law to exclude abortion from all programs under the new Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The HHS statement was issued after Pennsylvania officials announced that the state had received $160 million in federal funds for its insurance program covering those with pre-existing conditions.

Although an outline of the program says that “elective abortions will not be covered” under the program, another section states that coverage “includes only abortions and contraceptives that satisfy the requirements of” several Pennsylvania statutes.

Under one of the cited statutes, abortion is permitted up to 24 weeks of pregnancy if a physician certifies that the abortion is necessary because of the woman’s “physical, emotional, psychological (or) familial” circumstances or her age.

HHS Backus said the abortion policy she outlined in her statement would apply to both state and federally run programs covering people with pre-existing conditions.

“We will reiterate this policy in guidance to those running the Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan at both the state and federal levels,” she added. “The contracts to operate the Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan includes a requirement to follow all federal laws and guidance.”

Cardinal DiNardo said he reiterates this policy.

Cardinal DiNardo  
SEE CARDINAL, p. 13

Bishops Vann and Farrell to confer papal honor on Fr. Michael Olson, Sept. 5

A Fort Worth diocesan priest whose 16-year history has brought him from his own ordination to the seminary formation of future priests, recently received a papal honor from His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI.

Monsignor Michael Olson, rector of Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, in late June was notified of his papal honor of Chaplain to His Holiness, with the title of reverend monsignor.

Bishop Kevin W. Vann and Bishop Kevin J. Farrell will formally confer the honor at a solemn Vespers celebration at St. Patrick Cathedral Sept. 5. The two

SEE HOLY TRINITY, p. 13

Clockwise from top left:  
• Bishop Vann addresses his thanks to those present and to all across the diocese who have helped in the campaign.  
• Our Lady of Guadalupe Dancers added flair to the celebration.  
• Parish leaders from across the diocese greeted each other and shared in the joy of the campaign’s success.  
• Younger Our Lady of Guadalupe Dancers seemed especially expressive.  
• Father Stephen Jasso’s All Saints Parish was among those honored for surpassing their ATP parish goals.

Diocese celebrates All Things Possible campaign success, honors leaders, donors

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer  
Correspondent

As the Diocese of Fort Worth celebrated the massive success in its All Things Possible capital campaign, far surpassing its goal of $40 million in pledges, Bishop Kevin Vann found it possible to see something else.

A group representative of the diverse leadership of the diocese, all significant participants in the fund-raising effort, had gathered in June for a prayer service and dinner reception in honor of the campaign’s success. They sat in Fort Worth’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Hall, a circle of tables facing their bishop, and he compared them to a photograph.

“If we were going to get a photo of everybody here this evening,” the bishop mused, “what a beautiful view it would be for me to look out and see all the people in front of me who truly are a symbol of our diocese together as a family.”

SEE CELEBRATION, p. 22

Catholic schools will open school year, mark close of 40th Anniversary with All Schools Mass

The Office of Catholic Schools has announced that Bishop Kevin Vann will preside at a special Mass of the Holy Spirit at the Fort Worth Convention Center Arena, Wednesday, Sept. 1, at 11 a.m. to mark the close of the Fort Worth Diocese’s 40th Anniversary year and to celebrate the opening of the new school year. More than 6,000 students from 19 diocesan schools will gather for the special Mass for all students in grades one through 12. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend this celebration.

“This is a unique and wonderful opportunity not only for our children in Catholic schools, but for the entire diocese as well,” said Superintendent of Schools Don Miller.

A news release from the Schools Office says, “The first All Schools Liturgy was celebrated in 2006 and was a memorable, spirit-filled experience for all who participated.”

“Focusing on our theme, One in the Spirit, the 2010 liturgy gives us the opportunity as a body of believers to offer thanks and pray for our community and the success of the coming school year,” Miller added.

For more information on the All Schools Liturgy, contact Tessy Ross at tross@fwdioc.org.

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Embracing modern technology, 2010 Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference challenges teens to Know, Love, and Serve

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

When 14-year-old Lulu Rodriguez wanted to encourage her friends to attend this year’s Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference (DCYC), she used the best — and sometimes the only way — to contact today’s teenagers. The Itasca High School sophomore sent out text messages.

“I would start off with a Bible verse,” says the Our Lady of Mercy parishioner from Hillsboro who fires off about 100 texts a day from her cell phone. “I told my friends the weekend would be an eye-opener and bring them closer to God.”

About 20 of her high school pals accepted the invitation and spent July 9-11 at the DFWM Hyatt Regency Hotel. Along with 1,650 young people from across the Diocese of Fort Worth, they listened to motivational speakers, enjoyed rousing Christian music, and attended workshops designed to deepen faith and help build life skills.

“It was a great experience and we learned different ways of praying and worshiping God,” remembers Rodriguez, recalling the youth conference’s efforts to connect faith and technology. “Computers and phones are an easy way to connect with people, but now I know we can use them to talk to someone about God too.”

Sponsored by the diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry, DCYC provides a time for junior high and high school youngsters to experience their Catholic faith, make new friends, and come away from the experience with a greater sense of the Church, the community, and who they are, according to Kevin Prevo, director of the Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry.

“Our theme, ‘Know Love, Serve’ (Micah 6:8) seemed to really connect with young people and our adult leaders,” he says, noting that several of the 50 youth groups attending the event were first-time participants. “Our DCYC annual youth conference continues to grow thanks to God and all of the volunteer hours put in for months before the conference.”

Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann celebrated Sunday Mass and visited with the youngsters during the weekend. A special booth set up by the diocesan Vocation Office provided teens with an opportunity to visit with seminarians and priests.

This year’s list of workshops, talks, and musical performances tried to bring in aspects of the high tech world familiar to young people. One of the breakout sessions, given by a law enforcement official from the Cyber Safety Division of the Texas State Attorney General’s Office, discussed the legal issues and offered guidance regarding sexting, cyber-bullying, and social networking sites.

“Because teens are so tied into electronics and technology for social networking, we try to make deep connections in keynotes and workshops at DCYC,” Prevo explained.

Keynote speaker ValLimar Jansen, who entertained the assembly with a theatrical version of the Jacob’s Well Bible story and sang a soulful rendition of “Wade in the Water,” during a Saturday afternoon address, surprised her young listeners when she suddenly asked them to pull out their cell phones. During the weekend, youth leaders had discouraged their young charges from using the devices.

“This is a tool that can be used to build up the kingdom of God and answer the spiritual and emotional needs of people,” she told the audience.

As a sea of cells flickered in the darkened ballroom, the versatile performer asked God to bless the phones and then issued a challenge.

“Use your phone once a day to build up the body of Christ,” Jansen urged. “Send one text, one e-mail, or make one phone call to someone who is hurting, lonely, or feels separated.”

Understanding the nuances of youth culture, disc jockey Bill Lage wove together interactive music and storytelling to rally and inform youngsters about their Catholic faith.

“Because a DJ because I wanted to provide positive, clean music,” explained Lage, a 15-year veteran of the industry. “I play secular songs everyone loves, but I make it more about interaction. I challenge them to be open to Christian music and look at things a little differently.”

Meeting kids “where they’re at” is key, he insisted. During a serious moment, the hip DJ told the throng of energetic teens and pretends how the power of prayer helped him deal with a bully in the fifth grade. To help the situation, his mother advised him to pray to God spontaneously, “like He’s your friend. Make it real, different.”

“So that’s what I did, and God told me my prayers would be answered,” he said. “The bully went away and the experience changed my life. God’s had my back ever since.”

The pair shared an emotional story with the audience about a budding friendship in their youth group.

Faith-filled talks from DJ Bill and the other speakers received rave reviews from members of the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton youth group from Keller. Friends urged first-time participant Zach Cochran to come, and he brought along a buddy from his baseball team who isn’t Catholic. The pair shad-owed Sara Schaubut and Margaret Cressonie who are veteran DCYC attendees. All agreed this year’s DCYC exceeded expectations.

“They’ve really tried incorporating the modern world and technology we use and then bring it together with religion,” Schaubut pointed out. “They’re talking about texting and music and Facebook. Facebook pages are everywhere now.”

The weekend gave Zach Cochran a lot to think about.

“It’s energized my faith and, now that I know what it’s about, I can reach out to my friends and tell them to come next year,” he said.

Gloria Rodriguez is counting on positive reviews from DCYC to boost participation in Our Lady of Mercy’s new youth group. After a five-year effort by the religious education teacher, the Hillsboro parish launched a youth ministry program in 2009. This was the first time it sent a contingent of teenag-ers to the diocesan event.

“I think the kids realize what they’ve been missing all these years,” explained Gloria, who championed 23 youngsters, including her daughter, Lulu Rodriguaz. “I’ve enjoyed watching the fellowship. Our kids are building new relationships outside their comfort zone.”

The youth leader hopes the weekend cements her parish’s fledgling youth ministry and strengthens the faith of its members.

“I want them to come away from DCYC with a deeper understanding of their religion and the kind of relationship they are going to build with God,” she added. “The kids are loving the experience and I’m excited.”
Diocese's School of Lay Ministry opens registration for new student enrollment

The Diocese of Fort Worth Pope John Paul II Institute School of Lay Ministry is accepting registrations for the 2010-2011 academic year.

The Pope John Paul II School of Lay Ministry reported the Light of Christ Institute lay ministry training program last year. It has a re-structured, two-year curriculum which features ministry courses in both the "Basic Competency (first) Year" and the "Commissioning (second) Year." The program has been a requirement for consideration for diocesan permanent deacon formation.

"The people have shown a great deal of interest," said Father Carmen Mele, OP, the institute’s director, about the success of the first year.

Those who plan to enter the School of Lay Ministry’s first-year program in September should submit an application with their respective pastor’s signature. First-year classes in English will be offered at The Catholic Center on some Wednesday evenings, and in Spanish usually on the last Saturday of the month. There will also be an Internet option for those who have difficulty attending classes.

The academic year will begin with joint assemblies for first- and second-year participants. The assembly in Spanish will take place on Saturday, Sept. 11, at St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth, and the assembly in English on Saturday, Sept. 25, at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth.

Parishioners looking to become lay ecclesiastical ministers or current lay ministers who desire updated training may contact Fr. Carmen Mele, OP, at the diocesan Catholic Center at (817) 560-3300 ext. 262. An information sheet and an application form have also been sent to every pastor in the diocese and are available on the diocesan website at www.northtexascatholic.org/ec/catechesis/pjp2_institute/school_lay_min/Pages/default.aspx.

Finding fruitful marriages

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Everyone in the community and the family looks forward to the wedding day of a young couple. However, before we ring the church bells, let us be well-prepared as a community, a family, an engaged couple, and as singles considering marriage so that the hopes and dreams anticipated on their wedding day will be not only met but exceeded through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Last month I spoke about the need of our Vocations Office to begin using new communications to reach our parishioners on a daily basis. On my Facebook page, I recently asked married women the following question to help out the single ladies looking into the vocation of marriage: What qualities should a woman look for in a future husband? Below are 10 very diverse responses from women that will be of great value in helping the community, the family, and singles dating to determine if a couple is complementary for a happy and holy marriage.

• “First of all, ladies, ditch those matchmakers. You don’t need them. You are worth waiting for, and the man you are waiting for is worth waiting for, too.”

• “Look for someone who loves the Lord, and who can be your best friend. If you don’t get along before you get married, you won’t get along afterward! I am so blessed that my husband is also my best friend! Also, look for a guy who is willing to wait until marriage for physical intimacy — you are worth waiting for, and a man who truly loves you will agree!”

• “Be sure that he is KIND and RESPECTFUL. Those two qualities go a LONG way!!! My husband has never raised his voice to me or even made me feel like I am less than an amazing woman. And I’m a hard one to live with!! He doesn’t have to use ‘scare tactics’ to get his point across. He says what he needs to say lovingly and patiently. Remember what the Bible teaches us about how husbands should love their wives.”

• “You might wait... (for physical intimacy) while you strengthen your faith and rely on the Lord to bring the man to you. That way, your perfect man will be the one God plans for you. Then you’ll have your perfect ‘God’ mate.”

• “His relationship with God comes first, you are always a close second.”

• “Tall, dark, and handsome with a good salary... doesn’t cut it!! Is he good with children? Do you trust him? Does he make you laugh? When you are sick, does he do something to make you feel better?”

• “First of all, ladies, ditch the myth of the Asile Change Hymn. Then look for faith in God, dependability, honesty, shared values and religious beliefs, trustworthiness, emotional stability, and the ability to be your best friend, as well as your lover. After all, you are trusting your future husband not only with your heart but with your very soul.”

• “Does he know the Blessed Mother? What is his favorite image of her? This can be a beginning insight to how he sees women. I would want to know his commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Magisterium, and to the Church. I think a real woman shows a man what he is expected of him. To know Mary is a great way to begin inner transformation so that we may give our Fiat as she did.”

For the Church teaches us that the two purposes of marriage are, first, to help one another get to heaven and, second, to procreate and get all the munchkins to heaven, he needs to be kind, healthy, happy, holy. He needs to understand his role as husband and father to the best of his ability before marriage. (He will learn day by day within marriage.) So, let’s look at what he doesn’t have. If he has that kind of faith, all the things above will be there because he will know protecting your soul and the souls of your children and his mission, even unto death.”

I have added a few other questions into the mix to help round out the criteria. Do the two of you talk about God? Can you speak openly about your faith in Jesus Christ? Does he respect your opinion? Do you pray together? Does he ever seek forgiveness? Does he forgive you when you seek forgiveness? Does he enjoy time with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and an hour at Mass on Sundays? Is he able to be the person you see. What makes you think he will respect you? If he’s not meeting the overarching criteria from above, then he’s not the godly man you want for marriage, and its time to press the “dumb” button.”

Whether married or single, I believe we owe it to our community to strive for holiness and maturity, holding one accountable so that young married couples and future marriages will, with the grace of Christ, provide true love for each other and for their children and withstand the many storms that have destroyed marriages in the past.

Father Kyle Walterscheid, the director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail at kwalterscheid@fdioic.org.
‘Rebuilding’ program to be held at St. Andrew Parish

Rebuilding, a divorce and separation recovery program, will be offered at St. Andrew Parish, 3717 Stadium Dr., Fort Worth. The 12-week program is designed to provide support in a safe and nurturing environment where healing can begin. The program offers a step-by-step process that can make divorce recovery easier and less traumatic. The next program will be held Monday evenings, Aug. 20 through Nov. 22, from 7 to 9 p.m. To register, call the parish office at (817) 927-5383. Childcare is available with reservations made at least 48 hours in advance. For reservations, call (817) 924-6588.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics meets fourth Thursday each month

The next regular meeting of The Fort Worth Diocesan Ministry With Lesbian and Gay Catholics, or Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender, and Their Families will be held Thursday, Aug. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5386, or Sister Dorothy Egerering, SSND, at (817) 283-8601.

Annual Rosary Congress to be held Aug. 15-21 at Holy Redeemer

The annual Rosary Congress, sponsored by Apostolatus Uniti and Other Sexual Minorities, Other Sexual Minorities, and Their Families will be held Aug. 15 through Aug. 21, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 5019 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Fort Worth. Those participat- ing, sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth Hospital Ministry, is open to all who visit the home- offices of those inquirers or local hospital ministry.

The program is designed to train participants in knowledge, skills, and guide- lines for care ministry, plus diocesan and local hospital guidelines for visiting the sick. Instructors for this training will consist of the Directors of Pastoral Care from sev- eral of the hospitals in the area, as well as diocesan staff. A资源 will be made available for each participant as well as selected resource mate- rials. Lunch on both days will be provided. Mass will also be offered on Sunday for participants.

For more information or res- erations, contact Deacon Bruce Corbett at (817) 880-5479 or bcorbett@fwd.org.

Church of Fort Worth

Celeb rant Singers to hold concert at St. Vincent de Paul

St. Vincent de Paul Church, located at 5050 Black Oak Lane in River Oaks, is sponsoring DivorceCare and DCaK, Thursday even- ings beginning Aug. 26, through Nov. 18. The sessions will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

This 13-week program is designed to assist individuals who have experienced the pain of divorce or separation and are ready to begin the healing process in order to move ahead with their lives and is open to anyone who has gone through or who has completed the divorce process. The facilitators have been trained in the program, have attended the general training course and are prepared to help guide participants through the process themselves, can offer their compassion and understanding to guide participants. Although the program is a scripture-based program, it is not a Bible study. Children over the age of 12 may attend the adult session.

A company program DCaK (Divorce Care for Kids) is being offered simultaneously for children ages 5-12. Pre- registration is preferred. For more information and to register, contact Stephanie Byers at (817) 239-1257 or sayayla95@sbcglobal.net or Deacon Ron Aziee at (817) 738-9925 or ron@stpatw.org.

Hospital Ministry training to be offered Sept. 11-12

Training for hospital ministry will be offered Sept. 11-12 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 5019 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Fort Worth. Those participat- ing, sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth Hospital Ministry, is open to all who visit the home- offices of those inquirers or local hospital ministry.

Seminarian Welcome Dinner to be held Oct. 5

The 2010 Seminarian Welcome Dinner will be held Oct. 5 at the Fairmont Dallas, 1717 N. Akard, Dallas. The reception will begin at 5 p.m. and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The evening will include a wine, silent auction, keynote speaker, and priest prize packages. For more information or reservations, call the Seminarian Office or visit www.holymtnseminary.com.

People of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth

CARDINAL NEWMAN INSTITUTE TO OFFER FALL COURSE

In recognition of Cardinal John Henry Newman’s beatification by Pope Benedict XVI, the Newman Institute will celebrate the Feast of St. John Henry Newman in September by offering a five-week course on Saturdays, starting Aug. 28, on The Life and Writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman. The course will be held in the library at the College of St. Thomas More (CSTM), 3015 Lashbrook St., Fort Worth, near TCU. The classes will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 28, Sept. 11, 18, and 25 and Oct. 9. Each class will include “an open” lunch break. The instructors will be James Patrick, founder and chancellor of CSTM, and Dr. Patrick Foley, professor, historian, and editor.

John Tenny

John Tenny was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout, the Boy Scouts of America’s highest honor, at Judgeing at the Court of Honor on April 3 held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Denton. Tenny is a parishioner of St. Mark Church in Denton and is a member of Troop 65, which is chartered by First United Methodist Church of Denton. He is the son of Michael and Sue Tenny of Krum and is a junior at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth.

For his Eagle project, Tenny built new picnic benches and repaired existing benches for St. Mark Church. After designing the benches, Tenny received approval for the design and placement from the church and the benches and recuced other Scouts to help build, paint, and place the benches.

Handwritten notes on the paper are published.

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Second annual women’s conference to be held Aug. 28

The second annual Women of Faith/Women of Action Conference sponsored by the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, will be held Saturday, Aug. 28 at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church, 2010 N. Oklahoma. The theme of this year’s conference is “Moving Forward in Hope and Love.” Doors will open at 7:30 a.m. and close with Mass at 5:30 p.m. Archbishop Joseph E. Battilana of Oklahoma City will be the principle celebrant and homilist with Bishop Edward J. Slattery of Dallas celebrating at the closing Mass.

The keynote speaker will be Bishop Edward J. Slattery. During the morning session Bishop Slattery will speak on “Praying with the Icons.” The bishop’s topic for the afternoon session will be “The Little Way of St. Therese.” Special guest speaker, Tim Stasi, director of Catholic Answers and EWTN, will address the assembly both in the morning and afternoon sessions on “Saved by Faith Alone or Faith, Hope and Charity” and “The Ecumenist-God’s Extravagant Love Revealed.” Other speakers and a priest panel will also be featured at the assembly.


Registration cost is $40. A box dinner will be provided for $10. For more information, visit the Web site at okaccw.tripod.com/owa/index.html. For more information, call Chris Thomas at thomaschr@- sbcglobal.net or call (405) 386- 5187.

Cardinal Newman Institute to offer fall course

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The cost for the course is $200, with half payable at the first class. There is an additional charge for books.

For more information, includ- ing pre-registration, call the Institute at (817) 277-4859 or cni. info@yahoo.com.

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Funeral directorGuy Thompson, known for service to Catholic community, dies at 90

Story and Photo by Kathy Cribari Hamer

Correspondent

When Roger Kersten first met with Guy Thompson, “My job interview consisted of going to a funeral with him. We were going to St. Francis Village.”

Kersten is now Harveson and Cole’s funeral director with the most seniority—25 years—but then he was a 24-year-old from Nebraska, and had no idea where Mr. Thompson was taking him on this drive. “I thought he might be taking me somewhere and dropping me off,” Kersten joked.

“As we drove that day he would point things out—homes of people he had served, families who lived there, what each person did.” During that drive the man who would be his boss taught Kersten a truism that set him on a professional level: He

“he wanted me, ‘you’re not just doing a funeral,’” Kersten explained. “‘you’re serving someone who is part of the community where we all live. You’re part of the knits of the whole society.”

Guy Thompson, a Fort Worth icon, died Sunday, July 18, 2010, at the age of 90, but not before teaching Kersten the delicate, fine traditions of funeral direct ing, and not before influencing most of his children, and some grandchildren, to work in the family business.

Paul Joseph Bernardy, son of Teacy Thompson Bernardy, and husband Paul, both employed by Harveson and Cole, said, “I worked at the funeral home on and off for three to four years.

“When I worked for my grandfather, I would deliver flowers, and people would talk about the care he gave them in the tough times of their lives. How many lives he affected!

“Yesterday I was shopping for a shirt like one my grandfather wore, so I took a picture of him wearing it, and showed the clerk. She talked for 20 minutes about how he affected her family’s life.

“Mr. Thompson grew up in Fort Worth. He worked a variety of jobs, but decided to volunteer at a funeral home to influence them to hire it. He worked. He graduated from funeral directors’ school then entered the Navy and worked as a head hospital corpsman.

“He was a giant of a man,” said Sister Frances Evans, CCCV. “His compassion was unbelievable. I don’t care whether you were a person off the street — because Guy has had me come here to pray with street people whom he later buried. That’s the kind of fellow he was.”

“He was always kind and protective,” said Cindy Thompson, Harveson and Cole president, who named her son after her father.

“One of my proudest moments was when I gave birth to Guy,” she said, through tears, “and I introduced him to Dad. I had Guy in my arms and I said, ‘Dad, this is Guy Thompson.’

“He was surprised and so pleased. He took a paper towel out of the bathroom and wrote me a note that I still have in Guy’s book.”

Sr. Frances visited Mr. Thompson Saturday night, and prayed with him hours before his death.

“I could tell he would not make it through the night,” she said.

After his death it was Roger Kersten — 25 years earlier a student — who prepared his mentor’s body.

“It was difficult,” he said. “I cried as we carried him out of the house. I cried coming down the hallway. But when we got to the preparation area my mind switched gears.

“OK,” he thought, “it’s now time to put into effect everything he has instilled in us, and do the best we can.”

“Surprisingly, my eyes cleared up,” Kersten said, sadly, resignedly. And I thought, ‘Well wow! OK, thanks.”

Sister Mercedes Kiely, SHSp, died at 83

Former prison minister for dioce ne, Sister Mercedes Kiely, SHSp


Sr. Mercedes received her Bachelor of Science in English from St. Mary’s University and her Master of Ed ted education from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She completed her Clinical Pastoral Education from Harris County District Hospital in Houston.

During her years of minis try Sr. Mercedes served as a prison minister at the Federal Medical Center, at Carswell Air Force Base, and at the Fort Worth County Jail. She also served as prison minister in San Mateo, California and at Bexar County Adult Detention Center in San Antonio.

In addition, she taught in schools of the Congregation in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

Sr. Mercedes was preceded in death by her parents, six brothers, and one sister. She is survived by her sister-in-law, Patience Kiely, several nieces and nephews, and numerous friends.

All services were held at Holy Spirit Convent, 300 Yucca St., San Antonio. Recipp tion of the body with evening prayer took place July 6, at 5 p.m. The wake service, with recitation of the Rosary, was held at 7 p.m. Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated at 5 p.m. July 7.

Contributions in tribute to Sister Mercedes may be made to the Ministries of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, 300 Yucca St., San Antonio, TX, 78203.

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Diocese takes steps to make Natural Family Planning part of marriage prep curriculum

NFP is currently required in 13 parishes; July is NFP Awareness Month

By Juan Guajardo Correspondent


But it’s really not, says Marlon De La Torre, diocesan director of Family Life.

“It’s not that difficult,” De La Torre said. “You don’t have to be scientist or biologist.”

In an interview this week, Tony Abadie, diocesan co-ordinator of Natural Family Planning said, “It’s kind of funny because it’s never really defined by anybody, but NFP is simply using a woman’s recordable signs of fertility to find out whether she’s infertile or fertile on any given day of the month, as opposed to the rhythm method which is just a guess about fertility.”

And the facts don’t lie, Abadie said. All three methods of Natural Family Planning taught in the diocese: Billings, Sympto-Thermal, and Creighton, are proven to be up to 99 percent effective in spacing births or achieving pregnancy.

“Now we’re in that mode of rolling it out smoothly. Currently 13 parishes will work with a diocesan-wide program which requires certain parishes to mandate NFP classes for engaged couples and will help Abadie and the NFP committee make sure a diocesan-wide program will work smoothly. Currently 13 parishes require NFP before marriage.

“Over these next five years we’ll be expanding into more and more parishes and trying to get more of them online, until the whole diocese requires it,” Abadie explained.

And he has seen firsthand that NFP is not a bad thing to learn. For Abadie, who originally did not use NFP in his marriage, it brought peace to his marriage, chastity, and better communication.

“There’s a lot that changed in our marriage,” he said. National Natural Family Planning Awareness week, an initiative by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, starts July 25 and ends on July 31. Already, Abadie has placed ads in parish bulletins and arranged a noon radio interview on July 26 on KATH 910 AM for the start of Awareness Week. And he’s looking into the possibility of increasing evangelization not just for parishioners, but for priests.

Abadie also invites anyone interested in NFP, or teaching NFP to visit the diocesan link at www.fwdioc.org/ministries/familylife/. *

NFP Testimonials

Below are personal testimonies from several NFP instructors around the diocese about the role the practice played in their lives.

Scott and Amy Rustand (CCL Instructors)

“Looking back, we can now see how we were both stuck in this cycle of self-gratification. NFP taught us how to be selfless, instead of selfish.”

“I thought I was pro-life. NFP taught me what it really meant to be pro-life.”

“When we were using contraception, we thought we were in control, but little did we know that the medication was in control of us, affecting not only our fertility but our emotions.”

“The use of artificial contraceptives go against pro-life values because it is actively using abortifacient drugs to manipulate family size.”

Bill and Mary Koubia (CCL Instructors / Supervisors)

“I experienced my husband’s rejection of my fertility as a personal rejection. I felt used rather than loved. Once we embraced God’s design for marriage, we experienced a new freedom and peace in our relationship.”

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New diocesan Marriage and Family Life director hopes
to serve as a bridge to evangelize across cultures

By Michele Baker

Correspondent

Marlon De La Torre, who joins the staff of the Diocese of Fort Worth as the director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life, is the picture of an all-American boy. The son of a salesman and a stay-at-home mother, he grew up working his grandfather’s farm during weekends, holidays, and vacations, while working hard at school playing basketball and trying to make the grade.

“My mother knew that an education was the key for all of us,” De La Torre recalls. “Even though she hadn’t been educated beyond high school when my brothers and sister and I were growing up, she insisted that we read, study, and try to get the best grades. This was always her motivating speech to us.”

The twist to De La Torre’s story is that it isn’t set in the bucolic speech to us.”

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stay-at-home mother, he grew up

is the picture of an all-American

fi ce of Marriage and Family Life,

Worth as the director of the Of-

the staff of the Diocese of Fort

Marlon De La Torre

Arts in Theology and Catechesis

and in Education Administration

while beginning his career within

the Church.

“Mr. Jacobelli instilled in me a deep love for the Church. He was a strong, Catholic male role

model. He lived his faith and was an authentic human being,” said De La Torre.

Fidelity to God and passion for the faith are traits De La Torre continues to uphold as he takes on the duties as director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life here in the Diocese of Fort Worth. He will administer programs in both English and Spanish, once again bringing together both parts of a man who belongs fully to each whole.

“I see it as a merger between cultures in which the unifying force for both is Catholicism. This office is representative of the dynamic of our faith that is one, holy, catholic, apostolic,” explains De La Torre. “My response is to make these things co-exist in one place. In the end, our faithfulness as Catholics is our unification.”

After all, the “Torre” in De La Torre means “bridge.”

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WE’RE NOT JUST A SCHOOL. WE’RE A FAMILY.
Bishop says revised norms expand ways church responds to sex abuse

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The revised procedures governing the handling of clerical sexual abuse cases give church officials stronger tools for aiding victims and for disciplining wayward priests, said the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People.

Bishop Blase J. Cupich said bishops around the world have definitive rules for handling abuse cases and other serious violations of church law under the procedures, known as norms in church parlance.

"The new norms go beyond the ‘Essential Norms’ (adopted in 2002 by the U.S. bishops). They include other aspects of the crime of sexual abuse, for instance vulnerable adults, and pornography. They also allow for the quick adjudication of these cases," Bishop Cupich said during a conference call with reporters at the headquar ters of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The changes have been in the works for months and were approved by Pope Benedict XVI May 21. They formalize many existing church practices involving clergy sexual abuse while raising the seriousness of offenses by clergy who use child pornography as well as those accused of abusing adults with physical or mental disabilities.

Other changes announced by the Vatican upgrade the seriousness of offenses related to the attempted ordination of women and the recording of confessions. They confirm that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith can judge cardinals, patriarchs, and bishops accused of "more grave crimes." Qualified lay Catholics also are permitted to serve on tribunals that deal with sex abuse cases.

The changes do not lessen the requirements that church officials work with law enforcement to report cases of abuse and the use of child pornography, said Bishop Cupich, head of the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota, who will be installed as bishop of Spokane, Washington, Sept. 3.

"This document has to be taken in consideration with the other documents that have already been released ... on the website for the Holy See, which calls for cooperation with civil officials. Since the time of St. Paul, Christians are called to obey the civil law. That really is fundamental here in regard to abuse. They must act in a way that is best for victims and the church," he said.

Bishop Cupich also said it is likely that more abuse victims will come forward "from the past" because the revised norms include a provision extending the statute of limitations from 10 to 20 years after a sex abuse victim’s 18th birthday.

"We would hope, in fact, that the occasion of the release of this document will be another opportunity for any victim to come forward for healing, for justice in the life of the church," he said.

The publicity has to be aimed at inviting victims to come forward for healing.

Before taking questions from reporters, Bishop Cupich read a prepared statement in which he said the revisions indicate that the church views child sexual abuse as a serious offense.

"By putting child sexual abuse by clergy in the same context as the safeguarding of the sacraments, the church is making it clear that such misconduct violates the core values of our faith and worship," he said.

The announcement was welcomed by various observers, who said the revisions formalize practices already followed by the church. They said the revisions will help the church in handling allegations of abuse and other serious violations of canon law.

"It’s a natural development," said Mercy Sister Sharon Ewart, executive coordinator of the Canon Law Society of America in Washington. "When the norms were first promulgated in 2001, it was clear they would have to be revised and considered over time."

"This shows that child sexual abuse is a major crime under church law as well as civil laws," she said.

The Swiss Bishops’ Conference, which toughened its guidelines on clergy sexual abuse in June, said in a statement that the Vatican’s stance backed its own position.

"Sexual violence is a crime, and sexual violence against children is a particularly heinous crime. It must have no place in the church," the statement said.

"By putting child sexual abuse in church law as a serious offense."

"We would hope, in fact, that the occasion of the release of this document will be another opportunity for any victim to come forward for healing, for justice in the life of the church," he said.

"This is ... consistent with the seriousness with which the (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) takes the implementation of these norms," she added.

Diane M. Knight, who chairs the National Review Board, which oversees the U.S. bishops’ compliance with the national sexual abuse and child protection policies they adopted in June 2002, called the revisions “a big step forward.”

"Here in the U.S., the bishops had the ‘Essential Norms’ to guide them," she told Catholic News Service from Milwaukee. "But there was not that kind of clarity for other bishops around the world."

"This shows that child sexual abuse is a major crime under church law as well as civil laws,” she said.

"We would hope, in fact, that the occasion of the release of this document will be another opportunity for any victim to come forward for healing, for justice in the life of the church," he said.

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Bishop Kicanas urges U.S. to treat immigration as humanitarian issue

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told lawmakers on Capitol Hill that the problem of immigration should not be dissected as an economic issue, but as a humanitarian one. Bishop Kicanas made the remarks July 14 before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law.

“The current immigration law we have today fails to meet the moral test of dignity to the human person,” said Bishop Kicanas, whose diocese runs along the whole of the Arizona-Mexico border. Referring to a tough new law passed April 23 in Arizona but not expected to take effect until July 29, he said it was “only providing a Band-Aid unless new federal laws are made.”

He made a clear distinction between those coming to the United States to work and those coming to do the nation harm. “From a moral perspective, we cannot accept the toil of immigrants without providing them protection,” Bishop Kicanas said.

The bishop made several points about what comprehensive immigration reform should include. A new immigration law should “honor the rule of law and help restore it by requiring 11 million undocumented to pay a fine, pay back taxes, learn English and get in the back of the line,” the bishop said. “We believe this is a proportionate penalty.”

Settlement reached in abuse accusation

Editor’s Note: The following news release regarding settlement of a claim against the diocese involving Rudy Renteria was issued June 10 by the Diocese of Fort Worth:

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth has reached a settlement agreement through mediation of a claim brought against the Diocese by a person who was allegedly abused by Rudy Renteria.

The incident occurred while Renteria was assigned to St. Matthew Catholic Church in Arlington in 1979-1981.

Bishop Kevin Vann expressed regret for the incident.

“I am deeply sorry for any sexual abuse that any individual may have endured and suffered by Renteria or any person connected with the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. I am deeply ashamed and truly sorry. I pray that healing and reconciliation can be achieved in your life. I have previously stated that such actions are a sin and a crime,” Bishop Vann emphasizes that the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth will address any charge of abuse as quickly and as pastorally as possible.

“As I have stated in the past and want to reiterate now, I am committed to making sure the Diocese’s policies are adhered to in order to prevent future tragedy such as that which has befallen the victims of abuse,” he said.

The Diocese has been in compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People’s requirements in every audit conducted since its passage in 2002. An audit by an independent auditing firm hired by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was last done in Fall 2007. The Diocese was found in compliance with the Charter requirements.


Renteria was removed from active ministry on June 29, 2002 by the late Bishop Joseph Delaney. Bishop Vann has petitioned the Vatican to laicize Renteria, which is a process to return him to lay status. The request is pending.

The Diocese of Fort Worth asks that anyone who has either witnessed or has suffered sexual abuse by anyone who serves the Church to come forward so that the individual and the Church can continue the healing process. To report abuse to the Diocese of Fort Worth call Judy Locke, the Victim Assistance Coordinator, at 817-560-2452, ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdoc.org. Persons also can call the sexual abuse hotline, 817-560-2452, ext. 900. Or call The Catholic Center 817-560-2452, ext. 102 and ask for the Chancellor, Father E. James Hart.
A lesson for the secular humanists: Facts don’t save

By David Mills

Free Inquiry is a magazine in whose title the word “free” seems to mean freedom from having to include God in their inquiries, but not the freedom to include Him.

The magazine is published by the Council for Secular Humanism, and as their homepage says, “The Council promotes rational, human-based viewpoints on important social and ethical issues. In particular, it tackles issues where traditional religion obstructs the right to self-determination, for example, freedom of choice in sexual relationships, reproduction, and voluntary euthanasia.”

A few days ago a press release arrived touting an article in the latest edition of Free Inquiry titled “We Are All African!” The subtitle asked, “Can scientific proof that we’re all from Africa motivate rational, human-based viewpoints on important social and ethical issues?”

The article argued that science had proved that all human beings have a common ancestor in Africa millions of years ago, and that this should make us treat each other better. “A scientific understanding of the origin of our species can offer real hope for humanity,” said the source quoted in the release. “It reveals greater insight into human commonality irrespective of individual or group definitions of religious origins.”

The press release then summarized the writer’s “moral message” with a quote from the article itself: “We are all African. With these four words, we see a genetic coalescence of the entire human population... We are equal, for we have been liberated from any self-imposed ideas of importance or special designation. We see that racism is a human invention. It is a social construct with lingering natural biases — leftover baggage from our mammalian xenophobic tendencies. We no longer need to segregate and distinguish ourselves through the use of artificial inventions of importance whether politically, philosophically, or religiously motivated.”

The article is written in an eager, excited, and even religious way. It is, after all, about salvation and hope for humanity, as the magazine itself says. And it’s one of the more pathetic examples of its genre.

You have a writer, obviously well-meaning and earnest, who has seen a real problem, and thinks that getting everyone to agree on a scientific fact will somehow solve it. (Though even he, near the end of the article, admits “It may be just wishful thinking.”)

But why in the world would the bigot care that millions of years ago he shared with everyone else a common ancestor? He’s a bigot because he compares himself to the people he dislikes now, because now they have a different skin color or language or national origin or social class or belief system or whatever difference he’s chosen to make himself feel superior.

If millennia of belief that “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’ hasn’t kept people from treating each other horribly, a simple fact by itself certainly isn’t going to. Judaism and Christianity both declare that our common ancestry is not just a fact but the act of the God who judges us. If we’ll ignore God, and we’ve been doing so since Adam, we’ll certainly ignore the scientists.

Judahism and Christianity both declare that our common ancestry is not just a fact but the act of the God who judges us. If we’ll ignore God, and we’ve been doing so since Adam, we’ll certainly ignore the scientists.

Are you going to run up to the white-robed leader of the lynch mob with the rope in his hand and say, “Excuse me, but don’t you know that you and he both came from Africa millions of years ago? You’re brothers! Just give him a hug! Take him home to meet the wife and kids!” It’s not going to happen. Many secular gospels go like this. They want to find good reason for people to treat each other well. They want a “real hope for humanity,” as the writer says, even if the hope only gives hope for our life in this world. That’s just human, to want what religion offers. But to get the hope they want, they have to leave out the horrible reality of human sinfulness. They have to pretend that man is not as bad as he is. So they pin their hope on a fact, as if — despite the massive evidence of human history and of our own lives — knowing a fact will make people better.

Christianity begins with the clear-eyed knowledge of what we’re really like. It sees the good (we are created in the image of God, after all) and the bad. It doesn’t try to fool us into thinking the answer to human wickedness is easy and can be found in a textbook. It points us to a Cross.

David Mills is author of DISCOVERING MARY and deputy editor of FIRST THINGS. He and his family attend St. John’s Church in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. He can be reached at catholicense@gmail.com.

Life wasn’t meant to be lived on autopilot

By Mary Morrell

“For what human being knows what is truly human except the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received the gifts bestowed on us by God.”

— 1 Corinthians 2:11-12

Recently I’ve discovered that as my car ages, it seems to operate more and more on autopilot.

Just last week, we made it half way to my office though I haven’t worked there in eight months. I guess cars sometimes succumb to the same challenges as people. At least, that’s the excuse I’d like to use, especially when I’ve reached my destination absentmindedly, having little to no recollection of the journey.

In truth, I’ll admit the tendency to go through life on autopilot is strong. Maybe because it’s safe. Maybe because it’s comfortable. No matter the reason, no matter the reason, to no recollection of the journey.

It’s a social construct with lingering natural biases — leftover baggage from our mammalian xenophobic tendencies. We no longer need to segregate and distinguish ourselves through the use of artificial inventions of importance, whether politically, philosophically, or religiously motivated.

Sometimes asking the questions leads us to a wonderful realization that we know who we are, at least for this moment; that we are doing what God intended us to do and, with full understanding of that life is not always a rose garden, are truly happy and grateful for our lives as they are.

Other times, the questions lead to an acknowledgement that changes need to be made, maybe big, maybe small, or maybe, as my spiritual director once advised, we simply need to unpack our daily craziness and multiple roles, pack a picnic lunch instead and commune with God’s gift of nature. Yet even more than encouraging us to embrace some blessed time to ourselves, there is a greater purpose for examining our lives. Awareness, awareness allows us to see ourselves with wise eyes. It peels away the veneer of our chances of ignore. Assuming that our opportunities to respond more fully to God’s generous love, and to be more fully the person God calls us to be. This was the challenge Jesus placed together, as my father used to say, there are riches to which we could assign image, authority, success, importance, possessions, intellect, or our belief that we are self-sufficient. The value of looking within, of examining our lives, is a growing ability to undertake the journey fully conscious and unencumbered with false treasures, so we end up where God wants us to be.

Mary Morrell and her husband are the parents of six adult sons. They live in Colonia, New Jersey, where Mary works as a freelance writer.
Sometime it comes to a critical distinction
By Tom Grenchik

On June 23, the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine released a clarification entitled: The Distinction between Direct Abortion and Legitimate Medical Procedures. Since most folks don’t read every new posting on the vast USCCB website, this helpful statement could be overlooked.

The statement notes that “On Nov. 5, 2009, medical personnel at the St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona, performed a procedure that caused the death of an unborn child. Most Reverend Thomas Olmsted, the Bishop of Phoenix, has judged that this procedure was in fact a direct abortion and so morally wrong.”

When Bishop Olmsted spoke, many a commentator became a self-appointed expert on the Church’s moral teaching. The national media certainly caused confusion among Catholics and the general public as to what the Church teaches regarding illegitimate and legitimate medical procedures for addressing the risk to a mother’s health or even life during a pregnancy.

The Committee on Doctrine reminded us that “…abortion (that is, the directly intended termination of pregnancy before viability or the directly intended destruction of a viable fetus) is never permitted… One may never directly kill an innocent human being, no matter what the reason… By contrast, in some situations, it may be permissible to perform a medical procedure on a pregnant woman that directly treats a serious health problem but that also has a secondary effect that leads to the death of the developing child… The difference can be seen in two different scenarios in which the unborn child is not yet old enough to survive outside the womb.”

“In the first scenario, a pregnant woman is experiencing problems with one or more of her organs, apparently as a result of the added burden of pregnancy. The doctor recommends an abortion to protect the health of the woman… The surgery directly targets the life of the unborn child. It is the surgical instrument in the hands of the doctor that causes the child’s death. The surgery does not directly address the health problem of the woman, for example, by repairing the organ that is malfunctioning… The abortion is the means by which a reduced strain upon the organ or organs is achieved. As the Church has said many times, direct abortion is never permissible because a good end cannot justify an evil means…”

“In the second scenario, a pregnant woman develops cancer in her uterus. The doctor recommends surgery to remove the cancerous uterus as the only way to prevent the spread of the cancer… The woman’s health benefits directly from the surgery, because of the removal of the cancerous organ. The surgery does not directly target the life of the unborn child. The child will not be able to live long after the uterus is removed from the woman’s body, but the death of the child is an unintended and unavoidable side effect and not the aim of the surgery. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with surgery to remove a malfunctioning organ. It is morally justified when the continued presence of the organ causes problems for the rest of the body.”

“Surgery to terminate the life of an innocent person, however, is intrinsically wrong… Nothing, therefore, can justify a direct abortion. No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the Law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church.”

May the Law of God, proclaimed by our Church and through our bishops, inspire each of us to work for the protection of every human person, mother and child alike.

To read the entire statement, go to: www.usccb.org/doctrine/direct-abortion-statement2010-06-23.pdf

It’s something we don’t think about much. But Guy was one of those who is the last to deal with something so simple, so mundane, and yet so personal as our Shoes.

The last time I saw my mother’s shoes, they were on the floor under her hospital bed.

One was lying parallel with the foot of the bed, pointing toward the side. And one’s toe was over the other shoe’s heel, balanced, like they had been walking, and now, ready to rest, one was removing the other one.

As I looked at the shoes it never occurred to me I wouldn’t see them again. They would never again be on her feet. I would never again see her feet.

But Guy Thompson saw my mother’s feet the very next day, as he gently prepared her for burial. That would be the last thing anyone would ever do for her. The last careful attention, the last ministering she would ever receive.

Mr. Thompson, the man we always contacted when loved ones died, has now himself passed away, a month after his 90th birthday. And our grief is intense, communal, familial, and generational. All that, multiplied by the 71 years he spent touching people’s feet — and their lives.

I knew Guy Thompson during 30 years of those 70, a trickle in time, but longer than I knew my own father. Mr. Thompson had a great impact on my life, and I loved him.

When my mother died, while visiting Fort Worth, Mr. Thompson knew exactly what to say to my family, to help us make sense of the worst event we had ever faced together.

We were still children ourselves weren’t we? Where was that buffer, that cushion between us and chilly reality (death) that we were suddenly — how was this possible — touching? We walked into the funeral home as little blobs of clay, sticky, melting clay. But Guy was a sculptor, refining and repairing the artifact previously known as life.

And when we walked out the door — walking on our own feet — we were, once again, whole.

That was Mr. Thompson’s genius.

I spent most of last week, thinking about Guy Thompson, and the times our families shared — children and grandchildren’s occasions; projects, parties, pictures.

I remembered the festivities, and the times of ill health. I also thought of my mom’s shoes. When I saw her shoes under the hospital bed, I didn’t comprehend they would not always be there — that they would not always be anywhere.

Naively, like a newly-formed clay figurine, I ignored that which I was unable to confront. I never spoke to my mother again after that night. If I had acknowledged it was my last chance, I would have reacted much differently.

There is a voice message from Guy Thompson on my answering machine. It has been there for nearly three years, and I shall not erase it. The message begins, “Hey Sister Kathy. This is your friend up on 8th Avenue.”

I don’t know if we ever finished the conversation we began that day, just as I don’t know if my mom and I finished ours.

For now, it is bittersweet that my friend up on 8th Avenue is in Heaven, and I shan’t speak to him again.

All I can say now is, “Vaya con Dios, Guy. I send my love.”
Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth

Editor’s Note: On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Bishop Kevin Vann’s ordination and installation as the third bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth on July 13, 2005, NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC Editor Jeff Hessley asked the bishop a few questions about how he has experienced his time as shepherd. The interview from which these remarks are taken can be seen on the diocesan website: www.fwdioc.org.

NTC: Can you talk a little bit about what it was like to make the transition from your home and the place you were formed, Springfield, Illinois, to the diocese?

Bishop: At a distance of five years I can reflect on the experience a little more objectively. My world was a good-sized parish without any prior experience being a bishop to being bishop of one of the fastest growing dioceses in the country.

NTC: You’re in constant motion, visiting and being out in the parishes with the people of the diocese; something I’ve observed you do since you first came. Could you talk a little bit about visiting the various parishes and communities and how you have experienced being among the variety of communities in the diocese?

Bishop: That is part of my life and ministry that I enjoy. It gives me a lot of uplift or strength, or a sense of purpose, as part of what I am supposed to do as a shepherd. I’ve tried to view this work that God has given me, this calling, through the lens of being a pastor or a priest. So as when I was pastor of a parish, I’ve tried to get to know as many families as I can, to pray with them and be with them, being with them in the good times and the bad. So I’m trying to live this out now as well as I can, with the help of God and my friends. That’s why it’s important for me to be in as many places as I can — all 28 counties, all 25,000 square miles, (getting to know) as many people as possible in our institutions, in our faith communities, and in our families.

NTC: Have you been surprised at the diversity of the ethnic groups, the mix of rural and urban and small towns?

Bishop: Well I think I had a taste of that at my ordination and installation Mass. The Tongan choir sang, and the Vietnamese and certainly the Hispanic (people were there). But now that I’ve been here five years, I’ve experienced it firsthand many, many places, and that’s a blessing in the diocese that I really enjoy. The diocese came from, the Diocese of Springfield which was my home for so many years, really doesn’t have that kind of diversity — and that’s something that I really enjoy. And along with that, the diversity in the whole state of Texas, these two ecclesiastical provinces — I really enjoy seeing the hand of God, the presence of God (in that diversity).

NTC: What were some of your reactions to seeing the mission work of Father Bob Thames on your recent trip to Bolivia?

Bishop: That was the second time I had been there to see him. I actually was there, believe three years ago around the occasion of the feast of the patron saint of his parish — Nuestra Señora del Carmen. I marveled at him, and his deep prayer life, his deep spiritual life, his deep care for the people — and his very simple lifestyle. But like me, he’s always on the go. But he has a great heart for the people and a great heart for the missionary work there in Bolivia.

NTC: How about Celaya (Mexico)? Do you have any thoughts on that and the mission work we are beginning there?

Bishop: We have the blessing here in the diocese to have an active Mission Council. That’s true throughout the state. That’s something that I hadn’t experienced back in Illinois. The first year when I came here, I had a visit with the bishop of Celaya and the vicar general at that time and Father Juan Rivero and perhaps some others, because that was a project that had started before I got here. Father Joe Schumacher had met with them, and perhaps Bishop Delaney, several years before that. We had discovered that we had a natural connection with the diocese, because we have a lot of people from Celaya here in Fort Worth, mostly concentrated around St. George Parish, but then elsewhere as well. With that natural connection we explored what we could do. We met with (the bishop and his representatives) and their proposal to us was to send a couple of their priests to help minister to their people up here. That’s how it all began.

NTC: So it’s moving along then?

Bishop: It’s moving along slowly, but we had this natural connection, this natural relationship already which I think is very important in the formation of the work. We have some built-in relationships with people here who have family still in Celaya. I know a number of folks from Celaya in the Parish of St. George, where there is a group of jóvenes that I know. I go and pray with them maybe once a month. In fact, next week, I’m going down to Guanajuato, which is near Celaya, because I’m having a quinceñera for a family who have friends in Celaya. So there are connections.

NTC: I wonder if you’re able to sneak over and do some hospital ministry, occasionally, because I know that that’s something close to your heart?

Bishop: was at Cook’s this past week. I try to celebrate Mass every couple of months. I usually go to Cook’s Children’s on Christmas Eve to visit with the families that have children still in there. I used to do that regularly when I was in Illinois. I occasionally, if necessary, will take calls from the hospital.

NTC: I understand you’ve also been known to “sneak into prisons” to minister to prisoners — you and Deacon Len Sanchez sometimes.

Bishop: Yes, Deacon Len and I do that sometimes, and sometimes with the help of other priests. Maybe every other month or so I have Mass at the prison. I went out to the prison at Venus …. And I’ve celebrated Mass and heard confessions and anointed some of the prisoners. I did some of that back when I was in Illinois.

NTC: This is a challenging time to be an American Catholic in a lot of ways, with the challenges to the respect for life, with the challenges in the area of human sexuality. Is there anything you would like to say to our people — to your people — about how they should meet the secular society that surrounds them, that they swim in?

Bishop: I’ve always liked Church history. It’s given me the ability to see beyond the blessings and the challenges of the present moment. The first year I was here, I re-read Death Comes to the Archbishop by Willa Cather, which talks about Archbishop Lamy, in New Mexico, in Santa Fe, which is not that far from here. I read and re-read the story of the history of the Church in Texas, Through Fire and Flood, (by Father Talmadge Moore) then volume two of that too, called Acts of Faith. I’m not sure that there has ever been a time that was not challenging for us. I saw what Archbishop Lamy had to deal with; I saw what some of the early settlers in Texas had to deal with; what the first settlers in this country had to deal with, even in the history of the Church. So every age has its blessings and its challenges. I just think that we have to be steadfast in our prayer, in the conviction of our faith. Living our faith does not impose limits or burdens on us, but in fact, living our Catholic faith to the best that we can, in its fullest aspects, is liberating and freeing, rather than oppressive — which might be what the current culture might try to tell us.

Bishop Kevin Vann, just ordained to the episcopate and having been installed as bishop, blesses the crowd of more than 5,000 gathered in Daniel Meyer Coliseum on the TCU campus, followed by his former bishop, Bishop George Lucas, then bishop of Springfield, Illinois, and then San Antonio Archbishop Jose Gomez, metropolitan of what was then the Province of Texas. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

Bishop Vann, sprinkles the gathered Church as he consecrates the new church building for Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in South Fort Worth. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Bishop Kevin Vann’s ordination and installation Mass. The Tongan choir sang, and the Vietnamese and certainly the Hispanic (people were there). (Photo courtesy of Moore) then volume two of that too, called Acts of Faith.

Bishop Vann walks along the shore of the Sea of Galilee on a pilgrimage he shared with the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre. (Photo courtesy of Chris and Karen Hull)

Bishop Kevin Vann reflects on his first five years as Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
Bishops having success limiting federal funding of states’ abortion policies

Holy Trinity Seminary Rector, Father Michael Olson will become Monsignor Michael Olson Sept. 5 at St. Patrick Cathedral

FROM PAGE 1
welcomed "this new policy, while continuing to be gravely concerned that it was not issued until after some states had announced that pro-abortion health plans were approved and had begun to enroll patients." "This situation illustrates once again the need for Congress to enact legislation clearly stating once and for all that all funds appropriated by PPACA will not pay for abortions or for insurance coverage that includes abortion," he added.

In a May letter to House members, Cardinal DiNardo urged passage of the Protect Life Act, H.R. 5111, to bring the new health reform law "into line with policies for them to be assured that their security, but later said her agency was "in the process of correcting the package so it will not have elective abortion coverage."

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The Gift of Priesthood

Priests of the Arlington Deanery share their experiences

Father Philip Boagteg Brembah

Parish: St. Joseph, Arlington
Ordained: October 16, 1991
Q. What part of your priestly duties do you find the most rewarding?
A. I enjoy the contact with the people. It is rewarding to see the growth in their faith and their relationship with God. It is also rewarding to see them live their faith in their daily lives.

Father Michael Ciski, TOR

Parishes: St. Maria Goretti, Arlington
Ordained: December 11, 1983
Q. How does your interaction with God’s people make your priesthood more rewarding?
A. I find it very rewarding to see the growth in people’s faith. It is inspiring to see them take their faith seriously and live it out in their daily lives.

Father George Foley

Parish: St. Jude, Mansfield
Ordained: September 24, 1977
Q. What do you most desire to convey to your parishioners or others you serve?
A. I want to help people understand the importance of their faith and the role it plays in their lives. I want to help them see the beauty and power of the sacraments.

Father Thomas J. Craig

Parish: St. Vincent de Paul, Arlington
Ordained: June 26, 1982
Q. What do you most desire to convey to your parishioners or others you serve?
A. I want to help people understand the meaning of the sacraments and how they are a part of their daily lives.

Father John Pacheco

Parish: St. Matthew, Arlington
Ordained: May 23, 2009
Q. How do you nourish your relationship with God?
A. I find it very rewarding to spend time in prayer and reflection. It helps me to stay connected to God and to see His presence in my daily life.

Editor’s Note: This is the third in an ongoing series featuring priests from the different deaneries in the diocese sharing about aspects of their ministry. Interviews were compiled by John English.
Diocese to screen documentary on life of Archbishop Fulton Sheen Aug. 12 in Keller

Producers hope to spread awareness of Sheen’s work, canonization cause

By Tony Gutiérrez
Associate Editor

For generations of American Catholics, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen shared an ancient message of truth through the most up-to-date forms of mass communication, becoming one of the country’s first “televangelists” with his show, Life is Worth Living.

In an effort to introduce the late archbishop and his teachings to a new generation, the Sheen Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting his works and promoting his cause for canonization, will release a documentary about his life, titled Servant of All, which will be screened at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 12 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church’s Formation building at 2016 Willis Ln., in Keller.

“Our goal was to reintroduce Archbishop Sheen to the modern world,” said M onsor Dr. Andrew Deptula, founding director of the foundation. “We tried to focus on the key aspects of his life into a one-hour film and rekindle the love people have for Archbishop Sheen.”

Fulton Sheen was born May 8, 1895 in El Paso, Illinois, and ordained a priest in 1919. Father Sheen began his broadcasting career in the 1930s with a weekly radio program. After being ordained auxiliary bishop of New York in 1951, he started his television program. The popular program won him an Emmy and lasted until 1958. In 1966, he was appointed bishop of Rochester, New York, and he was later appointed archbishop of a titular see, freeing him to focus on his evangelization work. Archbishop Sheen died Dec. 9, 1979. In 2002, Bishop Daniel Jenky, CSC, of Peoria officially opened the cause for Fulton Sheen’s canonization.

“Many people love him for different reasons. Some love him for his work with modern media, others for his missionary work. For me, Fulton Sheen is THE model of modern diocesan priesthood. His love of Our Lady, daily devotion to the Eucharist, and his zeal for souls challenges me to be a better priest,” said Msgr. Deptula.

The documentary also includes interviews with people who tell how Archbishop Sheen continues to influence them today. One story Msgr. Deptula remembered vividly was of a traveling nurse who was an admirer of Archbishop Sheen. He had been driving through Peoria at night and saw church spires and decided to pull over on the chance that it might be the church Fulton Sheen served as a priest. The church happened to be the cathedral, which would normally have been closed at night, but the foundation was using it that evening for filming. When the traveler walked in, he was interviewed for the documentary.

“We happened to be filming when that man happened to stop by. We had a lot of what we would call ‘Fulton Sheen’ moments,” Msgr. Deptula said. “The real producer of the film was someone outside of space and time.”

Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann, who serves on the foundation’s advisory board, said he remembers Archbishop Sheen for his teaching ability, and even used some of the archbishop’s tapes when he taught RCIA classes as a parish priest.

“He was a great teacher and evangelist and used modern media before it was popular,” Bishop Vann said. “I’d recommend if people could, to obtain copies of his shows and watch them for themselves. It was the highlight of my grandparents’ week to watch him on television on Life is Worth Living. He played a pivotal role in explaining the Catholic faith that made it understandable to all kinds of people.”

Bishop Vann, who saw Servant of All at a bishops meeting, said he thought the film was very powerful and hoped viewers would leave with a “renewed appreciation for his life and ministry and its current relevance for us.”

The screening, which is being co-sponsored by the diocese’s Catechesis Department and Catholics Respect Life Office, will encourage those present to consider screening the film in their own parishes.

“He was the first to use modern forms of communications to catechize literally hundreds of thousands of people, so I wanted to offer this to the catechists of the diocese as a reminder of what a great catechist he was, and the way he taught,” said Lucas Pollice, diocesan director of Catechesis. “He taught in a way that was faithful to the Church’s teachings, but he made it relevant to the modern world, which is what Vatican II has called us to do.”

Pollice added that the screening would also bring awareness to the canonization cause.

Catholics Respect Life Director Chanacee Ruth-Killgore said she admired Fulton Sheen for his spiritual adoption prayer for children in danger of abortion.

“When people have the faith, and fullness of truth, that can only lead to a defense of the sanctity of life,” she said. “You can see that in Fulton Sheen.”

For information about the screening Aug. 12 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, contact the Lucas Pollice at lpollice@fwdioc.org or at (817) 560-2452 ext. 260, or Chanacee Ruth-Killgore at cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org, or at (817) 560-2452 ext. 257. To RSVP for the screening, visit www.catholicscreenings.com. For information about Fulton Sheen’s ministry, or the canonization cause, visit the Sheen Foundation’s website at www.archbishopsheencause.org.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen’s Prayer to Spiritually Adopt an Unborn Child

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn child. I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion.

He inspired millions and his messages remain as relevant and powerful today as they were nearly a half-century ago. See more at www.SheenFilm.org

This film is not yet available to the general public, but you are invited to a special preview of this amazing story!

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC CHURCH
Ed. & Formation Bldg
2016 Willis Lane
Keller, TX 76248

Thursday, August 12, 2010 7PM

FORK TICKETS OR MORE INFORMATION. CONTACT:
RSVP at www.CatholicScreenings.com

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VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI urged young people to be inspired by St. Maria Goretti’s courage and strength and to always choose the good no matter what it costs.

“This young virgin and martyr was “a girl who, despite being very young, knew how to show strength and courage against evil,” the pope said during remarks in Italian at the end of his weekly general audience July 7.

The 11-year-old girl was repeatedly stabbed by a young neighbor after she refused his sexual advances. She died in the neighborhood after she refused his advances. Everything they had once stored away for themselves had been brought out and redeemed for a new life dedicated to something that undoubtedly matters to God.

His warning is for more than the mega-rich financial wizards. The drive, or at least the temptation, to store up wealth, prestige or simply “disposable income” bubbles up in all of us in some form. For those who find some success at it, it can become difficult to get off the wealth-building track and back on to a matters-to-God track.

Our friend Fred was a good man. An Ivy League grad, he was a talented, creative professional who rose to the top levels of his field. He became a division director of his firm and was highly regarded among his peers. His adult daughter followed right along in his footsteps.

Fred was well liked. He wasn’t selfish or greedy, but he was pursuing a path to success he’d been on since he entered college.

He’d served on the board of his professional organization for many years. A month before Fred was to assume the presidency of the group he e-mailed board members that he must step down because he couldn’t commit to the travel required of the position. Personal matters made it necessary for him to be close to home.

That December his friends and colleagues received a photo Christmas card from him and his wife in their new home — with eight young special-needs foster children. Everything they had once stored away for themselves had been brought out and redeemed for a new life dedicated to something that undoubtedly matters to God.

QUESTIONS:
If you take an inventory, what among the “wealth” you’ve stored up do you think would qualify as something that matters to God? What changes can you make in your lifestyle and pursuits to invest in God’s concerns?

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Choose the good no matter the cost, says pope at general audience

Pope Benedict XVI uses holy water to bless a statue of St. Annibale Di Francia before his general audience at the Vatican July 7. The 18-foot statue is in a niche on an exterior wall of St. Peter’s Basilica. (CNS photo/ Paul Haring)

August 1, Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Cycle C. Readings:
1) Ecclesiastes 1:2-2:21-23
Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17
2) Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

By Jean Denton

There’s plenty in the press these days about the world’s financial wizards blithely making more and more millions of dollars for themselves without regard to the current economic crisis. It’s impossible not to ask the question: How much does one person need? Maybe these wizards plow their gains back into the economy, though.

This weekend’s Gospel cautions against a life concentrated on storing up riches in order to rest, eat, drink and be merry. In explaining hisparable of the rich man, Jesus poses this question, in effect: What happens when you’ve saved up all this wealth but die with nothing that matters to God?

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Families’ communion reflects the life of the Trinity

By Jeff Hedglen

The scene was postcard perfect, on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean with waves rolling in with a powerful, steady rhythm. The beach was filled with revelers splashing about in the waves and building sand castles and warming themselves in the glow of the sun. It was a perfect day and a perfect setting for a family reunion.

Three generations of my mother’s side of the family gathered to reconnect. We are spread all over the country from California to Rhode Island, and as a result we do not see each other as much as we would like. One of the unique things about family is that it does not take long to pick up where you left off. There were cousins there that I have only seen a handful of times and some second cousins I barely remember meeting, but we hit it off like old friends.

It really was striking how quickly we connected and were able to share about faith and life. It brought to mind something I read in John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, namely, that we are made in the image of God who is a communion of persons. The family we are born into is an image of that communion of persons. It is exactly this kind of unity I felt at the reunion.

This imaging of the Trinity is the only way I can explain the fast connection between the members of the family. This experience even extended to my wife, who met a lot of these people for the first time. She quickly bonded with my relatives, as if she had been one of the family her whole life.

Because we are an image of the Trinity, the family has a special role to play in our lives. They are called to be the people who forgive us no matter what, who support us no matter what, who love us in spite of our weaknesses, and who celebrate us in our strengths.

Dale’s elderly mother.
Dale was fully engaged in civic matters of the city where he worked his entire career. As a journalist, he held local leaders accountable and looked out for “the little guy.” Committed to assuring a quality higher education for local young people, he was instrumental in the establishment of a branch of the state university in the community.

Dale’s and Sherry’s anticipated retirement as the beginning of a new adventure. But he had been retired only a few months when he got his cancer diagnosis. For the next year they kept hope and gamely fought his disease. But it moved too fast. This wasn’t what they’d planned.

The day after Dale’s passing Sherry told me she was gratified by letters from friends expressing their affection for him. Then the newspaper sent her hundreds of e-mails it had received from readers recounting Dale’s influence on the community and countless individuals.

“I’m so thankful for our friends and for always being close to our boys,” she said, “but I had no idea how much people appreciated what Dale stood for and what he did with his life.”

Dale’s way was the way Jesus called us to live: in the present moment. He was vigilant, accepting with joy all that came his way and with faith living every day for the love of God and others. Would that we all might live so well.

QUESTIONS:
How would you live your life differently if you knew Jesus were coming to judge you today? What keeps you from acting this way every day?

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In a similar way a man and woman come together in love and their total gift of self to each other produces the fruit of children. Over time these children have children and these children have children, and the next thing you know you’re having a family reunion.

The exchange of love and gift of self that happen in the context of family is unique. Sure we have many kinds of relationships in our lives, friends, co-workers, business associates, but it is in the family where the most intimate of communications can exist.

This is not to say that family relationships are free of pain and difficulties. I myself have said things to my siblings that I would never dare saying to other people, but in a particular way even this is tied to the faith dimension of our unity. The bond we have as family is a blood bond for sure, but it goes even deeper. Because in a similar way a man and woman come together in love and their total gift of self to each other produces the fruit of children.

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The sacraments communicate God’s grace to us

By Lucas Pollice

A sacrament is a visible sign instituted by Christ that gives sanctifying grace. It is a unique moment in which, through visible and tangible signs, words, and actions, God imparts upon us the gift of his life and love. It is through these signs that we come to know in a real and intimate way his love and bow his life and love are transforming, healing, and strengthening us.

Sacraments impart to us sanctifying grace.

The goal of the sacraments is to communicate to us God’s very life and love which we call grace. Grace is absolutely necessary to the spiritual life because without it we are spiritually dead. God created our human nature to live in intimate communion with Him. Our human nature needs and depends upon his grace in the same way that our bodies rely on oxygen; without it we would be physically dead.

We call the grace given to us in the sacraments sanctifying grace because it transforms us and makes us holy and more like God. The word sanctifying comes from the Latin word sanctus (which means holy) and literally means “to make holy.” This is because God’s love is effective—that is to say that when we come into contact with his love and life, it does something to us. He fills us with his life to heal us from the wounds of sin and enables us to live a full human life freed from slavery to sin and in the light of his love. With his grace, we spiritually breathe again, and once again become spiritually alive. The sacraments continue to communicate God’s grace to us throughout all of our lives, continuously transforming us to become more like Christ, healing and strengthening us against sin, and enabling us to live a life of faith, hope, and especially love. Thus, they are in a sense road signs to heaven, because through the graces communicated to us through them, they keep us on the “narrow path” of salvation as we continue on our pilgrimage journey towards heaven.

The sacraments are instituted by Christ Himself.

The sacraments are not an invention of the Church, or of a pope, but are rather of the will of Christ Himself. He instituted specific signs and actions and entrusted them to the apostles and their successors to be the unique and powerful way in which He would communicate his life and love to us. Thus, the sacraments have their origin in Christ. The Church, being faithful to his will, continues to manifest and hand on through both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition each of the sacraments in the life of the Church.

We can clearly see the origins of some of the sacraments in the life and ministry of Christ himself revealed to us through Scripture. Other sacraments are not necessarily seen in the life and actions of Christ, but are seen through the epistles of St. Paul and other scriptural writings as already manifest in the apostolic Church of the New Testament. All seven of the sacraments are at least implicitly referred to in Scripture and handed on through Sacred Tradition from the very beginning of the Church’s life and mission.

The sacraments are visible, tangible signs.

Each sacrament is a visible, tangible, natural sign that not only makes present sanctifying grace, but also communicates to us and gives meaning to what God’s grace is accomplishing in us. His grace is effective in us whether we realize or understand it or not. However, he desires that we know in a real and concrete way what He is doing to us so that we can not only know his love and grace, but also so we can respond to and accept his grace making it even more effective in our lives. The signs of each of the sacraments are something that is visible and tangible to our senses, something that we can see, touch, taste, or hear. These signs make visible and tangible to us what God is doing to us invisibly and spiritually.

These sacramental signs are natural signs, such as water, oil, bread, and wine that have universal meaning so that all peoples of all times, places, and cultures can know and understand. For example, water is used in the sacrament of Baptism. If you ask someone from any time, place, or culture what they associate with water, you will almost always get the same answers: Water is universally associated with washing and cleansing, as bringing about an essential for life, and the quenching of thirst. Thus, water as the sign of baptism, communicates to us in a visible, real, and tangible way that God is washing us and cleansing us from sin, bringing us into a new life with Christ, and satiating our thirst for union with God.

Sacramental signs are always accompanied by words and actions that also bring forth the life and power of the signs. In the same way that Christ revealed his transforming and healing power through both words and actions, he works through the signs and words of each of the sacraments, filling us with his life and grace, and transforming us with his power.
La diócesis propone requerir cursos de Planificación familiar natural en la preparación para el matrimonio

El método de ovulación Billings. El método sintotérmico, de pareja a pareja. El modelo Creighton de fertilidad. Esos seudónimos hacen que la Planificación familiar natural (NFP, por sus siglas en inglés) suene, por no decir más, un poco difícil.

Pero de veras no lo es, dice Marlon De La Torre, director diocesano de Vida familiar. “No es tan difícil”, explica De La Torre. “No se tiene que ser científico ni biólogo”.

En una entrevista esta semana, Tony Abadie, coordinador diocesano de Planificación familiar natural, comentó: “Es divertido porque nadie de veras lo define, pero la NFP simplemente utiliza las señales obvias de la mujer en cuanto a su fertilidad, para averiguar sí es fértil o inférttil cualquier día del mes. Esto es opuesto al método del ritmo, que es la contraparte de la NFP”.

La meta del obispo Vann es pedirle a todas las parroquias que requieran la NFP para las parejas comprometidas, Abadie dijo. Actualmente la diócesis está trabajando para alcanzar esa meta con el comienzo del Programa piloto de la parroquia (Pilot Parish Program), que requiere que ciertas parroquias requieran clases de NFP para las parejas comprometidas. Estas parroquias serán elegidas por los comités de NFP a una tasa de 13 para cada 15 parroquias.

Y los hechos no mienten, Abadie explica. Los tres métodos de planificación familiar natural se enseñan en la diócesis: Billings, sintotérmico y Creighton. El método Creighton es válido para las parejas que quieran no usar la NFP de veras me ayuda—de un lugar determinado—a respetar a mi esposa para el comienzo de la semana de concientización. Y también está buscando la posibilidades de tomar parte del programa, le ha sido crucial el estudio de la NFP, o en enseñarla, a visitar el sitio Web de la diócesis: http://www.fwdioc.org/ministries/familylife/.

“En los próximos cinco años, estaremos trabajando para muchas otras parroquias, hasta que la diócesis esté funcionando sin problemas. Y se ha visto de primera mano que el método de ovulación Billings puede funcionar, pero la diócesis está trabajando para alcanzar esa meta con el comienzo del Programa piloto de la parroquia (Pilot Parish Program), que requiere que ciertas parroquias requieran clases de NFP para las parejas comprometidas. Estas parroquias serán elegidas por los comités de NFP a una tasa de 13 para cada 15 parroquias.”

La semana nacional de concientización sobre la planificación familiar natural, una iniciativa de los Obispos de los Estados Unidos, comienza el 25 de julio y termina el 31 de julio. Ya Abadie ha colocado anuncios en los boletines parroquiales y ha programado una entrevista por radio el 26 de julio en el canal KATH 910 AM, para el comienzo de la semana de concientización. Y también está buscando la posibilidad de expandir la evangelización no solamente a los feligreses, sino también a los sacerdotes. Abadie también invita a cualquier persona que esté interesado en la NFP, o en enseñarla, a visitar el sitio Web de la diócesis: http://www.fwdioc.org/ministries/familylife/.

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La Escuela de ministerio laical acepta inscripciones de estudiantes nuevos

La Escuela de ministerio laical del instituto Juan Pablo II está aceptando inscripciones de estudiantes nuevos. Los fieles que deseen entrenamiento intensivo para el ministerio, aquellos ministros que quieran entrenamiento actualizado, pueden comunicarse con el Padre Carmelo Mele, O.P., al Centro Católico (teléfono: 817-560-3300; email: cmmele@frdio.org). Mayor información y la solicitud están disponibles también en el sitio web diocesano: http://www.fwdioc.org/MINISTERIOS/INSTITUTO_PJP2/ESCUERA_MINISTERIO_LAICAL/Pages/default.aspx.

El programa de dos años comenzará en septiembre.
Marlon De La Torre, nuevo director de la Oficina de la vida familiar, es puente entre dos culturas

Por Michele Baker
Corresponsal

Marlon De La Torre, quien se une a la organización de la Diócesis de Fort Worth como director de la Oficina del matrimonio y la vida familiar, es la imagen del típico muchacho norteamericano. Hijo de un vendedor y una madre que no trabajaba, creció ayudando en la finca de su abuelo durante los fines de semana, días feriados y vacaciones, mientras estudiaba mucho en la escuela, jugando basquetbol y tratando de distanciarse de un vendedor y una madre que se quedaba en casa y cuidaba de la familia después del bachillerato; sin embargo, yo quería ir a la universidad. Mi madre se encantó con la idea de continuar su educación. Le pidió a Jacobelli que le recomendara universidades católicas, y decidió ir a la Universidad Franciscana de Steubenville en Ohio. “Era la más lejos de casa”, De La Torre explica con naturalidad.

“Naci en Calexico, California, y crecí en El Centro”, comentó De La Torre. “Es tan cerca de la frontera con México, que no hay casi ninguna diferencia distinguible entre los dos países. Casi todos hablábamos dos idiomas, y coexistíamos en un ambiente culturalmente mezclado”. Con la familia extendida de su madre viviendo en la cercana avenida Nuevo León, en México, De La Torre creció no tanto viajando entre dos mundos, sino acogiendo la manera en que diferentes aspectos de dos mundos aparentemente desiguales se unían para él. “No voy a decir que no habían tensiones”, De La Torre interpone rápidamente. “Por ejemplo, en una familia tradicionalmente mexicana como la mía, el hijo mayor—ese soy yo—típicamente se quedaría en casa y cuidaría de la familia después del bachillerato; sin embargo, yo quería ir a la universidad. Mi madre se sentía cómoda con el prospecto, pero mi padre solamente consintió. Animado por Dennis Jacobelli, su mentor y entrenador de basquetbol durante el bachillerato, De La Torre siguió adelante con el sueño de seguir sustraído y decidió ir a la universidad. Mi madre se encantó con la idea de continuar su educación. Le pidió a Jacobelli que le recomendara universidades católicas, y decidió ir a la Universidad Franciscana de Steubenville en Ohio. “Era la más lejos de casa”, De La Torre explica con naturalidad. "Yo quería expandir el rango de mis experiencias".

Cuando había terminado su licenciatura de Filosofía y Letras en teología; otra licenciatura de Ciencias, especializando en la salud mental y servicios sociales; y una esposa, las experiencias que De La Torre había abarcado claramente se habían ampliado. Mientras él y su esposa Amy le dieron la bienvenida a tres hijos—el primero, Miguel, ahora de 11 años, luego Gabriella, de 8, y María, que tiene 5—De La Torre continúa expandiendo sus horizontes con una maestría en Teología y catequesis, y otra en Administración educativa. Al mismo tiempo, comenzaba su carrera en la Iglesia. “El señor Jacobelli me inculcó un amor profundo a la Iglesia. Era un hombre fuertemente católico, mi modelo a seguir. Vivía su fe y era un auténtico ser humano”, dijo De La Torre.

Fidelidad a Dios y pasión en su fe son características que De La Torre continúa manteniendo mientras inicia sus responsabilidades como director de la Oficina del matrimonio y la vida familiar aquí en la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Administrará programas en ambos idiomas —español e inglés— otra vez uniendo dos partes de un hombre que pertenece completamente a su unión. “Lo veo como una alianza entre dos culturas en la cual la fuerza unificadora para ambas es el catolicismo. Esta oficina es representativa de la dinámica de nuestra fe: que es una sagrada, católica y apostólica”, explica De La Torre. “Mi respuesta es hacer estas cosas coexistir en un lugar. Nuestra fidelidad como católicos es nuestra unificación”.

Después de todo, la “torre” en De La Torre quiere decir “puente”.
Un obispo exhorta a EEUU que se trate la inmigración como asunto humanitario y no económico

WASHINGTON (CNS) — El obispo Gerald F. Kicanas de Tucson, Ariz., vicepresidente de la Conferencia de obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos, les dijo a los legisladores, en Capitol Hill, que los problemas de inmigración no deberían analizarse como asuntos económicos sino como asuntos humanitarios.

El obispo Kicanas hizo sus comentarios el 14 de julio frente al subcomité de Inmigración, ciudadanía, refugiados, seguridad de la frontera y derecho internacional de la cámara.

“Las actuales leyes de inmigración que tenemos hoy en día fallan al no pasar el examen de dignidad para la persona humana”, dijo el obispo Kicanas, de la diócesis de Tucson, que se despliega a lo largo de la frontera entre Arizona y México. En referencia a la severa ley aprobada el 23 de abril en Arizona, pero de la que se espera no entrará en vigor sino hasta el 29 de julio, el obispo dijo que era “solamente una curita, a menos que se hagan nuevas leyes federales”.

El obispo hizo una clara distinción entre lo que vienen a los Estados Unidos a trabajar y lo que viene a hacer daño a la nación.

“Desde una perspectiva moral, no podemos aceptar la fatiga de inmigrantes, sin darles nosotros protección”, dijo el obispo Kicanas.

En el testimonio que presentó, el obispo señaló varios puntos que se deben incluir en una reforma completa de inmigración.

En una nueva ley de inmigración, se debe “honrar el imperio de la ley y ayudar a restaurarlo, requiriéndoles a los 11 millones de inmigrantes indocumentados que paguen una multa, paguen impuestos atrasados, aprendan inglés y se pongan al final de la fila”, dijo el obispo. “Creemos que este (es) un castigo proporcional.”

El obispo dijo que la ley federal se debe hacer cumplir, y a los que no cumplan con ella, se les debe pedir cuentas.

El obispo Kicanas dijo que la reforma de inmigración ayudaría a que la nación estuviera más segura y (pudiera) enfocarse “en los que vienen a tratar de hacernos daño”.

Entre otras personas que testificaron en la audiencia se contaba el reverendo Richard Land, director de la escuela de Derecho y libertad religiosa de la Universidad Liberty; y James Edwards, graduado del Centro de estudios de inmigración. Todas estas personas, provenientes de puntos de vista religiosos y políticos diferentes, llegaron a una conclusión unánime en el sentido de que la acción política que el Congreso adopte para nuevos inmigrantes debe incluir el requisito de competencia del idioma inglés y medios para asegurarles un camino de estado legal que se ganen.

Sin embargo, no estuvieron de acuerdo con la mejor solución para los 12 millones de inmigrantes ilegales que ya están en el país.

El obispo Kicanas dijo que por lo menos una medida debería de ser un programa de residencia temporal para los inmigrantes indocumentados que viven en los Estados Unidos “para forzarlos a que salgan de las sombras”. El objetivo de los lugartos familiares roto por la acción política de las leyes de inmigración se debatía con frecuencia.

Un miembro del comité, el Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Calif., le pidió al obispo su punto de vista sobre la separación de familias de inmigrantes, específicamente de los que toman parte en programas de trabajadores.

El obispo Kicanas dijo que basaba su respuesta en lo que la iglesia enseña, y que es que las familias deben de conservarse unidas.

Lungren respondió: “Entonces, ¿deben de ser tratados (los inmigrantes) mejor que nuestros hombres y mujeres que están en las fuerzas armadas y que están separados de su familia?”.

El obispo replicó que las dos situaciones familiares no eran análogas.

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Bolivia...

FROM PAGE 24
public schools, Bishop Vann said that “education from a faith point of view is meant to help them in their lives.” And the program’s aim at breaking the cycle of poverty through education has yielded results, thanks to the more than 430 sponsors in the program.

At the school’s November 2009 graduation, 54 students received their high school diplomas. Fr. Thames wrote in his regular letter to ETC sponsors. Furthermore, Fr. Thames’ team is currently helping another 40 students at the university level, del Castillo said. A handful of those students plan to come back to Cabezas once they graduate, to help the school and community there, del Castillo added.

The challenge now is how to develop ETC into a “more formidable mission,” Dcn. Sanchez said. During the trip, Bishop Vann, Fr. McKone, and Dcn. Sanchez spoke with Fr. Thames about ways to keep strengthening Educate the Children and gathering a larger base of support.

“We discussed quite a few things,” Fr. McKone said. “One of the things we would like to see is really just an expansion of the mission philosophy throughout the diocese, that mission is part of the baptismal call we all share and the nature of the Church is missionary. So what we would like to see is some kind of mission committee or person or agent in each parish.”

Fr. McKone was invited on the visit to get a unique look at Fr. Thames’ project so he could possibly help Fr. Thames as a liaison to the diocese and promote Educate the Children on a more regular basis throughout the parishes. He will not be giving up his pastor’s duties to do this. “Having been there and seen it, I can now speak with a ‘been there, done that’ kind of viewpoint and promote the mission and solicit a response to him,” he said.

It was Bishop Vann’s second visit to Bolivia in three years. “It was about time for me to go back again,” Bishop Vann said, adding that they plan to “continue to strengthen the connection between the Mission Council and Fr. Thames’ ministry.”

For more information on Educate the Children or how to get involved, e-mail Henry del Castillo, ETC coordinator at delcasth@aol.com or visit the ETC website at www.fwdioc.org/MISSIONS/MINISTRIES/MISSION-OUTREACH/BOLIVIA/. For more information on Educate the Children or how to get involved, e-mail Henry del Castillo, ETC coordinator at delcasth@aol.com or visit the ETC website at www.fwdioc.org/MISSIONS/MINISTRIES/MISSION-OUTREACH/BOLIVIA/. Pag.es/edChild.aspx.

Celebration...

FROM PAGE 1
The All Things Possible campaign, the bishop said, was a snapshot in time of one small part of the diocese’s 40-year history. The rest of the history, he explained, went back to “the first missionaries in Texas, to the roots of our faith, wherever that may be, going all the way back to ‘In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh.’”

The gathering at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church had the air of a final celebration, even though some parish drives were still in progress, and would continue into the fall. But, with a stated goal of $40 million, which the bishop had called a challenge in the current economic times, All Things Possible pledges had gone far beyond their goal and hit $48.7 million.

“It is important to see that the donations, the sacrifices that are being made, in faith, are making a huge impact in our local diocese, and to know as well that of the $48.7 million over $20 million will be directed at local parish projects.

“That’s your parish homes, my brothers and sisters,” Bishop Vann said, “and what a blessing that is for all of us.”

After evening prayer and dinner, the audience enjoyed baile folklorico, performed by the Our Lady of Guadalupe Dancers, who ranged from early elementary school age to adults. It was a flurry of twirling skirts and fancy footwork, with the audience applauding and photographing, capturing their own pictorial records.

The All Things Possible Campaign — the largest single effort to raise funds in the history of the diocese — was dynamic, said Pat Miller, diocesan director of Stewardship and Giving, “with 90 parishes and missions working together to meet specific diocesan and parish needs.” More than 17,000 donors participated in the campaign.

Some of those parishes went substantially beyond expectations, and were commended at the dinner, receiving awards for special categories of participation, such as highest percentage over goal or highest percent of participation by parishioners. Also named were four pastors and administrators with multiple parishes that all exceeded their goals.

“H e [Fr. Thames] has a tremendous operation. It takes care of a lot of people who normally would not have the opportunity to get what they are getting now. He has certainly put a lot of extra effort into ETC. Fr. Thames’ true philosophy is the way to conquer poverty is to educate the children.”

— Deacon Len Sanchez, Mission Council chairman
MARKETING COORDINATOR

The Diocese of Fort Worth is accepting applications for a Marketing Coordinator. The Marketing Coordinator must have a bachelor’s degree and at least three years of experience in marketing, including knowledge of social media and marketing trends. The position requires a combination of strong writing and graphic design skills and experience in public relations and media relations. The position will be responsible for developing and implementing marketing strategies to promote the Diocese of Fort Worth and its initiatives. The position will also require strong organizational skills and the ability to work independently and as part of a team. The position is based in Fort Worth, and the salary is competitive. For more information and to apply, please visit www.fwdiocese.org/employment.

ST. JOSEPH’S BAPTIST CHURCH

ST. JOSEPH’S BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a baptized, committed, and faithful person to serve as a volunteer mentor to new families. The mentor will be responsible for providing guidance and support to new families and will participate in various events and activities. The position requires a commitment to joyful ecumenism and a willingness to serve as a bridge between the church and the community. The position is based in Fort Worth, and the salary is competitive. For more information and to apply, please visit www.stjosbs.org/employment.

SERVICE ANGEL

The Diocese of Fort Worth is seeking volunteers to serve as Service Angels. Service Angels assist in the production of worship aids for Catholic liturgy. The position requires a combination of strong organizational skills and the ability to work independently and as part of a team. The position is based in Fort Worth, and the salary is competitive. For more information and to apply, please visit www.fwdiocese.org/employment.

SENIOR LIFE OFFICER

The Archdiocese of Dallas is seeking a Senior Life Officer to assist in the administration of the Archdiocese’s Senior Life Ministry. The position requires a bachelor’s degree in social work or a related field and at least five years of experience working with senior citizens. The position also requires excellent written and oral communication skills and strong organizational skills. The position is based in Dallas, and the salary is competitive. For more information and to apply, please visit www.adallas.org/employment.

TOUR GUIDE

The Diocese of Fort Worth is seeking a Tour Guide to assist in the development and implementation of annual sacramental programs. The position requires a bachelor’s degree in religious education and at least two years of experience working with children. The position also requires excellent written and oral communication skills and strong organizational skills. The position is based in Fort Worth, and the salary is competitive. For more information and to apply, please visit www.fwdiocese.org/employment.

YOUTH FAITH FORMATION DIRECTOR

The Diocese of Fort Worth is seeking a Youth Faith Formation Director to develop and implement faith formation programs for middle and high school students. The position requires a bachelor’s degree in religious education and at least five years of experience working with youth. The position also requires excellent written and oral communication skills and strong organizational skills. The position is based in Fort Worth, and the salary is competitive. For more information and to apply, please visit www.fwdiocese.org/employment.
Fr. Robert Thames welcomed Bishop Vann and Mission Council representatives to Nuestra Señora del Carmen in Bolivia, to show them his simple mission philosophy at work: to break the cycle of poverty.

**Educate the Children**

By Juan Guajardo / Correspondent

Photos Courtesy of Father Jack McKone / Mission Council member

It was Father Jack McKone’s first time to visit Bolivia, and he came away amazed, despite the six-hour flight to get there.

Along with Bishop Kevin Vann and Deacon Len Sanchez, Fr. McKone spent three days visiting the school operated by Father Robert Thames in Cabezas, Bolivia, and funded by the Educate the Children sponsorship program. Fr. Thames, a priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth, has spent the last six years ministering to the almost 400 children attending the school through funds and sponsorships sent from parishioners throughout the diocese and the U.S.

Through sponsorships, people in the diocese are able to provide a needy child in Bolivia with an education, food, lodging, and textbooks.

“It is amazing. You see how much is going on there,” said Fr. McKone, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Quanah and a member of the diocesan Mission Council. “He’s really got a great deal going on.”

The bishop, Fr. McKone and Dcn. Sanchez went to meet Fr. Thames and to show support for his ministry but also to consider ways to strengthen and expand Educate the Children.

The group took a walking visit of the school run by Fr. Thames and his team, and they attended Mass, visited the orphanage operated by Fr. Thames’ pastoral team and enjoyed a folklorico dance presented by some of the children in the Educate the Children program. While there, they also met with the cardinal archbishop and auxiliary bishop from the Archdiocese of La Paz, who also expressed their support for Fr. Thames’ work.

Moreover, they saw firsthand the systemic poverty of the heavily rural and impoverished region that relies mainly on an agricultural economy and were able to “experience what [Fr. Thames] experiences every day,” said Dcn. Sanchez, chairman of the Mission Council.

“He has a tremendous operation,” Dcn. Sanchez said. “It takes care of a lot of people who normally would not have the opportunity to get what they are getting now. He has certainly put a lot of extra effort into ETC. Fr. Thames’ true philosophy is the way to conquer poverty is to educate the children.”

To date, Educate the Children has had extensive success with schoolchildren in Bolivia. Approximately 400 children are currently enrolled in the school, which provides education from grade six to 12. About 80 adults are involved in the adult education program provided there, and, upon completion, will earn the equivalent of a GED. In the six years that Nuestra Señora del Carmen has operated, about 400 to 500 students have attended yearly, said Henry del Castillo.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Bishop Kevin Vann and diocesan Mission Council Chairman Deacon Len Sanchez are greeted by an assembly of students and supporters of the Educate the Children program in Cabezas, Bolivia. • Students perform traditional dances during the bishop’s visit. • The program also teaches adults vocational skills. Here a man shows his wood-carving skills to the visitors. • Bishop Vann visits with a student. • Father Robert Thames, director of the program and a priest from the Diocese of Fort Worth, welcomes Bishop Vann, Dcn. Sanchez, and Mission Council member Father Jack McKone.

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