SVDP National Meeting helps leaders learn how to better serve the poor

Story by Michele Baker
Photos by Donna Ryckaert

More than 600 members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul — including one member who travelled from Australia — participated in the society’s 2011 Annual Meeting Aug. 31 to Sept. 3. Held at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine.

The event was hosted by The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Dallas.

True to its title, the National Meeting began with a series of meetings: for executive directors, spiritual advisors, and national and regional committee members. Yet by the time keynote speaker Philip DeVol took the podium Thursday morning, the mission behind the meetings emerged. Though not a Vincentian himself, DeVol — an author, consultant, and something of an expert on poverty issues — has ideas about working with those who live in poverty that certainly resonate with the Society’s ministry.

“One of the most important things I learned while growing up in India with parents who were medical missionaries,” DeVol explained, “is that our mission requires that we be completely engaged and involved with the people we serve.”

DeVol practices what he preaches as a consultant on poverty issues. He’s written several books about the topic, most notably his 1997 volume Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities, the basic

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Catholic Social Teaching calls us to work toward civilization of love, dignity for all

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the month of September, the Diocese of Fort Worth has been blessed to host the national conventions of two important organizations that do vital work in the area of Catholic Social Teaching. First, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul held their national conference in Grapevine Aug. 31 through Sept. 3.

In my years of priestly ministry, and now as the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth, I have greatly valued the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. When I was a student at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, I learned much about the heritage and life of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Vincentian family (including Frederick Ozanam and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul) from the priests of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. That was an important part of my formation that is with me to this day. I have an icon both of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise De Marillac in my chapel in the Cathedral Rectory here in Fort Worth.

The Society is a true witness to the mission of the Church to reach out to those who are in need and to do so with the compassion and love of Jesus himself. Throughout their work the Society of St. Vincent de Paul helps to make the life and spirit of St. Vincent continue to be alive in our world today. I want to thank the Society for their invaluable work in the life of the Church and know that your compassionate work is truly making a difference in many lives throughout the United States and beyond.

I am also very pleased that the Diocese of Fort Worth has hosted Catholic Charities USA’s annual Gathering and Poverty Summit “Think and Act Anew” held here in Fort Worth from Sept. 18 to 21. This gathering of participants from across the country offered us the opportunity to renew and refine our own efforts as we address and assist those who are suffering from poverty and to affirm our solidarity with those doing this important work of the Church across the country. Catholic Charities throughout the United States has done and continues to do incredible work in providing both the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to the poor and those in need in a wide variety of areas and circumstances. Catholic Charities in many ways has been the backbone of the Church’s efforts to be a continuous presence to the poor, and, as Blessed Pope John Paul II so often called for, has engaged in the building of a true civilization of love. Pope Benedict XVI, in his first encyclical Deus Caritas Est, also highlighted the importance of the work of organizations like Catholic Charities:

Whoever loves Christ loves the Church, and desires the Church to be increasingly the image and instrument of the love which flows from Christ. The personnel of every Catholic charitable organization want to work with the Church and therefore with the Bishop, so that the love of God can spread throughout the world. By their sharing in the Church’s practice of love, they wish to be witnesses of God and of Christ, and they wish for this very reason freely to do good to all. (33)

I know firsthand that the presence of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Fort Worth continues to be an instrument of mercy and hope to thousands each year. I am grateful for their work and presence here in the Diocese and all across the country. Thank you to Heather Reynolds and all of her staff and board members for all that they do, and for the work that was entailed in hosting Catholic Charities USA here in Fort Worth. This has been an honor for us. It was an honor having them with us, and especially to have welcomed so many involved in living the Church’s social teaching. A special thanks also to Father Larry Snyder, director of Catholic Charities USA.

All of this serves to remind us of the richness of the Church’s social teaching, which has its foundation in the dignity of each and every human person. The Church has always been, from her beginning, concerned with the dignity of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God, and the Church exists to see that this dignity is promoted, protected, and served at all times and in all circumstances. Catholic Social Teaching has developed from the 2,000 year teaching Tradition of the Church, but has been more explicitly developed over the past 120 years especially by the Papal Magisterium. The first social encyclical Rerum Novarum by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 was a foundational document in the history of the Church’s social teaching and primarily addressed the rights of workers during the peak of the industrial revolution. The popes of the twentieth century have continued to draw from the richness of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition to expound upon the Church’s social teachings and apply them to the present day economic and societal issues faced by modern man. There are a number of great social encyclicals written by most of the Popes of the twentieth century, many of them on specific anniversaries of the promulgation of Rerum Novarum. The most recently issued social encyclical was Caritas in Veritate or Love in Truth by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.

As developed by the modern popes, these social teachings provide guidelines and criteria to be used in the varying times, circumstances, and situations in which the dignity of the human person may be threatened or diminished. These guidelines are to be used so that true justice and peace may be established by a proper ordering of the state, the family, and the rights of persons. Catholic Social Teaching calls all of us to work to establish a civilization of love in which the dignity of every person is promoted and protected, and teacher that all of us, as members of the Body of Christ, the Church, are called upon to follow the example of the Good Samaritan and respond to the suffering of others and to unleash the love of Christ. As Blessed Pope John Paul II teaches:

Following the parable of the Gospel, we could say that suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order to unleash love in the human person, that unselfish gift of one’s “I” on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which sits in his heart and actions. The person who is a “neighbor” cannot indifferently pass by the suffering of another: this is the name of fundamental human solidarity, still more in the name of love of neighbor. He must "stop," “sympathize,” just like the Samaritan of the Gospel parable.

The parable in itself expresses a deeply Christian truth, but one that at the same time is very universally human. It is not without reason that, also in ordinary speech, any activity on behalf of the suffering and needy is called “Good Samaritan” work.

— On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, Salvifici Doloris, 29

I encourage all to take some time to study the Church’s social teaching as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church as well as some of the more recent papal social encyclicals. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has also published the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church which is another excellent resource to study Catholic social teaching. This resource can be purchased through USCCB publishing at www.usccpb.org.

Finally, I also wanted to take this opportunity to reflect upon the tenth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks. As we have once again watched the horror that unfolded upon that terrible day, we need to pray for the many who died that day and that healing, faith, and forgiveness may continue in their families and loved ones. We also need to continue to remember with great gratitude and love the fallen heroes of that day: the firefighters, police, and other brave responders who gave the ultimate sacrifice in helping others to safety. They truly lived out the words of our Lord, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down his life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).

I would like to conclude with the words of Blessed Pope John Paul II from his General Audience of September 12, 2001, the day after the attack on our country, for our prayerful reflection as we again remember the events of September 11, 2001:

Yesterday was a dark day in the history of humanity, a terrible affront to human dignity. After receiving the news, I followed with intense concern the developing situation, with heartfelt prayers to the Lord. How is it possible to...
So that's what rain is like...

We have been waiting a long time, expectantly, for rain, for clouds in the sky and cool breezes. They seem to be on their way as we prepare this issue. Many of our neighbors have suffered, lost cattle, crops and hay, even their homes. The absence of water in this drought is a reminder of what our lives would be like without the presence of God with us. Without his love, our lives would be as scorched and barren as the browned fields and dry creek beds that cover our state right now.

But several of the stories in this issue, will bring you spiritual refreshment, like a taste of cool spring waters, flowing waters.

You've already noticed, no doubt, Sister Mary Clare Beazer’s vocation story on the back page, detailing how she came to be a newly vowed Olivent Benedictine nun after hearing God’s call. But you may not have seen the story of how Michael Strong, a Nolan graduate who grew up in Holy Family Parish on Fort Worth’s West Side, and then attended and graduated from the University of Dallas came to his vocational decision, leading to his ordination as a Cistercian priest. He was ordained as Father Ambrose on Aug. 19 at Cistercian Abbey in Irving. His story is on Page 33.

The reputation of the University of Dallas is growing at a rate to match the school’s excellence and solid grounding in the Catholic faith. Joan Gillen’s articles about UD’s Rome Campus, its new pastoral ministry undergraduate degree, and the upcoming University of Dallas Ministry Conference round out the introduction to its history and vision for the future offered by UD President Thomas Keefe. That all begins on Page 20.

And Texas isn’t the only place that’s been ridiculously hot this year. Joan Gillen brings us an account of the trials of some of our World Youth Day pilgrims in Madrid. Though many of them suffered in the extreme heat, experiencing dehydration and illness, they also learned much through the shared sacrifice and mutual support that got them through. That article is on Page 26.

The Bishop’s Blog at www.fwdioc.org brings us up to date on the arrival of new religious orders in the diocese, the visit of a Burmese bishop and the convening of our community of 300 Burmese Catholics, and the celebration of the restoration of the beautiful St. Peter’s Church in Lindsay. And you can always get more news — including new video from Catholic News Service — from the NTC at www.fwdioc.org/ntc.

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Ella’s effects go beyond contraception to abortion, experts say
WASHINGTON (CNS) — In marketing materials for ella, the emergency contraception pill that will be available without co-pay foreductible American women of child-bearing age under the new health reform plan, a cartoon character egg peaks out from behind a glass door while a cartoon character sperm stands on the steps, apparently capering her to come outside.

“It can’t come out for five days,” the egg replies to the sperm. The ad goes on to say the drug’s “power to help keep these two apart” and says ella, known generically as ulipristal acetate, “provides extra time for extra pregnancy prevention.”

But that’s not all it does. “Ella may also work by proceding the ovulation of the woman’s egg before it is released into the Fallopian tubes or has already reached the uterus, it’s if the car has started and “you can take it wherever you want to go” but the the electrical system fails, she said.

“The car comes to a halt,” just like ella “makes the process of ovulation to implantation come to a halt” so making the lining of the uterus a hostile environment for pregnancy.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says “abortion occurs when the fetus is expelled from a woman’s uterus.” It defines a fetus as “the developing offspring in the fetus from the ninth week of pregnancy until the end of pregnancy” and says the earlier, embryonic stage of life goes “from the time it implants in the uterus up to eight completed weeks of pregnancy.”

But Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, noted that abortion includes “the interval between conception and implantation of the human embryo” as an abortion “even if it only interfees with the embryo’s survival prior to the completion of implantation.”

He said some have accused the bishops of exaggerating ella’s effects or using “scare tactics” against it. “Sometimes it is really itself that is scary,” he said.

“Be quite frank, the fact that this drug can work up to and after the usual time of implantation is not seen as a disadvantage but as a benefit by those who are promoting the drug, whose only goal is maximum effectiveness in countering unintended pregnancy,” Doerflinger said.

“Of course this mandated coverage, and accepted rules of medical privacy, will also mean that the minor daughters of almost all Americans with health insurance (including millions of Catholic parents) will have confidential access to this abortifacient drug without their parents’ knowledge,” he added.

Religious freedom includes freedom to act on beliefs, leaders say
ROME (CNS) — True religious freedom includes allowing believers to contribute to their countries’ political discussions and to allow their beliefs and morals to impact the way they engage in public life, said the Vatican’s foreign minister.

“Nor one should confuse or compare the marginalization of religion with the true persecution and killing of Christians in some parts of the world,” but efforts to ban religious expressions from public life are still an attack on religious freedom, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, the Vatican secretary for relations with states said.

The archbishop was one of several speakers at a Rome session Sept. 12 on “preventing and responding to hate speech, hatred and incitement to violence,” including publicly.

The archbishop spoke at a Rome meeting Sept. 12 on “preventing and responding to hate crimes and incidents and crimes against Christians,” the meeting was sponsored by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The organization’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has reported “a growing intolerance of Christians” — including desecration of places of worship, arson and other property damage, and attacks on worshippers and religious leaders — in the organization’s 56 member states, which include most European countries as well as the United States and Canada.

Archbishop Mamberti said the definition of religious freedom cannot be simply freedom of worship, although it is a key element. “With due respect for the rights of all, religious freedom also includes the right to preach, educate, convert, contribute to public discourse and participate fully in public activities,” he said.

Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, director of foreign relations for the Moscow patriarchate, said the gathering that too many governments, institutions, and individuals in Europe “use religious diversity as an excuse to exclude signs of Christian civilization from the public and political reality,” as if denying Europe’s Christian roots would make Europeans more welcoming and tolerant of other faiths.

In reality, he said, such policies and attitudes teach disrespect for all believers.

For true believers, he said, faith is not something lived only a couple of hours a week in a church, synagogue or mosque. Faith has consequences for the way people live and behave, including publicly, he said.

Archbishop Dominique Mamberti said.

Bishops urge ‘supercommittee’ to remember poor in budget cut talks
WASHINGTON (CNS) — The charwoman of the U.S. bishops’ international and domestic policy committees urged the 12-member Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction — popularly known as the “supercommittee” — to remember the poor and vulnerable as they come up with a plan to deal with the nation’s financial deficit.

In this effort, you will examine ending of the “entitlements” budget, said Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, N.Y., chairman of the bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace, and Bishop Stephen E. Blair of Stockton, Calif., chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, in their Aug. 31 letter.

“Behind all those numbers are people we serve every day in our parishes, schools, hospitals, shelters, and soup kitchens. Poverty and most vulnerable do not have powerful lobbyists, but they have the most compelling needs and a special claim on our individual consciences and national choices, especially in these times of massive joblessness, increasing poverty, and growing hunger,” they said.

The supercommittee, made up of six members of the Senate and six of the House of Representatives, and equally divided between Democrats and Republicans, was created as part of the August 2011 plan to raise the national debt ceiling. It will first meet Sept. 16, and if it must recommend by Thanksgiving cuts of $1.5 trillion over 10 years. If its recommendations are not adopted, $1.2 trillion in cuts over 10 years would be triggered — half involving defense spending.

“Ajust framework for future budgets cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services for poor and vulnerable persons. These programs need to be made more effective, efficient and responsive and we should work to strengthen and improve them on an ongoing basis,” said Bishop Hubbard and Blair.

“However, it would be wrong to bust a huge shadow over engagement by those who already hurt the most by cutting programs such as foreign aid, affordable housing programs, child nutrition, or healthcare,” they said. “Ajust framework also requires shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary military and other spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly.”

The two bishops offered moral criteria to the supercommittee when making budget decisions.

“Every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity,” they said.

“A central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects the ‘least of these,’” a reference to Matthew 25, they added. “The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work, or in poverty should come first.”

Also, Bishop Blaine and Hubbard said, “government and other institutions have a shared responsibility to promote the common good of all, especially ordinary workers and families who struggle to live in dignity in difficult economic times.”

Briefly
Church, National, & International
Volunteers serve food cooked by nuns and other volunteers in late February in the Wednesday Soup Kitchen at St. Brice Parish in Argo Summit, Ill. A faith-based coalition called Circle of Protection, which includes the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has been urging the federal government to not cut funding of programs for the poor in the national budget. (CNS photo/ Keni Gallaway, Chicago-River North)
Texas Catholic Conference supports DREAM Act

AUSTIN (TCC) — The Texas Catholic Conference is encouraging parishes across Texas and the country to participate in the “Pray for the DREAM (Acts)” Sunday, Sept. 5. This national effort seeks to raise public awareness for the obstacles facing undocumented students and to alert parishes to ways they can support struggling students earn a college degree and eventual employment.

Churches are gathering to raise awareness and support through a host of activities such as prayer dinners, prayers, vigils, homilies, etc. between Sept. 18 and Oct. 9, with the biggest focus being Sunday, Sept. 5.

The proposed DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) is currently before the U.S. Congress. It offers to provide temporary residency to undocumented immigrant students who agree to complete two years military service or remain in the country for at least two years at a four-year college. Upon successfully completing military service or earning a college degree, the undocumented residents could apply for permanent legal status.

The DREAM Act is partially modeled on legislation signed by Governor Rick Perry in 2001, which provides in-state tuition for undocumented students who have lived in Texas for three years prior to earning their high school diploma and a year before enrolling in a state college or university. In exchange, students must promise to become permanent residents of the United States as soon as they are eligible.

“The downside to Texas law is that while immigrant students can earn college degrees, they are stilled or impeded in obtaining their legal states, which subsequently prohibits them from entering the workforce,” the TCC said on its website, www.tcatcatholic.org.

According to the conference’s website, the DREAM Act is important to Catholics because it’s intended to help undocumented immigrant minors hone their God-given talents.

“He gives each of us a skill or talent, that if honed and developed properly, can benefit ourselves and our communities. Ignoring these gifts — or actively preventing the nurturing of the gifts of others — is a shameful waste,” the website said. “Jesus’ Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) is the story of a man who entrusts his wealth to three servants while he is away. While two of the servants use their talents and wins to invest and double their master’s wealth, the third servant buries his inheritance in the ground out of fear. The master lavishes the servants whose efforts brought benefits, but scolds the third for wasting the opportunity.”

“Bright, eager students who desire to learn, grow, and develop their gifts to benefit all so are a treasure to our nation. Ignoring (or burying) these students’ talents not only thwarts their dreams and dreams but diminishes the quality of life of us all,” the website concludes.

To help parishes organize projects and events, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops’ Justice for Immigrants has created an online resource kit available at www.justiceforimmigrants.org/background.

According to the TCC’s website, the conference wants to know of any parish events and activities being planned to feature them on its website and publications.

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Diocese creates Archives Office and hires archivist; names new directors for Children's Catechesis and Marriage and Family Life

North Texas Catholic Staff

Recent changes in personnel at the diocesan offices include the appointment of two new diocesan staff members, a change in existing staff roles, and the creation of a new diocesan department, according to Mark Simeroth, director of Human Resources for the diocese.

“We are happy to welcome new diocesan staff members Claire Galloway and Chris Vaughan,” said Simeroth. “Additionally, Marlon De La Torre, who has previously served as the director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life over the past year, will now serve as the director of the Office of Catechetical Formation and Children’s Catechesis for the Diocese.”

De La Torre, an adjunct professor of Catechetics for the Catholic Distance University, has previously served as the Superintendent of Schools and as associate director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, in Kansas City, Missouri. Additionally, De La Torre has served in the Diocese of Memphis as principal and chair of Catechesis at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic High School. While in Memphis, he also served as diocesan director of Religious Education and Apologetics and as adjunct professor of Catechetics for Diocesan Catholic High Schools.

The ministry professional earned his undergraduate degrees in theology and in mental health/human services at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio. He continued on at the university to earn his graduate degree in theology with a concentration in Catechetics, and also earned his master’s degree in education administration/curriculum at the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

“I look forward to evangelizing and catechizing the faithful... In particular, instructing catechists at the parish and school levels in the areas of catechist and doctrinal formation, curriculum development, and catechetical administration,” wrote De La Torre in an e-mail to the Office of Parish Services and Women’s Congregations.

Claire Galloway, director of the newly-formed Office of Records Management and Archives, is a certified archivist who received her undergraduate degree in history from Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana, and her master’s degree in public history from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. While in Arkansas she worked as a graduate assistant at the Clinton Presidential Library for two years, and went on to work in Special Collections in the Texas Christian University Archives in Fort Worth. For the past two years she has served as archivist in the University, Labor, and Political Collections within the University of Texas at Arlington Special Collections area of the university library.

“I greatly look forward to working with the diocese to manage its records and archives material,” said Galloway, noting her deep interest in the history of the local Catholic Church.

“The diocese has such a rich heritage, and I feel blessed to be a participant in its life.”

Father Dan Kelley named new diocesan chancellor; Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, and Peter Flynn take on new vice-chancellor roles

North Texas Catholic Staff

Bishop Kevin Vann has appointed Father Daniel Kelley, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Arlington, chancellor of the Diocese of Fort Worth. Fr. Kelley has served in the new role since Aug. 1, while also continuing as pastor of St. Joseph. Fr. Kelley, who was ordained Dec. 9, 1995, is currently pursuing studies in canon law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He will complete the requirements for the degree in May of 2012.

“As chancellor, I serve as the formal notary to the bishop,” Fr. Kelley explained. In this capacity, he witnesses the signing of important documents, and performs other official functions at the request of the bishop, while also continuing to serve, as he has for the past five years, at the diocesan Marriage Tribunal office.

The bishop has made two additional appointments within the diocesan leadership structure, leading to the creation of two new Vice Chancellor positions. As of Aug. 1, Peter Flynn, who has served within the diocese for 26 years, and previously served as director of Finance and Administrative Services, has been appointed Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services. In this capacity, Flynn will continue to oversee the areas of diocesan finance, advancement, and record management and archives.

The only change in his actual areas of responsibility includes his new work in human resources, said Flynn. “The new structure addresses reporting functions,” he explained. “Any administrative functions report up through me, and I report directly to [vicar general] Father Stephen Berg.”

Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, has served as director of Children’s Catechesis and Catechetical Ministry since 2002, has been named Vice Chancellor of Parish Services and Women Religious. In this capacity, she will work closely with the diocesan Office of Vocations in order to support and nurture the needs of women’s congregations within the diocese. Additionally, she will assist parishes with any needs that arise as a result of transitions in pastors and staff members.

“I am overjoyed to have been able to welcome several religious communities of women to our diocese this month, including the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who are now at the Holy Name of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary parishes,” said Sr. Cruz. “I further rejoice to have been a part of the facilitation of the return of the Missionary Catechist Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to St. Bartholomew Parish in Fort Worth.”

In her new role, Sr. Cruz has also attended the blessing of the Vietnamese Dominican Sisters’ convent in Arlington and helped to welcome Father Armando Flores of Celaya, Mexico, to St. George Parish in Fort Worth and Father Gildardo Alvarez of the Congregation of the Operarios del Reino de Cristo at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth.

Father Dan Kelley

Peter Flynn

Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN
Deacon Dámaso Castellón is remembered as compassionate and diligent in his ministry with parishes, hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons

Deacon Dámaso R. Castellón, a faithful servant who often worked with the Hispanic community, died on Aug. 18, one day short of the twenty-second anniversary of his ordination to the diaconate in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Much of his service in the diaconate was spent doing prison ministry.

"I remember him being the nicest, sweetest man. He was always so considerate. He was a very holy, spiritual guy," said Mary Garcia, business manager at Immaculate Conception Church in Denton.

Visitation was during the day on Aug. 20, with a Rosary at 5 p.m. at Mount Oivet Funeral Home in Fort Worth. Mass of Christian burial was at 2 p.m. on Aug. 22, at All Saints Catholic Church in Fort Worth.

Dcn. Castellón was born in Midland on March 27, 1926 to Worth. All Saints Catholic Church in Fort Worth.

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Dcn. Castellón was born in Midland on March 27, 1926 to Thomas and Ascencion Castellón, and grew up in Mexico. He had lived in the North Texas area since 1968.

He and his wife Maria had been married for 60 years, and had been parishioners of All Saints Church. Before becoming a deacon, he and his wife had already been very active in their parish. They both served as lectors and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and helped with nursing home visitation. Dcn. Castellón also was former chairman of the Spanish Cursillo Leader’s School.

Dcn. Castellón was ordained to the diaconate on Aug. 19, 1989, at St. Michael Parish in Bedford, by Bishop Joseph Delaney, the second bishop of the Diocese.

Dcn. Castellón first served in his home parish, All Saints, in 1989 and then served at St. Joseph’s Church in Cleburne from 1989-1992. He was at Immaculate Conception Church in Denton from 1992-1995.

Garcia said Dcn. Castellón drove from the Fort Worth area to help with the Spanish Masses at ICC and with anything else that was needed. She said he preached at the Spanish Masses, visited people in the hospital and nursing homes, and attended meetings to give the Hispanic community a voice.

"We enjoyed working with him," said Garcia.


Mary Wolfle, pastoral secretary of Immaculate Conception Church in Denton, said that Dcn. Castellón also worked with the Hispanic ministry while he worked with him at St. John the Apostle.

"You could tell how much he loved [the people] by how he managed to take time for them," she said.

Wolfle said Dcn. Castellón was always kind and helped with visiting people in nurses homes, hospitals, and the homebound.

"Whatever he was doing, he would keep at it until he got it done," she said.


Dcn. Castellón was a retired auto mechanic after 26 years. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Maria Castellón; daughter, Genevieve Reece and husband Genevieve Coby; sons Robert Castellón and wife Suzanne; Thomas Castellón; Domingo Castellón; and Marco Castellón and wife Patricia; nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Condolences can be sent to his wife Maria Castellón and his family at 1017 Baylor Ave., Fort Worth, TX, 76111.

Deacon Dámaso R. Castellón

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Wolfle said Dcn. Castellón was always kind and helped with visiting people in nurses homes, hospitals, and the homebound.

"Whatever he was doing, he would keep at it until he got it done," she said.


Dcn. Castellón was a retired auto mechanic after 26 years. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Maria Castellón; daughter, Genevieve Reece and husband Genevieve Coby; sons Robert Castellón and wife Suzanne; Thomas Castellón; Domingo Castellón; and Marco Castellón and wife Patricia; nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Condolences can be sent to his wife Maria Castellón and his family at 1017 Baylor Ave., Fort Worth, TX, 76111.

Sister Mary Walden, OSU, (1922-2011) dies

Sister Mary Walden, OSU

Editor’s Note: This obituary has been adapted from a press release sent by the Ursuline Sisters.

Sister Mary Walden, OSU, died Aug. 12 at the Ursuline Queen of Peace infirmary in Alton, Illinois. Sr. Mary served in the Diocese of Fort Worth for 10 years from 1973 to 1983 at the Texas Christian University Catholic Campus Ministry and in the marriage tribunal office.

Sr. Mary was born Colleen Viola Walden Nov. 15, 1922 to William F. and Viola Fay Harlan Walden, in St. Louis.

Sr. Mary received a bachelor’s degree from Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Iowa, and the College of New Rochelle in New York. She earned a master’s degree in religious education at The Catholic University of America and a master’s degree in theology at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio.

She entered the Ursuline Sisters in 1944. In 1949, while she worked with him at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington, was a student at TCU while Sr. Mary served there, and credits her with helping him in his vocation to the priesthood.

"She was a great mentor to me," Fr. Craig said. "It’s probably because of her and her prayers and guidance that helped me in my vocation. She’ll be sorely missed."

In 2009, Sr. Mary retired to Queen of Peace in Alton, Illinois.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Aug. 17 at the Ursuline Convent Chapel in Alton. She is survived by two brothers, Pat Walden of Kansas City, Missouri, and James Walden of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She was preceded in death by her sisters Frances and Anastasia, and brothers Harvey, Raleigh, and Eugene.

Memorials may be made to the Ursuline Sisters’ Queen of Peace Healthcare Center, 845 Danforth St., Alton, IL 62002.
Key changes to Missal capture original meanings

By James Breig

Casual observers of the Roman Catholic Church often remark that it hasn’t changed in 2,000 years. Actually, just like any living institution, it is constantly changing. Over the centuries, where and when the Mass is celebrated, how saints are chosen, and the method of electing popes are some of the ways the Church has adjusted its traditions and policies.

Now come changes to the Roman Missal, the book containing the prayers for the Mass. For years, the Church has been working to more accurately translate those prayers from the Latin in which the original Missal is promulgated into modern languages, including English. Msgr. Kevin Irwin, dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, says those alterations were necessitated by two factors.

“First, the Committee charged with the English translation of the Roman Missal issued the post-Vatican II translations very quickly,” he notes, referring to the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. “They realized, after a few years’ use of the Missal, that some translations should have been more accurate. Second, some feasts have been added to the Church’s liturgical calendar in recent years, for example, St. Padre Pio’s. Those Latin Masses need to be translated into English.”

Peter Finn, associate director of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), compares the changes “to the cleaning of an old painting whose images are brought to clearer light in the cleaning process. … The translations have sought to achieve a suitable balance between the word-for-word, literal meaning of the Latin and the demands of good proclamation, style, and intelligibility.”

One of the most significant changes, Msgr. Irwin says, involves the familiar phrase, “And also with you,” which the congregation recites after the celebrant of the Mass says, “The Lord be with you.”

He explains that “the congregation will now say, ‘and with your spirit.’ This places the English translation in line with most other languages. The response is not to the person of the priest but to the Spirit of God, who ordained him to permanent service in the Church. It is an acknowledgment of the ‘spirit’ and grace which is in him.”

Msgr. Anthony Sherman, executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat of Divine Worship, offers another example: Instead of saying “we believe” at the beginning of the Creed, Catholics will soon recite, “I believe.” The reason for the shift, he says, is “to underline the fact that, although we share our belief together with our brothers and sisters, each one of us is called to make an individual profession of faith.”

As the changes are introduced, parishioners will have many guides to help them learn their new responses. “Parishes are underway by a number of publishers to print up Mass booklets or cards containing the changes,” Msgr. Irwin notes.

Adds Msgr. Sherman: “Eventually all participation aids and hymnals will include the new responses of the people.” Finn notes that “today, the people’s responses can be made more readily available not only in printed editions but also on websites, CDs, iPhones, etc.”

One website available to help people become familiar with the new translation of the Roman Missal is sponsored by the U.S. Bishops: www.usccb.org/romanmissal.

Average Catholics may not immediately grasp the necessity and benefits of the changes, Msgr. Irwin admits, but the familiarity that comes with time should lead people to comfort with and understanding of the words.

“All of us — laity, clergy, and religious — will need to take time to review the changed words and come to appreciate what we may not have understood or appreciated before,” he says. “There are layers of meaning to liturgical texts, not just one meaning. These translations and the education we shall receive before they are implemented will offer us a chance to ‘brush up’ our knowledge of the Mass and of our beliefs.”

Msgr. Sherman believes the changes “will invite the faithful to pause and reflect on what, after so many years, we may have taken for granted. People will listen more attentively to the various prayers proclaimed by the priest and these will convey a much deeper richness, which can be the basis for meditation and prayer for the enrichment of one’s spiritual life.”

James Breig, a long-time diocesan newspaper editor and freelance writer, has written hundreds of articles for Catholic magazines. For 25 years, he also authored an award-winning column on the media for Catholic newspapers. Now retired, he continues to write and is working on a book about World War II.
Preparation, participation, and perseverance can help us appreciate Christ’s real Presence in the Eucharist

FROM PAGE 1
what the Christian life is! The relationship between the Mass and everyday life is a reciprocal relationship, an active experience. At every Mass Catholics bring the offering of what’s going on in their lives — and offer that in union with Jesus. It is that union, culminating in the Holy Communion, that strengthens them for everyday life, explains Msgr. DeGrocco.

“We do liturgy in order to try to do Christian life right. What we do at Mass is a summation or a ‘microcosm,’ if you will, of the way we are supposed to be living Christian life.” According to Msgr. DeGrocco, this awareness of what takes place at every Mass is precisely why Catholics should invest themselves into appreciating the Mass. “We cannot be Catholic without it,” he says. “We cannot be fully united to Jesus without sacramental communion with Him in the Eucharist.”

Not only is daily life about the Mass, says Liturgy Professor Sister Janet Baxendale, SC of New York City’s St. Joseph’s Seminary, but the Mass also “offers extraordinary help in my efforts to live my life well” through Scripture, the Word of God, the Prayers of the Faithful, and most powerfully, by receiving the Eucharist.

In Holy Communion, “Christ comes to us and nourishes us; to be food for our souls as we struggle to fulfill our baptismal call to be like Christ, to be his presence in our world,” notes Sr. Baxendale.

Distractions can make participation and appreciation of the Mass discouraging, notes Sr. Baxendale. “Our thoughts stray; we find ourselves trying to solve problems of home, of office, of life in general. The people around us distract us: a crying child; someone with an annoying habit sharing ‘my’ pew; the choir is off-key; the readings can’t be heard — and on and on.”

Sr. Baxendale says there are strategies to reduce the impact of these distractions:

- Prepare for Mass. Read over that day’s Scriptures. “In this way you will have done the ‘ground work,’ tilling the soil so that the seed of God’s Word may find ready soil in you.”

- Participate in Mass. Sing the hymns, pray the responses, listen to the readings and to the prayers said by the priest on our behalf: the opening prayer, the prayer over the gifts, the prayer after Communion, the Eucharistic prayer. “Work at doing this well, and there will be less time for distractions.”

- Learn about the Mass. Check online sources provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and printed materials in your own parish for resources to “enhance your understanding and appreciation of the great gift God has given to his people in the Mass.”

- Take daily time to be silent and to listen. The self-discipline of a regular period of quiet reflection teaches us to “empty our minds of the cares, ideas, and distracting thoughts that press on us — and to concentrate on God, on his incredible love for me (personally), and his presence to me. Our reverence can bear fruit in the ability to concentrate more fully when we are at Mass.”

- Don’t get discouraged. “It is the effort that counts. The results are in the hands of God.”

Christ is present at Mass in many ways, explains Msgr. DeGrocco, “in the gathered assembly, in the Word, in the priest, and most especially in the Real Presence of the Eucharist… The person in the pew who does nothing ‘more’ than being internally attentive and bringing the sacrifice of his/her life, and who does all the external participation (sitting, standing, kneeling, responding, singing) is nonetheless participating fully.” He notes, “The best way to improve one’s appreciation of the Mass is to improve one’s living of the sacrifice of one’s life.”

María de Lourdes Ruiz Scaperlanda is a frequent contributor to the Catholic press. She is an award winning Catholic journalist, the author of five books, and an occasional contributor to the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC. See www.mymaria.net

FROM PAGE 1

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What doctors owe women: A clear assessment of the risks

By Susan Wills

As former abortion clinic staff attest ... counselors at abortion clinics conceal mental and physical health risks — as well as the fact that the procedure will violently end a child's life — in order to sell abortions.

Women who have mental health problems after abortion are those who had mental health problems before their abortion. They claim that having an abortion is better for one's mental health than giving birth to an "unplanned" (and therefore to their mind "unwanted") child.

Dr. Coleman's meta-analysis disproves these contentions, weeding out weak and potentially biased studies by including only studies that (1) were published in a peer-reviewed journal, (2) had at least 100 participants in the sample, (3) used a comparison group (e.g., women who had given birth, women who had not had an abortion), (4) measured one or more outcomes, such as depression, substance abuse or suicidal behavior and (5) controlled for other variables, such as prior history of mental health problems or exposure to violence.

Health care professionals have a duty to advise patients of the benefits and risks of a procedure "in a manner that reflects the current scientific literature," so patients can make an informed choice. As former abortion clinic staff attest, and as underscored by the U.S. and U.K. studies, counselors at abortion clinics conceal mental and physical health risks — as well as the fact that the procedure will violently end a child's life — in order to sell abortions.

Thanks to Dr. Coleman, the current scientific literature now proves that the increased risks to mental health from abortion outweigh any genuine "benefit" to women. Women considering abortion deserve to be told these facts — but they won't hear them once they're inside the clinic. It is up to us to get the word out.

Susan Wills is Assistant Director for Education & Outreach, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-life Activities. For more information on the Church’s ministry to women and men after abortion, visit www.hopeafterabortion.org.

Over ‘The Ledge’

Atheist movie makes unintended point

By David Mills

I’d never heard of “The Ledge”, a movie released just a couple of months ago. I never would have heard of it but for an article by a blogger for the National Catholic Register, the alert and entertaining Matthew Archbold.

It’s a movie about an evangelical Christian couple who meet a really nice and pretty cool atheist who liberates the young wife from her oppressive, judgmental, uptight, and generally annoying husband by seducing her into an affair. The husband gets upset and tells the atheist that he has to jump off a ledge at noon or he (the crazy Christian husband) will kill the wife. As the storyline summary goes: “He then has one hour to make a choice between his own life and someone else’s. Without faith in an afterlife, will he be capable of such a sacrifice?”

I’m guessing without seeing the movie that the really nice and pretty cool atheist jumps, because that proves that he’s a good man even though he doesn’t believe in God, while the crazy Christian is a bad man even though — or maybe because — he believes in God. Or maybe he’s saved at the last moment when the police knock down the door and rescue the poor wife from her crazy Christian husband. But even if he is rescued, we know he was going to jump because he’s such a great guy he’d give up the only life he thinks he’s going to have to save someone else. Save her from her crazy Christian husband and by extension from her imaginary God.

Archbold includes the trailer for the movie, and it features several scenes promising what used to be called cheesecake shots of the young and beautiful Liv Tyler. The producers and director were clearly trying to create as much audience appeal as they could. If the plot won’t bring them in, a topless Liv Tyler might. That’s the way they think in Hollywood, and (ala) not without reason. To be fair, I can understand them hedging their bets on the box office appeal of theological debates.

The director reportedly worked hard to promote the movie among atheist groups and on atheist websites. It was to be, I suspect, the atheist’s break out movie.

The movie website IMDB estimates the movie’s budget at $10 million. According to IMDB, the movie made $5,176 on its opening weekend. It opened on two screens, just two, in the whole country.

The movie’s critics gave it an 11 percent score. “The Smurfs” did twice as well with the critics as “The Ledge”.

Let’s enjoy that. $5,176. Two screens. An 11 percent rating. Beaten by “The Smurfs”. And a loss of about $9,995,000.

We can’t make too much of this, because many anti-Christian movies make a lot of money, and many movies that make a lot of money are implicitly anti-Christian. But I think the movie’s failure does say something at least a little encouraging about Americans and religion.

As Archbold writes, “I think one of the things that went wrong with this movie isn’t just that it was an atheist movie. It’s that it was anti-Christian. Instead of showing atheists dealing with dramatic situations which they do, the director chose to have the atheist in a battle with a crazy Christian caricature. And guess what, people in a mainly Christian country decided not to see it. Now that’s the kind of natural selection I can get behind.”

A lot of our neighbors think: some implicit anti-Christianity, okay. But obvious, direct Atheism vs. Christianity, with the Atheist coming out on top, not okay.

That suggests Christians still have an opening to share the faith with others who may seem uninterested. Many Americans may have pushed God into the corner, but they don’t like it when someone tries to push him out of the room. As long as he’s still in the corner, we can try to help them see why he ought to be in the center of the room.

In any case, it’s nice to know that a movie-maker can’t beat up on Christianity and make money doing so.

David Mills is executive editor of First Things (www.firstthings.com). Matthew Archbold’s blog can be found at www.ncregister.com/blog/matthew-archbold.
t our opening yearbook meeting this September, my TCU students played an icebreaker game in which participants were asked to name their favorite movie genre and film.

Most of the students said they liked comedy, but they also listed sci-fi and "anything related to dance." Nobody named horror or mystery, I noted, and more significantly, I realized I hadn’t seen most of the 60 students’ favorite flicks.

When all had taken their turns, they gave me mine: “Easy,” I said, “I like ‘Trapped in Space’ movies and ‘Back in Time’ movies.”

Instead of rousing affirmation, I was met with blank faces.

I chided them: “You know! ‘Back in Time’ movies, when the leading lady passes out and wakes up at a 1961 homecoming dance, or a man encounters his dad speaking through a ham radio!”

“In ‘Trapped in Space Movies,’ NASA saves the astronauts, and then everyone in mission control tosses their papers in the air and cheers.”

Silence. The room was so quiet you could hear crickets.

“The best ‘Trapped in Space’ movie ever was in 1969,” I concluded. “It was called ‘Marsoneed.’”

“I always cry at the end,” I pointed out. “When I first discovered the computer program ‘Google Earth,’ I was fascinated by the idea of seeing a satellite view of my Fort Worth home, our roof, awnings and porch! I wondered when the image had been captured, and if we were in the house when that happened.

You can look at Google Earth and see anything. In seconds you can fly from the Pyramids to the Mendenhal Glacier, and you don’t need a coat, luggage, or snacks for the trip.

I like the feeling of omnipotent-flying-person with super-close-up viewing power, so when I open Google Earth, I speed from the Pyramids to the Mendenhal Glacier, and you don’t need a coat, luggage, or snacks for the trip.

The girl was 20 years old, not 12, like she looked, and she seemed to become progressively more vulnerable. She couldn’t get an apartment because she needed a job, and she couldn’t get a job because she needed an ID.

But I noticed she had one thing: a crucifix around her neck.

“What is your name?” I asked. “Ruby,” she answered.

“There is a Catholic Church two blocks away,” I pointed out. “They will give you advice, and maybe help you.”

The thought of her living on the street was incomprehensible to me.

Forty years ago, skinny little girls didn’t live on the streets of Pueblo, where we could walk all the way to The Junction for a lime- and caramel corn just about any time we wanted.

If I could see... if only I could log on to Time-Travel Google Earth, a program yet to be invented, and see my best friend and me walking home to 316 Harrison! Joe Cribari would get home; he’d pour himself a beverage; and talk to us, and all would be well.

Even more significant, though, I’d like to jump forward in time, to San Antonio’s Downtown St. Joseph Catholic Church, and see what became of that begging girl.

On Commerce Street, when she walked away from me, I had asked myself, “What was I thinking!” and called after her, “Ruby! Ruby!”

I jogged to her, handed her the last cash I had in my wallet — a five dollar bill. “Do not spend this on drugs or alcohol!” I admonished, strongly. I watched as she went into the church.

I hope, some moment in time, if I were able to zoom into San Antonio on Future Google Earth, there would be no sign of Ruby on the streets.

If that were to happen... oh if that were to happen!

If goodness came out of Ruby’s visit to Time-Travel Google Earth, a program yet to be invented, and see my best friend and me walking home to 316 Harrison! Joe Cribari would get home; he’d pour himself a beverage; and talk to us, and all would be well.

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I hope, some moment in time, if I were able to zoom into San Antonio on Future Google Earth, there would be no sign of Ruby on the streets.

If that were to happen... oh if that were to happen!

If goodness came out of Ruby’s visit to Downtown St. Joseph’s, I bet there would be a lot of cheering in Mission Control, where God watches us. I bet he’d throw his hat in the air and cheer.

Those kinds of movie endings always make me cry.

Kathy Cribari Hamer and her husband are members of St. Andrew Parish near TCU in Southwest Fort Worth. In May 2009 her column received the second place award for best family life columns from the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada for the second time in two years. In 2009, Kathy’s column received the first place award in the same category.

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Now $20 could help Carry Hope

Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth is promoting a new way for families and individuals to reach out and help their neighbors in need. They’re rolling it out this month, distributing colorful Carry Hope Totes, reusable tote bags, with lists of either hygiene and food items or hygiene and cleaning supply items, each totaling around $20.

Participants wanting to assist the mostly working poor Catholic Charities serves, fill the Carry Hope Totes with the items on the list and return them to Catholic Charities. Charities is seeking parish youth groups to partner with in this project, using it as a way to help youth realize that most individuals and families they work with don’t have enough income to take care of all of their needs.

As the letter accompanying the Carry Hope shopping lists puts it: “Can you imagine having to tell your children that the pantry is empty and you have no food for them to eat, no laundry detergent to wash their clothes, no soap for them to bathe with? For many of the families served by Catholic Charities, that is the grim reality they face each day,” the letter states.

“Of the nearly 111,000 individuals and families served by Catholic Charities in 2010, the vast majority have an annual household income of less than $17,000. We serve the working poor and people in financial crisis.

“At the front end of these services is the Creating Hope Donor Center,” the letter goes on, “established to provide the very basic items that relate to the well being and survival of a family; items such as food, hygiene products, and cleaning supplies, items that many take for granted.”

Now, for only $20, young people and their families can become part of the Catholic Charities mission, helping people who may be working, but cannot earn a living wage in today’s economy, enough to make ends meet. It’s a small price to pay to be able to help our neighbors.
ARE YOU WILLING TO CONFORM YOUR LIFE TO THE CROSS?

By Lucas Pollice

In this month of September, the Church celebrates two liturgical events which call our attention to the mystery of the Cross. The first is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14 and the second is the Rite of Acceptance which will be celebrated in many parishes this month as a part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

During this powerful Rite, those who are preparing for baptism are asked by the priest, “Are you willing to conform your life to the Cross?”

These two great liturgical events call all of us to once again reflect upon the Cross of Jesus Christ and its place in our daily lives. What does the Cross reveal to us, and what does accepting the Cross in our lives call us to?

First, the Cross reveals to us the unending and merciful love of the Father, a Father who is faithful to Himself and his promise of salvation. For many, the Cross is a stumbling block, the image of the disfigured Christ crushed by the sins of humanity. But this is the paradox of the Cross! Through the horror of sin and death is revealed a love that is more powerful than any conceivable evil.

The Cross also reveals to us the great dignity of each and every human person. Through his passion and death, Christ unites himself intimately with each and every person, takes upon himself our sins, and through the shedding of his precious blood, raises our dignity to a new and unsurpassing dignity. How precious must we be in the sight of God that he gave his only Son so that we may be redeemed? Thus, the Cross is a powerful revelation of the dignity of the human person that confronts our modern day “culture of death” which cheapens in so many ways the dignity of the person. The Cross stands as the eternal witness to the preciousness of human life, the very human life that was redeemed, from the moment of his conception in Mary’s womb to the moment of his death when death itself was destroyed, by the very Savor hanging from its wood. This is the good news of Christianity, the “gospel of life” that Blessed Pope John Paul II also speaks of as the “human dimension” of the redemption:

“Therefore,” for our sake (God) made him (the Son) to be sin who knew no sin. If he was made to be sin him who was without any sin whatsoever, it was to reveal the love that is always greater than the whole of creation, the love that is he himself, since “God is love.” Above all, love is greater than sin, than weakness, than the “futility of creation”; it is stronger than death. For the love of Christ constrained us to preach the Gospel to you, not in vain. For “if I am afflicted, it is for you; if I am made to suffer, it is for you.” — 2 Corinthians 2:14-15

Therefore, “as merci, and in man’s history this revelation of love and mercy has taken a form and a name: that of Jesus Christ” — The Redeemer of Man, 9

The Cross also reveals to us the great dignity of each and every human person. Through his passion and death, Christ unites himself intimately with each and every person, takes upon himself our sins, and through the shedding of his precious blood, raises our dignity to a new and unsurpassing dignity. How precious must we be in the sight of God that he gave his only Son so that we may be redeemed? Thus, the Cross is a powerful revelation of the dignity of the human person that confronts our modern day “culture of death” which cheapens in so many ways the dignity of the person. The Cross stands as the eternal witness to the preciousness of human life, the very human life that was redeemed, from the moment of his conception in Mary’s womb to the moment of his death when death itself was destroyed, by the very Savor hanging from its wood. This is the good news of Christianity, the “gospel of life” that Blessed Pope John Paul II also speaks of as the “human dimension” of the redemption:

In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the Redemption man becomes newly “expressed” and, in a way, is newly created. He is newly created! The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly — and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being — must with his heart, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self, he must “appropriate” and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself: If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. How precious must be in the eyes of the Creator, if he “gained to great a Redeemer,” and if God “gave his only Son “in order that man “should not perish but have eternal life.” — The Redeemer of Man, 10

Therefore, in order to truly know ourselves, we must put ourselves in communion with the redemption of Christ and take up the Cross in our daily lives. To take up our cross means to be like Christ and lay down our lives and give of ourselves out of love for others. In fact, this gift of self stands at the very heart of what it means to be human, to be created in the image and likeness of God. As Vatican II profoundly states: “This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (The Church in the Modern World, 24). Thus, it is only through giving of ourselves that we can come to know true freedom and life!

Our freedom is not given to us to just do as we please, but that we may freely give of ourselves in love to God and others. The Cross both reveals to us and calls us to this truth. As John Paul II states: “The Crucified Christ reveals the authentic meaning of freedom; he lives it fully in the total gift of himself and calls his disciples to share in his freedom” (The Splendor of Truth, 85).

Therefore, the Cross must become our example and pattern of living as disciples of Christ. This does not mean that we need to go out looking for suffering, but it is an overall attitude of love and giving of a gift of self through our ordinary lives. By carrying our own daily cross and uniting ourselves intimately to the Cross of Christ, our daily duties, activities, and even sufferings take on a new meaning and light. Even the most menial tasks can suddenly become redemptive when offered with a spirit of sacrifice and love. In fact, our whole life can become a “spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5) We especially offer ourselves as a living sacrifice in the sacrifice of the Mass, when we offer ourselves with Christ to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. At each and every Mass we literally stand at the foot of the Cross and offer ourselves wholly and entirely to the Father. Through this gift of sacrifice, we are then transformed by the grace of the Eucharist and sent forth into the world “to love and serve the Lord.”

Imagine if all of us were to take the mystery and power of the Cross through our lives to our own little corners of the world! The world would be a very different place! So, with faith and trust in God’s grace, we must daily ask ourselves anew, “Are you willing to conform your life to the Cross?”

Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master’s degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University.
Four Steps to Christian Maturity:

Recognize Christ! Listen to Christ!

Proclaim Christ! Give your life to Christ!

Have you ever wondered why those who have just joined the Catholic Church are excited about their faith, are filled with the Spirit, and ready to spread the Word of God? Sometimes we may say to ourselves, “Wow, I wish I had that kind of zeal!” yet on other occasions we may say under our breath, “Whatever. In a few months I hope it wears out.” I hope we lean toward a desire for the good of another and not toward jealousy or envy because someone has been powerfully blessed.

I propose to you that there are four clear steps needed for any Christian, male or female, to grow in maturity of their faith and reliance on God. From all that I have read on the lives of the saints they have all gone through these four steps that I will outline. Furthermore, it would be most advantageous for teenagers and the college-aged to know that these steps are a prerequisite for a lifetime of spiritual growth in order to make good adult decisions. These four steps, which are progressively more difficult, will also prepare young people as they consider their careers, or court the idea of marriage or the religious life. Let’s see these four steps and challenges that Jesus presents to Peter in Luke 5:1-11.

The first step to Christian maturity is to recognize that God is with us at all times, that Jesus has chosen to step into the boat that is our life. We see that Jesus was already preaching to the crowds when he chose to get into the boat that belonged to Simon Peter who was minding his own business. This may remind us of the passage from John 15:16, “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.”

So, when did Jesus decide to step into your life? When you were baptized? That’s the day that Jesus most assuredly came into your life, cleansed you from your sins, and opened up the channel to life in the Holy Spirit by a new birth to live a holy life, gave you a mission in life that is irrevocable, incorporated you into the Christian community of faith centered on Christ in the Eucharist, raised you in dignity through his grace, and welcomed you to a place of honor where you shall never be shamed but always treasured.

The second step of Christian maturity is to listen to the Word of God which parallels Jesus’ request to Peter as “he asked him to put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing.

The third level to Christian maturity is much more difficult. It involves personal risk and courage and all too few Catholics are willing to take their faith to this level, but maybe it’s time to get there. The Gospel continues: “After he had finished speaking he said to Simon, ‘Put our into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.’ Simon said in reply, ‘Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.’”

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Four and last step to spiritual maturity is to give our whole lives over to Christ who perpetually loves us despite our fallen nature. “When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." … Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.” St. Paul says it best in 2 Corinthians 5:14: “the love of Christ compels us …So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away.”

When we are convinced that Jesus is the only way for our lives and we become convinced in our faith, then we, like Peter and the apostles, have reached spiritual maturity while bringing the will of God for our lives even though we will still struggle internally to be reformed and reformed in Christ, and even though externally we will be harshly treated and mocked. Let us not forget all the saints who urge us on the path of Christ which they themselves also chose.

In summary these four steps to spiritual maturity are: Recognize Christ! Listen to Christ! Proclaim Christ! Give your life to Christ! Then and only then can you reach your full potential as a Christian adult as Christ intends. Most converts have gone through all four of these stages and hence their joy and excitement of being Catholic can seem over the top, as it should be for all of us. Where do you see yourself? Let’s all strive to reach that next step as the love of Christ compels us!
Someday each of us will be remembered. It’s up to us how.

By Jeff Hedglen

There is nothing like learning how to live from attending a funeral. I recently attended two funerals, both were filled with sadness and joy, a mixture of mourning and celebration, just like it should be when faith-filled people pass away. The surprising thing was the life lessons I learned from these two wonderful women.

The first was a friend of mine named Jackie. During the sermon portion of the service the presider pulled out a Bible and informed the congregation that this was Jackie’s Bible and that the sermon was going to be taken from the highlighted and underlined sections of the Bible. Page by page, line by line, highlight by highlight, we saw into the heart of our dear friend. We were privileged to see what parts of God’s living Word had touched, encouraged, challenged, and comforted Jackie over the years. It was a beautiful mirror into our dear friend’s soul.

Later on in the funeral we were challenged with the idea that when our own came and if our own Bible was the fodder for the sermon, what would the message be? We all kind of looked around, and I could tell that we were all thinking, geez; we have to start highlighting our Bibles! But of course this goes way beyond what we have underlined and has more to do with the challenge to read and meditate on the Word of God in such a way that the words come alive and move us so much that we want to be able to find these words again with ease.

The second funeral was for Lura, the mother of a good friend. She had lived a long and wonderful life. There seemed to be an endless stream of people who had an equally endless fount of powerful and touching memories of their connection with her. Stories came from her children, grandchildren, church family, and friends, each one more touching than the last. It was abundantly clear that Lura not only was a woman of faith, but that she lived that faith.

As we gathered outside the church I overheard a friend saying tearfully “O my gosh, I have to start being a better mother, grandmother, wife, friend, and Christian. Otherwise what will people be saying about me at my funeral?” I’m sure many of us felt the same way. Hearing about the reckless abandon with which this woman lived her life and faith was a powerful challenge to all in attendance to step up our game.

What is life all about and what is our purpose on this planet? I have heard it said that when someone is on their deathbed they never say: “I wish I had made more money” or “I wish I had bought a bigger home.” Rather, the regrets people have when they are nearing death surround their relationships, their faith, and how they spend their limited time on earth.

Page by page, line by line, highlight by highlight, we saw into the heart of our dear friend. What is life all about and what is our purpose on this planet? I have heard it said that when someone is on their deathbed they never say: “I wish I had made more money” or “I wish I had bought a bigger home.” Rather, the regrets people have when they are nearing death surround their relationships, their faith, and how they spend their limited time on earth.

Yet, while we are living our lives, we often are consumed with things that, in the big scheme of things, are really trivial. This is not to say that making money and having a home are inconsequential things, only that we can get so distracted, left on grudges for no real good reason, destroying relationships and ruining lives. We can stay so busy that we leave very little time for friends and family, or for that matter, ourselves. We have so few days on this planet, even though living to 90 seems like a long time, when that day gets here it will seem like a blink of the eye.

Attending those two funerals caused me to take a look at my life and the way I spend my time. The lives of those two women encouraged me to focus more time on my relationship with Jesus and the people in my life who matter most. Most of all, the experience got me thinking about my funeral and what people might say about me. That thought alone is motivating me to give everything I have to each day I live.

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

Cross-Words

By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

1. Essential book
2. Thoughts
3. Sounds the horn
4. Slip
5. German industrial town

1 2 3 4 5

1
2
3
4
5

The etching “Christ Preaching” (The Hundred Guilder Print) is among the works being shown in “Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus” on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art through Oct. 30. After its showing in Philadelphia, the exhibit moves to the Detroit Institute of Art.

Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry, greets attendees at an international conference on women’s health care and the dignity of motherhood sponsored by MaterCare International at the Vatican Sept. 2. Also pictured are Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., right, who spoke at the conference, and Dr. Jose Maria Simon de Castro, president of the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations.

Features

Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi

ONE MINUTE THEY PRO-CHOICE, THEN THEY’RE PRO-LIFE

AND THE NEXT MINUTE THEY
SWITCH BACK FROM PRO-LIFE TO PRO-ABORTION

I DON’T MIND THE FLIP-FLOPPING, IT’S THE FLOP-FLOPPING I CAN’T STAND

I DON’T GET THESE POLITICIANS...

The ROCK

by Jean Desmon

I’M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT MY DIRECTION IN LIFE.

I JUST WANT YOU TO LOVE ME, AND CARE FOR MY LOVED ONES.

OH, OWW! THIS ISN’T ABOUT YOU, EVERYTHING IS ABOUT YOU, I WANT IT.

OH, WAIT—EVERYTHING IS ABOUT YOU, I WANT IT!

www.cheapdolce.com
Respect Life Month

Ministries that offer families healing after miscarriages and stillbirths are growing in the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

Maria Walters had a feeling something was wrong with the baby she was carrying. The expectant mother wrote down her fears in a pregnancy journal, then quickly brushed them aside. Having already produced three healthy children calmed the busy mom’s anxiety as she prepared her brood for a trip to the obstetrician’s office to hear the news of her baby’s heart beat.

“Seconds after the doctor started the sonogram, he asked the kids to leave the room, and I knew I miscarried,” Walters remembers. “For the next few minutes, I went numb to what the doctor was saying.”

The miscarriage catapulted Maria and her husband, Jeff, into a world of unexplained and unexpected loss. In the days that followed, few resources were available to help the family cope with the chemically induced labor and delivery of the lost pregnancy or the need to acknowledge their child’s death. At 15 weeks gestation, the five-inch long fetus — a girl named Mary Abigail — was perfectly formed with fingers and toes.

“She even had a dimple on her chin, just like the one my husband and older daughter [share],” recalls the grieving mother who held her baby following delivery. “She was beautiful but lifeless.”

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioners never considered surrendering their daughter’s tiny body to the hospital for disposal. State law requires cremation or burial of a fetus only after 20 weeks. At the same time, they had no Church guidelines to follow regarding funeral services after miscarriage.

“I don’t know how people go through something like this without faith,” Walters says tearfully. “Mary never took a breath, but I know she had a purpose.”

The couple hopes their experience sheds light on a personal tragedy few people talk about. In a culture where the existence of life at conception is debated, miscarriage is dismissed as an “act of nature.” For the Walters, the unborn soul they created deserved a name, proper burial, and respect. Their discussion with hospital staff following the miscarriage was typical.

“They said most parents leave the remains at the hospital because it’s too expensive to do anything else, and funeral homes don’t mess with a baby that size,” Maria says, her voice cracking with emotion. “We wanted our daughter treated with dignity.”

Linda Puente knows what it’s like to feel insensitive remarks from people following a miscarriage. The St. Andrew Church member suffered two miscarriages and the birth of a stillborn son before finding comfort and understanding during a parish-sponsored memorial service for unborn children. Held each January during Sanctity of Human Life Month, the liturgy and naming ceremony at St. Andrew offers support and healing to parents who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. Mothers are encouraged to acknowledge their baby with a name and are given an unsealed certificate. Entire families sometimes attend the service together.

“When I sat down at my first memorial service, I realized I wasn’t alone,” says Puente, who waged a personal struggle with grief for years despite loving support from husband, Cruz.

She was the mother of a two-year-old daughter when her first miscarriage happened 10 weeks into a pregnancy.

“It didn’t seem real,” she says, describing the sudden loss. “You’re told you’re expecting, and your head begins to fill with plans and ambitions for this child. All of a sudden it’s gone, and you’re left wondering ‘why?’”

Uncomfortable talking about the miscarriage, Puente’s friends either ignored the situation or said the wrong thing. The words, “You have another baby,” didn’t ease her overwhelming feeling of emptiness.

“There’s no coffin, burial, or service,” she explains. “Eventually you get over the shock, but never acknowledging that baby compounds the grief.”

Today, Puente shares the comfort she found at her parish with others. As one of the directors of Healing Hearts, the mother of two grown children organizes the annual memorial service for unborn children at St. Andrew. The outreach ministry also gives prayerful support to grieving families, if parents contact them.

“We’re in the process of growing the ministry, so we can offer more than just one event,” she explains. “We’d like to host quarterly gatherings where women could sit down and talk with one another. It helps to listen to someone who’s gone through the same experience.”

Puente says the miscarriages made her a more compassionate person.

“People don’t realize how often miscarriage happens until it happens to them,” the organizer says. “There’s definitely a need for this ministry. No one should go through this alone.”

A diocesan Mass for Children Who Died Before Baptism also provides grieving parents with a sense of community and closure. Sponsored by Mother & Unborn Baby Care of North Texas and Catholics United for Life, the annual Mass is held each October at St. Mary the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia Ave. on the near South Side of Fort Worth. Father David Bristow will celebrate this year’s liturgy on Saturday, Oct. 8 at 12 noon.

“We’ve had women come to this Mass who lost their babies 50 years ago,” explains Chuck Pellerier, who organizes the event along with his wife, Pat. “At the time they didn’t get counseling or help. Their baby’s body was lost to them.”

Found in the Sacramentary of the Catholic Church, the liturgy commemorates the loss of children before baptism and prays that mourning parents find strength and 

SEE MISCARRIAGE, P. 17
Fort Worth 40 Days for Life kick-off rally to be held Sept. 28

Fort Worth’s fourth annual 40 Days for Life campaign is set to kick off with a rally at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28, across the street from the Planned Parenthood facility on 301 S. Henderson St., and will run through Nov. 6.

The 40 Days for Life campaign is a focused pro-life prayer campaign that is held in hundreds of cities throughout the world.

Bishop Kevin Vann is expected to deliver the opening prayer for the rally, followed by the event’s main speaker, Chris Aubert, a Catholic apologist who focuses on addressing pro-life issues such as abortion and contraception from a man’s perspective.

“He’s an enthusiastic and charismatic speaker, and we expect him to deliver an encouraging speech to the prayer volunteers,” said Jeff Williams, the Fort Worth 40 Days for Life communications coordinator about Aubert.

Since its inception in Bryan / College Station in 2004, 40 Days for Life has mobilized more than 400,000 people worldwide, saved more than 4,300 lives from abortion, seen 13 abortion facilities close, and led to the conversion of 52 abortion workers, including Abby Johnson, the former director of UnPlanned, a memoir detailing her experience working for Planned Parenthood.

Williams said organizers are planning a rally halfway through the campaign this year, with a date and location to be announced later. Organizers are also hoping to increase communication with prayer volunteers.

According to a flyer, 40 Days for Life is made up of three components:

- **Prayer and Fasting** — believers throughout the Fort Worth metro area are invited to join together for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting for an end to abortion.
- **Peaceful Vigil** — participants take a stand for life during a 40-day peaceful public witness outside Planned Parenthood;
- **Community Outreach** — help take a positive, upbeat pro-life message to every corner of the area through media efforts, advocacy, and public visibility.

“We’re trying to increase people’s awareness about the need to pray and fast,” Williams said.

To do this, organizers will distribute prayer cards labeled “The Discipline of Fasting” with tips on fasting.

“We can fast from meat or food, but there are other ways to fast that might be more beneficial to our spiritual life,” say the prayer cards, encouraging people to fast from things such as judging others, pessimism, or bitterness, and instead, encouraging to fast on Christ dwelling in others, in optimism, and in forgiveness.

To learn more about 40 Days for Life, or how to participate, e-mail local coordinators at 40daysforlifeftworth@gmail.com or by visit the website at www.40daysforlifeftworth.com.

**Life Chain invites pro-life to prayerful witness**

Since 1987, pro-life advocates have been coming together in October to form Life Chains in cities and towns across the country, offering a peaceful, silent, and prayerful witness for life.

“It is a silent witness of the Christian community standing together in honor of the 54 million babies whose lives have been lost to [surgical] abortion,” said Sharron Albertson, state director for Life Chain in Texas, noting the prayer is also for the countless numbers of unborn children killed by abortifacient drugs such as the “morning after” pill.

“Last year we listed more than 1,500 cities and towns with multiple locations, so that more than 1,800 locations were listed,” added Albertson, who is also Life Chain’s website coordinator.

Typically held on the first Sunday of October, this year, most cities and towns will hold their Life Chains on Sunday, Oct. 2. Albertson mentioned that some locations, such as Flower Mound and Dublin, choose to hold their events later in the month to avoid conflicts with other community events.

Signs for the Life Chain are provided, and only approved non-graphic signs will be allowed. Other guidelines include remaining a silent prayerful presence, standing 25 to 30 feet apart along the route, and not to park in front of any open businesses. Lawn chairs, strollers, umbrellas, and water are welcome. Donations will be accepted to cover the cost of the Life Chain.

Signs provided at each location proclaim “Abortion Kills Children”; “Adoption the Loving Option”; “Jesus Forgives & Heals”; “Lord, Forgive Us and Our Nation”; “Abortion Hurts Women”; “El Aborto Mata Ninos”; “Life — the first Inalienable Right”; “Pray to End Abortion”; and “Pregnant? Need Help? 1-800-395-HELP”.

**Life Chain Location List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keller</td>
<td>Highway 377 between North Tarrant Parkway and Waragua Road, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— Alana Demma (817) 337-1721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisville</td>
<td>Main Street at Interstate 35-E, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— John Lance (737) 436-2273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay</td>
<td>Highway 82 between Ash Street and Pecan Street, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— Stan and Stephanie Stoffels (940) 727-8663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>Highway 287 at F.M. 157 (Cooper Street, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— Kathi Miller (817) 335-9258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Wells</td>
<td>Highway 180 at Garrett Morris Parkway, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— Sharon Walls (940) 325-8920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muenster</td>
<td>Highway 82 at Muenster Park, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— John Beznar (940) 634-1434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Richland Hills</td>
<td>Chisholm Trail (Fm 1709) at Kimball Avenue and Carroll Avenue, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— Mary Solis (817) 329-0402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weatherford</td>
<td>S. Main Street, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— Jeanette Houle (817) 613-8008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita Falls</td>
<td>Midwestern Parkway at Kemp Boulevard, 3 to 4 p.m.</td>
<td>— Brenda Grayson (940) 716-9775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Highway 377 at Interstate 635 at Goldson Avenue, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— The Rev. Tim and Rhonda Boykin (325) 998-0818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Worth</td>
<td>3601 Alta Mesa Blvd., 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— Robert Battle (817) 556-3848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comanche</td>
<td>Highway 16 at Highway 377 south of courthouse, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— The Rev. Tim and Rhonda Boykin (325) 998-0818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeLeon</td>
<td>Highway 6 at Highway 16, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— The Rev. Ray Seckinger (254) 734-5146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton</td>
<td>Carroll Boulevard at University Drive, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— Cheryl Spooner (940) 594-8870</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td>Grand Avenue at Belcher, 2 to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>— Father Victor Cruz, HGN (940) 665-5395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>Elm Street between Third and Fourth Streets east of Courthouse Square, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— Guilda King (940) 521-1512 and The Rev. Wayne Harden (940) 521-1737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurst / Euless / Bedford</td>
<td>Pipeline Road at Interstate 820, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— Dave Palmer (972) 737-2990</td>
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<td>Life Chain in Flower Mound will be held Sunday, Oct. 30:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Mound</td>
<td>Highway 2499 at Forest Vista, Sun, Oct 30, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>— Myra Jean Myers (972) 539-6770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Miscarriage ...
FROM PAGE 15
comfort knowing their loved one is entrusted to God’s care.

A ritual included in the local Mass invites families to place a rose on the Marian altar in memory of their miscarried, aborted, or stillborn babies. Pelletier hopes heartbroken parents will turn to Mary — the Mother of all humanity — to help them cope with their grief.

“Some people have the spiritual need to go to a cemetery for closure, but most of these parents have no grave for their babies,” he points out. “The Marian altar gives them a place they can come back to and visit.”

Pelletier, a former post-abortion counselor, says providing parents with the opportunity to “give their baby to God” helps them heal emotionally and move forward. The Mass typically draws a crowd of 80 to 250 people and is open to everyone. A reception following the Mass is intended to replicate the meal and social gatherings most families host after a funeral.

Feedback from the Mass is always positive. When it comes to the healing power of prayer, “you can’t do any better than a Mass,” Pelletier adds.

For Maria Walters and her husband, the prayers and thoughtfulness of family and friends made a difficult time easier. A fellow parishioner and OB-Gyn nurse, Amy Cook, arrived for her shift at the hospital in time to deliver the couple’s baby with dignity and care. Father Jeff Poiriot, pastor of Holy Family Church in Fort Worth, called to reassure the couple and Thompson’s Harveson and Cole Funeral Home came to pick up their daughter’s remains in a small, wooden box.

A few days later, one of the directors, Cindy Thompson, led the family in a brief prayer service before placing Mary Abigail in a sealed brass box for burial next to her grandfather in Kaufman, just southeast of Dallas. Losing a child so unexpectedly made Maria’s faith stronger. She likes to think of her little girl as an angel.

“As parents, our job is to get our kids to heaven,” the resilient mother says, recalling an observation made by a friend. “I find comfort knowing I’ve already got one there.”

Bishops aim to mobilize Catholics to guard consciences on contraception

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops are working to mobilize Catholics across the country to tell the Obama administration that contraception and sterilization do not constitute preventive care for women and must not be mandated as part of health reform.

Through a new website at www.usccb.org/conscience, the bishops hope to generate thousands of comments to the Department of Health and Human Services about its Aug. 1 proposal that would require nearly all employers to provide sterilization and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including some that can cause an abortion, at no cost to women covered by their health insurance plans.

But time is of the essence, because the 60-day comment period on the HHS proposal closes Sept. 30. The site also includes a second “action alert” asking Catholics to tell their members of Congress to co-sponsor and pass the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act, which would guarantee the protection of conscience rights in all aspects of implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Proposed in the House of Representatives this spring, the legislation was introduced in the Senate Aug. 2 by three Republican senators — Roy Blunt of Missouri, Marco Rubio of Florida, and Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire.

“Respect for rights of conscience in health care has been a matter of strong bipartisan consensus for almost four decades,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, in a Sept. 7 letter to Congress.

The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act “would change no current state or federal mandate for health coverage, but simply prevent any new mandates under (the health reform law) — such as HHS’ new set of ‘preventive services for women’ — from being used to disregard the freedom of conscience that Americans now enjoy,” he added. “This would seem to be an absolutely essential element of any promise that if Americans like the health plan they now have, they may retain it.”

In addition to the two action alerts, the bishops’ website features backgrounders on conscience-related topics, news releases and documents on the HHS mandate and similar issues, and a commentary by Richard M. Doerflinger, associate director of the bishops’ Secretariat on Pro-Life Activities, about “the high costs of ‘free’ birth control.”

Doerflinger said it is “nonsensical” to see the proposed requirement that health plans offer contraceptives without co-pays or deductibles as “free birth control.”

“Currently women who want birth control coverage pay for it through their premiums, and sometimes also have a co-pay or out-of-pocket expense,” he wrote. “Under the new mandate they will still pay for it, but the cost will be buried in the overall premium — and everyone else, including churches and other religious employers as well as individual Catholics, will be forced to pay for it in their premiums too, so payments coerced from those who object will make birth control coverage a bit cheaper for those who want it.”

The site also offers information about the HHS mandate and what the bishops call the “incredibly narrow” religious exemption to it, the abortion-causing effect of at least one drug that would be included under the mandate and what should constitute preventive services under the health reform law.

“Everyone deserves access to basic life-affirming health care, and health care reform is supposed to serve that goal,” says a backgrounder on preventive health. “The effect of this mandate is just the opposite, as it pressures organizations to drop their health coverage for employees and others altogether if they have a moral or religious objection to these particular items.”

"Blessing after a miscarriage"
For those who trust in God, in the pain and sorrow there is consolation, in the face of despair there is hope, in the midst of death there is life. ...as we mourn the death of your child we place ourselves in the hands of God and pray for strength, for healing and for love.

—From “Blessing of a couple after a miscarriage,”
Book of Blessings (The Liturgical Press)
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we begin a new Sharing in Ministry appeal, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your generosity and your commitment to stewardship in this effort. Through this appeal we come together as a local Church to support a broad range of ministries, programs and apostolates within the Diocese that reach beyond the scope of any individual parish and are made possible by the collective giving of you, the faithful.

During 2009 and 2010, your generosity to the All Things Possible Campaign enabled us to continue programs and ministries funded by the annual appeal. With the fall of 2011, we are resuming Sharing in Ministry in its separate form.

TOGETHER REACHING OUT is the theme for this year’s appeal. Each of us is being challenged to go forth as the Body of Christ, “to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share.” — 1 Timothy 6:17-19. We need the generosity of all parishioners to help our diocesan Church provide:

- grants to supplement local funds to meet facility, program and ministry needs in our rural and center-city parishes and schools
- funds for tuition assistance for Catholic school families
- outreach to thousands of needy people served through Catholic Charities

The Sharing in Ministry Bishop’s Annual Appeal provides essential, annual operating funds that directly impact the lives of people throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth with programs, services and ministries that reach beyond the scope of any individual parish and are made possible by the collective giving to the appeal.

The All Things Possible campaign was an extraordinary effort above and beyond Sharing in Ministry to ensure the future viability of the Diocese and to raise funds for individual parishes. The campaign was a necessary measure to meet the growing demands of the Diocese that Sharing in Ministry cannot meet on an annual basis. Sharing in Ministry was included in the All Things Possible campaign for 2009 and 2010. Four million dollars was allocated to fund the programs normally fulfilled by Sharing in Ministry. In 2011, the Sharing in Ministry Bishop’s Annual Appeal returns to its separate form.
Christ,

- support to priests and sisters transitioning to ministry in our diocese and those pursuing advanced studies
- pastoral and administrative resources and services to our parishes, schools and other ministries

I invite you to join me in support of **Sharing in Ministry**. It is only by working together that we can accomplish much. Thank you for embracing God’s grace within you in loving generosity to others as our local Church in North Texas. May God bless each of you always.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Kevin W. Vann**
Most Rev. Kevin W. Vann, J.C.D., D.D.
Bishop of Fort Worth
If you ask Thomas W. Keefe about the University of Dallas’ rigorous core curriculum, he immediately recalls a recent conversation with a grousing underclassman.

The college junior complained to the university’s president about a literature assignment that required him to read Geoffrey Chaucer in Old English. Written in the Middle Ages before English pronunciation more like modern English, the poet’s works — like *The Canterbury Tales* — are difficult to study.

“I’m going to medical school. Why do I have to read Chaucer?” the student grumbled.

Keefe reminded the young man that challenging courses prepare UD graduates for success beyond the classroom.

“If you can read and understand Chaucer as a junior in college, there’s not a medical textbook out there you can’t master,” Keefe assured him.

The core curriculum — specific courses that outline the development of Western thought and culture from classical to modern times — is one of the traits that set the small, Catholic liberal arts university and its students apart. Pioneered by the university’s third president Donald A. Cowan and his wife, Dr. Louise Cowan, the common courses required of all undergraduates are based on classic texts. Academically challenging and personally transformative, the core curriculum encourages critical thinking and oral debate.

“Of the 700 colleges and universities in the U.S., only 17 still have a rigorous academic core committed to a broad appreciation of liberal arts before one pursues a specific course of study,” Keefe points out.

Adherence to a core curriculum is based on the belief that 17- and 18-year-old college freshmen don’t understand the academic world well enough to decide on a proficient, professional course of study. Classes in Western Civilization, literature, language, theology, philosophy, and science not only provide a broad base of knowledge, but also develop reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

“We’re a classic university that prepares the mind and prepares the spirit of students to take on significant challenges in life, academically and professionally,” President Keefe explains.

The school’s post-graduate statistics support that claim. Within two years of completing an undergraduate degree, 80 percent of students enroll in a graduate program. Ninety percent of pre-law students are accepted into law school and 85 percent of UD applicants go to medical school.

“Those numbers are comparable to any classic university in this country,” Keefe boasts.

Take into consideration that the school has no formal pre-med major, and the figures become even more impressive.

“Students are well-prepared because of the rigor and discipline of the curriculum,” he continues. “Not only do our students attend medical and law school at a high rate, they succeed at an even higher rate.”

Tim Gesner, a junior biology major, is planning a career in medicine but strong academics aren’t the only reason he chose the University of Dallas.

“What also sets it apart is its strong Catholic heritage,” says the practicing Catholic. “I was so enthusiastic about coming to a school where they truly care about building a strong Catholic community.”

UD’s Catholic heritage has its roots in the Diocese of Fort Worth where the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur operated the Our Lady

SEE LEGACY, P. 21
University of Dallas Rome program exposes students to Christian roots

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

University of Dallas students, who spend a semester studying at the school’s Rome campus, agree on one thing — the experience is transformative.

No one knows that better than Dr. John Norris. After winning a full academic scholarship to UD, the New Mexico native arrived in North Texas planning to follow in his father’s footsteps. The young college student thought he’d earn a degree in math or chemistry and become a professor.

That ambition changed after Norris took Western Theological Tradition — part of the core curriculum offered at the Eugene Constantin Rome Campus at Due Santi.

“Theology led me to look at life deeply and in an intellectual fashion,” says the 1984 graduate, remembering how the course material helped him cope with the death of his father at the end of his sophomore year. “It helped me answer questions about suffering, dying, purpose, and meaning that I was processing personally.”

Today, Norris, a 20-year veteran of UD’s theology department, credits his former Rome professor, Michael Waldstein, for fueling a burgeoning interest in the Christian faith that led to his teaching career.

“He took the questions and comments of his students seriously and really listened, tried to understand and respond,” explains the theology professor. “At the same time, he lived out his faith. We saw that in the lunchroom and as we traveled.”

It’s that kind of exposure to knowledge, spirituality, and example that makes the Rome semester a life changer for UD students, who spend a semester studying in Rome.

“Rome is an incredible, concentrated, imaginative core of what we do in UD as a whole,” says Norris who directed the program from 1992 to 1995. “There’s something about the Rome semester that is radically life-altering and unforgettable.”

The opportunity to study abroad was one of the reasons Anthony Nguyen chose the University of Dallas over other schools. Living in the Eternal City last spring made him a more confident traveler and a better Catholic.

“When the program took us to Assisi, Venice, Bari, and Rome, I truly learned how Italians live day-to-day,” says the junior biology major. “I walked the streets and listened to the most beautiful language around. The amount of Italian I picked up just hearing Italians talk to one another was astounding.”

Never a history buff, Gesner was quickly drawn into the thrill of seeing sites and relics preserved from ancient times.

“In class you would sigh how the Romans fought and died for Palatine Hill. The next day we stood on the same hill where countless battles took place years ago,” he explains. “In the atmosphere we were learning in, it’s hard not to fall in love with history.”

Intellectually, the five-course curriculum, coupled with hands-on experience, fires up a “catalytic reaction,” according to Norris.

“Students start to see how philosophy, literature, theology, history, art history, and language all interweave. And they do this in an environment where they can touch, see, feel, and smell what they are learning,” the professor continues. “They walk through the Roman forum as Julius Caesar did. They go to Corinthis and Athens where St. Paul spoke, and they visit St. Peter’s and stand on the stone where the Emperor Charlemagne was crowned.”

Vacations are educational but living in Europe for an extended period of time leaves an imprint that lasts a lifetime, Norris says.

“I think our students who have studied abroad are always Romans, he adds. “They come back knowing that city better than any other. They’ve walked through it, read and studied about it, eaten the food, fallen in love, and worshipped in it. Rome becomes part of who they are.”

Legacy ...

FROM PAGE 20

of Victory Junior College. When the religious community decided to relocate the school, it teamed with laymen Eugene Constantin, Jr., and Edward R. Maher, Sr., in the hopes of establishing a four-year Catholic institution of higher learning in North Texas. With the approval of Bishop Thomas Gorman, The University of Dallas opened in 1956 under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas with ownership by a Board of Trustees. Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann currently serves on the board.

Throughout its 54-year history, the Irving-based school has maintained a strong adherence to Catholic beliefs and principles. In its mission statement, the university says it is shaped, “by the long tradition of Catholic learning and acknowledges its commitment to the Catholic Church and its teachings.”

When it comes to rigorous academics and fidelity to the Catholic faith, “there isn’t a university that can hold a candle to us,” Keefe insists. “We have a great joy, acknowledgement, and enthusiasm for our Catholic heritage and commitment to the Church.”

UD is “enthusiastically” Catholic but welcomes students of all faiths. When the school admitted its first 96 undergraduates in 1956, Bishop Gorman hoped the university wouldn’t become a place exclusively for the affluent.

“He challenged us to open our
Legacies are the school’s best endorsement, according to Keefe.

“We love all of God’s children and want to provide them with a quality education,” he adds. “We support,” he adds. “We love all of God’s children and want to provide them with a quality education.”

To achieve that objective, the university makes tuition costs as affordable as possible. Almost every year, the students pay less than 50 percent of the stated tuition rate thanks to scholarships, grants, and loans. One of the President Keefe’s goals is to grow UD’s $50 million endowment fund, so more scholarship money is available.

Other schools have larger endowments, but “there isn’t a school as good as we are that charges less than we do,” he promises.

Touted as one of the country’s best institutions for undergraduate education by The Princeton Review, the University of Dallas draws a notable number of National Merit Scholars. Currently, 60 are enrolled among a student body of 1,360 undergraduates.

Proportionately, that’s the highest number of any Catholic university in the country,” Keefe enthuses. Last year, 47 students were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most respected undergraduate honors organization in America. The University of Dallas is the only Catholic university in Texas with a chapter.

A growing national reputation is helping the school attract admissions from across the U.S. Fifteen-eight percent of the school’s population comes from outside the state making UD “the most national university” in Texas.

“In Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and in Southern California, we’re better known, and in some ways, better appreciated, than in our own neighborhood,” Keefe explains.

Nineteen-year-old Mary Couture admits experiencing some culture shock when she first arrived in Dallas from Maine two years ago. The hot climate and concrete vistas were a shock to the senses for the newcomer.

“When I got to campus all my trepidation went away,” the college junior remembers. “I was in a place where everyone was outgoing and friendly.”

Couture, who applied to two colleges, chose UD because of its uncompromising academics and Rome program. The home-schooled teen hopes to become an English teacher and is pleased with her decision. Core classes, taken by everyone, help students choose a major and strengthen bonds within the community.

“I feel blessed to be here,” says Couture who appreciates the way teachers challenge students to pursue truth, beauty, and ask the big questions — “Who am I?” and “Why am I here?”

“They help you discern who you are,” she explains. “Once you know that, you can serve God and those around you.”

Couture says the university’s Catholic identity not only survives on campus but thrives, adding, “it’s beautiful the way the university lives the beliefs we hold here.”

Like many other UD students, Couture followed in the footsteps of her older sister, Therese, an alumna of the university. Legacies are the school’s best endorsement, according to President Keefe.

“We have a huge percentage of parents and grandparents who send their kids to the University of Dallas,” Keefe asserts. “Our best recruitment tool is the older brother or sister who encourages their younger brothers and sisters to come here.”

Alumni are the school’s most ardent supporters. After four years on campus, University of Dallas students leave knowing they have received an education second to none.

“And they love the University of Dallas,” the university president says proudly. “They loved the experience of being here.”

University of Dallas introduces new pastoral ministry undergraduate program

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

When it comes to the shortfall of priests ministering to a growing population of North Texas Catholics, the numbers aren’t good.

Serving the burgeoning numbers of Catholics in the dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas, is a highly dedicated cadre of diocesan and religious priests. Though both dioceses have experienced a recent surge in the number of young men studying for the priesthood, even with all of them ordained and in place, the ratio of active priests to Catholic parishioners in both dioceses is likely to remain vastly disproportionate.

The demand for well-trained, lay ministers is the reason why Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann and Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell approached the University of Dallas with a special request. They asked the Catholic, liberal arts school to consider offering an undergraduate degree in pastoral ministry. The University’s Board of Trustees overwhelmingly approved the measure last March.

Launched this fall, the pastoral ministry major is an example of the school’s passionate commitment to serve Christ and his Church, according to Brian Schmisek, Ph.D.

“As a Catholic university, we’re called by Ex Corde Ecclesiae to be of service,” explains the School of Ministry Dean, referring to an apostolic letter by Pope John Paul II regarding Catholic institutions of higher learning. “One of the ways we do that is through this undergraduate degree in pastoral ministry.”

Offering concentrations in both catechetical ministry and youth ministry, the program targets the areas of greatest demand in parishes right now. The University of Dallas has a master’s program in pastoral ministry, but more and more young people are choosing to serve the Church through their work right after college, Schmisek says.

“Many college students want to pursue church work and, until now, we didn’t really have a degree to educate them,” the dean says. “This degree gives them the education and experience they need and, at the same time, meets the requirements that the U.S. bishops have laid out.”

The university’s renowned theology department is popular.

“But that offers more of an academic, research degree,” Schmisek points out. “It’s for those who go on to graduate school, earn a Ph.D. and want to be professional theologians.”

Pastoral ministry students will begin their studies with “Essentials of Catholic life and identity,” — a prerequisite for the other eight courses in the major. The class will explore all the central elements of Catholic life and faith in the context of 21st century U.S. culture and circumstances.

Diana Dudoit Raich, the National Catholic Educators’ Association executive director of religious education for the past eight years, was hired to teach the introductory class. Schmisek expects the university to employ other instructors as the pastoral ministry program grows.

In addition to classroom work, students will also complete a required internship before graduation. Seniors will spend part of the year in a parish where they will be given responsibilities under the direction of a mentor.

“Many students are familiar with the parish they grew up in, but may not be aware that there are other kinds of parishes, Schmisek says. “Someone who came from an inner-city parish will have a different experience of church than someone who came from a suburban parish. We want students to see parish life in a variety of ways.”

The university’s Joint Committee on Ministry Education developed the curriculum for the pastoral ministry degree with input from the theology, philosophy, education, and business departments. It meets the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops standards for ecclesiastical ministry and was approved by both Bishop Vann and Bishop Farrell.

In a letter to the school’s Board of Trustees, Bishop Vann voiced his support saying, “[Bishop Farrell] support for this program at the University of Dallas, and my support are another clear expression of a spirituality and theology of communion. I know together we will continue to be involved with President Keefe in the ongoing development and strengthening of this program.”

Backed by strong faculty support, the new major will become an effective recruitment tool for the university. Schmisek says. A full year of promotion and advertising planned by the university should draw incoming freshmen interested in professional lay ministry.

Schmisek said he and his colleagues were encouraged by the fact that currently enrolled UD students are choosing it as their major. He described how one sophomore psychology student, who wants to become a youth minister, is now reconsidering her major. “The bishops were very prescient in their desire to have this degree.”

Schmisek calls UD’s new undergraduate pastoral ministry degree one of the premier programs in the nation.

“It combines the richness of a UD education with practical knowledge and skills,” he explains. “We anticipate that every (pastoral ministry) graduate will be working for the Church.”
NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC, OCTOBER, 2011 PAGE 23

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

The University of Dallas considers itself, “an enthusiastically Catholic community of learners.” Students and faculty thrive in an environment that celebrates a classical, liberal arts education and a deep, abiding belief in God.

But the school’s search for wisdom, truth, and virtue isn’t confined to campus classrooms and lecture halls. Since 2007, the Irving-based university has hosted a gathering that invites the wider community of Catholics to learn more about faith and discipleship. This year’s University of Dallas Ministry Conference (UDMC), set for Oct. 28-29 at the Dallas Convention Center, is an opportunity for professional lay ministers, as well as ordinary parishioners, to hear inspiring talks and discussions on everything from parenting adolescents to contemporary art and its place in worship. Cardinal Francis George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago and past president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will kick-off the two-day schedule with a keynote speech on Friday, Oct. 28.

Organizing a ministry conference for people living in Fort Worth and Dallas is part of the university’s overall mission, according to Thomas W. Keefe, University of Dallas president. When Dallas Bishop Thomas Gorman established the university in 1956, he asked the institution to serve the needs of Catholics in North Texas.

“This gives us a chance to welcome newcomers, especially Hispanics — to the area,” the university president said.

Conference sessions aren’t geared to just academics and clergy, but also the average person in the pew and Catholic educators.

“The event offers participants the opportunity to step away from their daily tasks to really enliven their faith.”

Attendance at the conference has grown from 1,000 in 2007 to the 6,000 participants expected this year. It is co-sponsored by the Dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas and attracts professional and volunteer church workers from Tyler, Austin, and San Antonio. Sessions are offered in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

A plethora of session topics include “Teens Standing Strong in a Sex-Crazed World,” “The Faith Community and Domestic Violence,” “Scouting as Youth Ministry,” and “Aging and the Elderly in the Bible.”

The conference’s broad scope of topics contributes to its success.

“The UD Ministry Conference specifically seeks to help participants become better and more knowledgeable volunteers in their parishes,” Carranza says, explaining the event’s popularity. “This is something other conferences do, but I think UDMC stands out because it specifically addresses continuing education or enrichment for those who teach the faith in parishes and Catholic schools.”

Many of the Friday sessions are designed specifically for teachers, but school parents would also benefit from the information.

“The challenge we face is helping all Catholics in this area understand this conference is for them,” he adds. “It’s a place they can go to find the educational tools needed to seek growth in their personal faith.”

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The long term goal of organizers is to have a nationally known conference.

Legacy of Catholic Higher Education

University of Dallas Ministry Conference to feature Cardinal George

University of Dallas Ministry Conference to feature Cardinal George

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, immediate past president of the USCCB, delivers the homily during Mass at the start of the bishops’ meeting last fall. Cardinal George will deliver the English keynote at this year’s UDMC.

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“We’re doing wonderful things already,” she says. “We eventually want a conference that puts us on a national stage.”
World Mission Sunday to be observed Oct. 23

Editor’s Note: This article has been adapted from a press release sent to the NTC by the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States.

In anticipation of World Mission Sunday to be held Oct. 23, Monsignor Robert Fuhrman, assistant national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies, toured the dioceses of Texas, including Fort Worth, promoting mission outreach.

World Mission Sunday, organized by the Propagation of the Faith, is a day set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit themselves to the Church’s missionary activity through prayer and sacrifice, according to the Societies’ website, www.onefamilyinmission.org. Annually, World Mission Sunday is celebrated on the next-to-last Sunday in October. As described by Blessed Pope John Paul II, World Mission Sunday is “an important day in the life of the Church because it teaches how to give: as an offering made to God, in the Eucharistic celebration and for all the missions of the world” (Redemptoris Missio 81).

“Mission is alive and well in Texas,” Msgr. Fuhrman said. “Our mission directors and staff in those dioceses are tapping into generous hearts and minds of Catholics to support our outreach to the poor in mission countries.”

Msgr. Fuhrman emphasized the great opportunity presented by the Pontifical Mission Societies: “It’s the ‘big picture,’” he said. “It’s a direct connection into mission work in every corner of the globe. In prayer and sacrifice, Catholics reach directly into Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Latin America, with the hope of our Lord and concrete help for the poor.”

Msgr. Fuhrman came to Texas after a phone call from Father Tom Craig, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington, and chairman of the Diocese of Fort Worth’s Mission Council. Fr. Craig also emphasized the missionary role that all Catholics are called to.

“It’s important that we see ourselves as missionaries... That’s who we are,” Fr. Craig said. “By our baptismal call, we are missionaries, and called to support all our brothers and sisters whether foreign or domestic.”

There are plans to make World Mission Sunday “front and center” this October, Msgr. Fuhrman said. “Missionaries from Fort Worth serve in Bolivia, Honduras, and Vietnam — and right inside this diocese,” he added.

Fr. Craig said that parishes will receive packets on how to participate in World Mission Sunday, and that Bishop Kevin Vann encourages pastors to get involved.

“We’re doing formation to help parishes do missionary outreach,” Fr. Craig said.

Fr. Craig added that those interested in helping with the missions should either contact their pastors or parish mission councils.

Mission dioceses — about 1,100 at this time — receive regular annual assistance from the funds collected. In addition, these mission dioceses submit requests to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples for assistance, among other needs, for catechetical programs, seminars, the work of Religious Communities, for communication and transportation needs, and for the building of chapels, churches, orphanages and schools. These needs are matched with the funds gathered in each year. The world’s national directors of the Propagation of the Faith vote on these requests, matching the funds available with the greatest needs. These funds are then distributed, in their entirety, to mission dioceses throughout the world.
Bishop Kevin Vann has announced that he and Father Michael Ciski, TOR, associate pastor at St. Maria Goretti Church in Arlington will lead a 10-day pilgrimage to the shrines of France June 30 to July 9, 2012. The Franciscan University Pilgrimage will include Lyon, Arles, Paray-le-Monial, Chartres, Mont-St.-Michel, Normandy, Lisieux, Paris, and Lourdes. According to a letter of invitation from Bishop Vann offering a description of the tour, much of the Catholic history of France and that nation’s contributions to the Church and the world will be explored.

“Even during times of secularization, turmoil, and war — great saints, wonderful works of art, and a high level of culture,” have been among the gifts the French have offered, writes Bishop Vann. The pilgrimage will include the contributions of French saints John Vianney, the Cure of Ars; St. Vincent de Paul; St. Margaret Mary Alacoque; St. John Eudes; and St. Catherine Laboure, touring their humble childhood homes, celebrating Mass at and visiting the holy sites associated with their lives.

Highlights of the tour include explorations of Medieval Paris and the Louvre, Notre Dame Cathedral, a cruise on the Seine and a day at the site of the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944 that includes the beaches of Normandy and the American Military Cemetery at St. Laurent where 9,000 American soldiers who died in the campaign are buried.

Parts of two days and one full day in Lourdes will offer pilgrims opportunities on two days to take part in the miraculous baths and blessing of the sick, as well as two opportunities to take part in the evening candlelight procession reciting the Rosary, singing Marian hymns with thousands of other pilgrims from around the world, as well as visits to St. Bernadette’s birthplace and the humble home she lived in at the time of the apparitions of Mary. A walking tour will allow the pilgrims to visit the three basilicas nearby and to walk behind the altar of the grotto and see the niche and the spring which flows there.

Bishop Vann closes his letter of invitation with a blessing: “May the sacred and Immaculate Hearts pour forth abundant love and grace into your lives, now and as we travel through France, a land where they have called forth such great devotion and manifested such tender care for all the children of God on this Sacred Priesthood.” For more information, contact Franciscan University Pilgrimages at 1-800-437-8368 or go to www.fuscian.edu/pilgrimages.

Arrangements for the pilgrimage are made by Peter’s Way Tours, Inc., of Jericho, New York. They can be reached by phone at (800) 225-7662 or (516) 605-1551, by e-mail at peter@petertours.com, or by through their website at www.peterstours.com. Estimated package price per person is listed as $3,495 plus $550 departure taxes and fuel surcharges with prices subject to change due to fluctuations in currency rates of exchange, fuel charges, and other associated costs. All admissions and travel and hotel are covered by the tour’s price, some meals are not. Pilgrims must provide their own transportation to and from Newark Airport.

A deposit of $350 per person is due on or before Dec. 23. According to tour information the initial deposit must be paid by check or money order. Balances may be paid by credit card, subject to a $100 surcharge.
Despite trials at international event, Fort Worth Diocese pilgrims to World Youth Day in Madrid were able to

Strengthen their faith

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

A

fter hearing about the camaraderie and devotion her friends experienced at previous gatherings in Germany and Australia, Abby Rodriguez couldn’t wait to spend Aug. 16-21 in Madrid, Spain, participating in World Youth Day 2011. The 21-year-old expected a six-day spiritual adventure that brought together the Vicar of Christ with young Catholics from around the world in a celebration of faith.

What she didn’t anticipate was a record breaking crowd of 1.5 million pilgrims filtering into Spain’s capital during a heat wave. A blazing sun, coupled with packed venues, a limited water supply, and no shade, presented Rodriguez and her 70 traveling companions from the Diocese of Fort Worth with a challenging worship experience.

“Dehydration was an issue,” says Rodriguez who waited six hours in 102-degree heat with other group members to see Pope Benedict XVI only to be told his route had been changed. “Being outdoors was a difficult situation, but we found ways to deal with the sun. People used boxes and blankets to make huts for shade. We tried to make do.”

A stomach virus, that swept through the Fort Worth contingent, added to the trying conditions. On the eve of the closing Papal Mass, the North Texans slept outside at the Palacio de Deportes, with thousands of other pilgrims.

“We rallied together by helping the sick in our group,” Rodriguez says. “We held the hands of people we hardly knew. Being Catholic means having a sense of charity and we definitely exemplified that.”

Madrid was the third time Susan Mullins served as a chaperone for diocesan youth traveling to World Youth Day — an international celebration initiated by Pope John Paul II in the early 1980s. The youth minister from Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton shepherded large groups to gatherings in Sydney, Australia (2008) and Cologne, Germany (2005), but the event in Spain was different.

“Organizers were overwhelmed by the numbers and not prepared,” Mullins says expressing her opinion. “And it wasn’t just at one event. At the opening Mass there wasn’t enough space for people or adequate police presence. It was unsafe to enter (the Plaza de Cibeles), so we left. At the vigil Mass, they ran out of water by noon and heat exhaustion hit everyone.”

According to an unnamed source quoted in an Aug. 31 Catholic News Agency story, perhaps as many as 75 percent of the estimated 2 million young people in Madrid World Youth Day events were unregistered, throwing kinks into the planning efforts of Spanish organizers.

Health issues forced Catholics from 11 different North Texas parishes to form a close-knit community. The young travelers, who were mere acquaintances at the beginning of the journey, learned life lessons in compassion and resilience by caring for one another.

“I’d say 90 percent of the group grew stronger because of what they went through,” Mullins says thoughtfully. “We just reminded them to ‘offer it up’ and there was a lot to ‘offer up.’”

But, despite the disappointments, sickness, and heat-related problems experienced in Madrid, there were many “blessed and beautiful moments,” during the 23-day pilgrimage, according to the chaperone. In addition to their stay in Spain, the Fort Worth travelers visited shrines and holy sites in Paris and Lourdes, France and in Portugal.

“Mr. Baca talked about his experiences at World Youth Day and how much fun it was,” says Thuy referring to her former Nolan theology teacher Jonathan Baca.

“I loved seeing the large crowds and all the American flags waving,” the 17-year-old explains. “I met a lot of great people.”

Like other pilgrims participating in the outdoor liturgies, Thuy braved sweltering 100-degree temperatures, but her sacrifice reaped a visual reward. Pope Benedict XVI, perched in his Popemobile, passed by the teenager as she stood in an outdoor plaza.

“It was the best moment of my life,” she gushed. “He seemed so young and happy and that made me happy.”

Thuy says the World Youth Day experience energized her faith.

“I saw young people praying and singing hymns in the streets,” she adds. “It made me realize I shouldn’t be ashamed to make the Sign of the Cross in public.”
SVDP Convention stresses practical, spiritual

OUTLINE OF WHICH HE PRESENTED IN HIS ADDRESS. THE BOOK PUTS FORTH A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE CITIZENS THEY SERVE.

“BRIDGES IS NOT A PROGRAM,” DeVol INSISTS. “IT IS A SET OF IDEAS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT WE MUST ACTUALLY LEARN FROM THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN POVERTY.”

Nothing could be more central to the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul who see themselves as a “listening ear” to the people they assist. “As Vincentians, we know that walking is more important than talking,” explained Bishop Mark Seitz, Vicar General and Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Dallas in his workshop, “Prayin’, Lovin’, Walkin’, and Talkin’: A Texas Take on Vincentian Spirituality.”

Founded in Paris in 1833 by a group of Catholic lay people, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is an international Christian community. Members of the Society, who call themselves Vincentians, follow Christ through service to the poor. Vincentians have a Rule that outlines their spirituality and acts as their guide to growth through service. “It’s truly a call,” said Linda Kindel, who served as the National Meeting Committee Chairperson for this year’s event. “I never would have imagined myself doing this. If you’d told me that I’d be going into people’s homes and asking them personal questions, I’d never have believed you. But I was called — and if you talk to other Vincentians, they’ll tell you the same thing. It’s truly a miracle.”

The SVDP approach to helping those in need emphasizes their dignity

By Michele Baker

Everyone knows what they do. Who hasn’t filled the grocery bags with the envelopes attached, helped stock a food pantry, or contributed to the special collections? Those who work in parish offices and social service organizations alike know that if someone is in need, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is there to help. But how many people truly know who the Vincentians are?

“Vincentians come from all walks of life: all ages and backgrounds,” explains Julie Walters, Executive Director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Diocesan Council of Dallas. “We are a religious community. Through our activities our members grow spiritually in communion with each other and the people that we serve. A religious community! As in, those who experience a “call” from God!”

“I absolutely had the experience of a call,” Walters affirms.


Gospel reading that Sunday was Matthew 25 (“...I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink...”). As she listened, she asked God how she could live that Gospel. In response to her question, a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul spoke during the homily. He described the Society as a vehicle for living that Gospel call. As he made an appeal for membership, Walters remembers, “I literally felt God speak to me and tell me, ‘YOU HAVE to do this.’ It was a moment of conversion for me.”

For Vincentians that moment of conversion is key. St. Vincent de Paul himself said, “God asks first for your heart and only then for your work.”

Even so, the saint whose name the Society bears was not its founder. That distinction belongs to a small group of French students, including the now Blessed Frederic Ozanam. The group, which met frequently to discuss the intellectual ideas of the day, was engaged in a lively discussion of faith when someone in their midst challenged them by asking how they could defend the Church when it did so little to help the people of their time. Rather than become insulted, the friends were moved to action and, in 1833, created a Conference of Charity in Paris. The purpose of this little conference was simply to help the members live out their baptismal call through charitable activity. They soon adopted St. Vincent de Paul as their patron because his ministry grew out of small works of charity.

“Our motto is that no act of charity is foreign to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul,” said Walters. “At the heart of those acts of charity is true love and a deep respect for the dignity of the human person. Vincentians enact this through the home visit.”

“Their works of charity are merely a vehicle. Bishop Mark Seitz, Auxiliary Bishop of Dallas and Vicar General of the Diocese of Dallas drove this point home in his workshop during the Society of St. Vincent de Paul National Meeting this year. As he cautioned Vincentians against equating financial aid as “help” he said, “Think of this: If the Society had no money at all would it still exist?”

And the Vincentians answered with a resounding, “Yes!”

The Vincentian approach to assisting people in need involves personal interviews in the homes of the people they help in order to get to know them better and to avoid what the Vincentians regard as the indignity of having to expose their neediness to others by going to the offices of public welfare agencies. Because of the way Vincentian works of charity flow from their spirituality, conference workshops covered a wide variety of topics.

There were practical topics such as “Running Successful Stores for Mission and Profit” and “How to Help Those With Mental Illness”; sessions on spirituality like Vincentian Formation; even administrative issues like “Who Are Those Guys? — Marketing Basics for Councils and Conferences.”

Yet through it all, the Vincentian identity as part and parcel of their ministry remained at the forefront. Bishop Kevin Vann, who presided over the closing Mass Saturday evening summed it up well. He said, “The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is more than charity. It is a response of love, rooted in faith and going forth in mission. It comes from and is in communion with the Church.”

Being that “listening ear” in the homes of those they serve corresponds to the most fundamental aspect of Vincentian spirituality. The first part of the Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul clearly states that “Members show their commitment through person-to-person contact.”

The Society is not an institution. In fact, Vincentians know that the primary purpose of the Society is the spiritual growth of its members. Their works of charity are merely a part of their mission of communion with each other and with God. It comes from and is in communion with the Church.”

Bishop Kevin Vann delivers a homily of appreciation and encouragement at the Mass for the SVDP convention Sept. 2, at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Grapevine. (NTC photo / Donna Ryckaert)
“The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”
— Philippians 4:7

October 2, Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle A Readings:
1) Isaiah 5:1-7
Psalm 80:9, 12-16, 19-20
2) Philippians 4:6-9
Gospel) Matthew 21:33-43

By Jeff Hedglen

In this week’s second reading from St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, we are told to have no anxiety at all. As I read this I thought, “Have you seen today’s paper?”

Whether in the television news, the daily paper, on the radio, or Internet blogs, there are constant reminders of troubling things happening these days. From earthquakes and hurricanes to flooding and wildfires, to unemployment and a collapsed economy, to famine and war, not to mention personal struggles with relationships and illnesses, there sure is a lot of reason to freak out a bit.

The Scripture reading brought to mind a song from the 1980s, “Don’t Worry Be Happy.” But with all this stuff going on, simply not worrying and being happy seems an ostrichlike, head-in-the-sand kind of attitude.

As I kept reading St. Paul’s letter, I discovered that the message is not so much that we are not to worry, rather it is more this: Instead of worrying, try praying and petitioning God with thanksgiving. If we do this, instead of the fear and unease that comes with anxiety, we will receive “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.” As if this were not enough, St. Paul says this peace will also guard our hearts and minds in Jesus.

I remember one time when I faced a huge decision. The consequences of the choice would affect many people and would quite possibly change my life dramatically. I fretted over all the possible scenarios and implications for weeks. My mind and my heart were doing battle, with my desires and loyalties as weapons. Round and round options and possibilities swirled in my mind. I shared this with a friend, and she said, “Don’t think about it, just do what you can and trust the Holy Spirit.”

I think this is the message from St. Paul. Worrying can drive us crazy, but if we let go of our need to be in control and offer our heartfelt prayers to God, peace will come. That doesn’t mean the problems go away or that the going will get easier; it is just a promise that God will walk with us and bring us peace on the journey.

QUESTIONS:
How do you typically handle stressful situations? How has your faith helped in these situations? What are some things you can do to let go of the worry and trust in God?

Everything is ready; come to the feast.
— Matthew 22:4

October 9, Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A Readings:
1) Isaiah 25:6-10a
Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
2) Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Gospel) Matthew 22:1-14

By Sharon K. Perkins

I had just finished a very long and hectic Saturday morning working our neighborhood garage sale and my empty stomach was growling in protest. As I entered my front door, my senses were welcomed by the sweet, buttery aroma of freshly baked cookies cooling on the pan. Homemade peanut butter chocolate chip, topped with chunks of chocolate peanut butter cups. Oh, bliss!

I was about to reach for one and was already imagining a glass of cold milk to go with it when my teenaged daughter stopped me with the announcement that the cookies were not for household consumption. “I’m going to my friend’s house to finish a project for school and I’m taking the cookies,” she informed me, “because I’m always going over there and I don’t want to go empty-handed this time.”

When I started to object, she reminded me that I had taught her that this is what one does as an invited guest. One prepares a gift to show one’s appreciation for the invitation. I’ll admit she had me there; how could I possibly argue? Her friend’s parents’ frequent hospitality was being acknowledged, and matched, by my daughter’s luscious homemade gift given in return.

This Sunday’s readings are filled with images of unreserved invitation, cordial hospitality — and food! Not just enough food to get by, but mouth-watering, “juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines,” an overflowing cup and a wedding feast of fattened cattle.

The gracious host, of course, is the Lord, who prepares an enticing banquet, issues the invitation and waits with undisguised yearning for us to accept the gift of his love, his body and blood presented as food. How crushingly disappointing it must be when we partake nonchalantly — or worse yet, don’t respond at all because we have “something better to do.”

Bearing homemade cookies, a bottle of wine or a bouquet of flowers to the home of one’s host or hostess might be an old-fashioned custom promulgated by grandmothers and mothers of days gone by. But it also bespeaks sincere thankfulness and an attitude of thoughtful preparation for receiving the gift of hospitality that is offered. Accepting the Lord’s invitation to his sacred meal deserves better than our empty hands and indifferent hearts.

QUESTIONS:
When was the last time you reflected on the abundance of God’s love for you as a personal invitation anticipating your response? How do you prepare yourself to receive Jesus’ banquet of the Eucharist?
October 23, Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle A. Readings:
1) Exodus 22:20-26
Psalm 18:2-4, 47, 51
2) 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10
Gospel) Matthew 22:34-40

“Which commandment in the law is the greatest?”
—Matthew 22:36

By Jean Denton

As correspondent for my diocesan newspaper, I cover the western part of Virginia. That includes many, mostly rural communities in the Appalachian region. I’ve lived all my life in urban areas, but ever since my very first visit to a small Catholic parish in Clintwood, I can’t seem to get enough of documenting the Gospel life among people in Appalachia.

Catholics in this largely non-Catholic region love their faith and their church. But they don’t come to church to genuflect properly or learn the fine points of church doctrine. As in most remote places in the world, religious ritual and formation have a role, but for the most part expressions of faith are more practical.

Parishioners come together to receive and share the life of Christ. They come because they love God, and they love and want to care for each other and their neighbors. That’s what Jesus, in today’s Gospel, calls all of us to do: Love God and your neighbor. He says these greatest commandments make up the entirety of his message.

St. Joseph Parish in Clintwood has only about 20 households in an impoverished county where the coal industry has come and gone and left behind a lot of need. There’s so much need among their elderly and low-income neighbors that this tiny parish will never be able to address it all. But they try because they love their neighbors. Every summer, for 12 weeks solid, they host visiting youth groups from around the country who come to help them serve their neighbors with roofing, plumbing, and home repair.

The visitors are embraced by the people of St. Joseph who serve them a meal every evening and share their local culture and music. They worship together, learning how loving God and neighbor are part of the same reality.

Perhaps there is a pattern here in my two friends’ lives that would help today’s politicians to act a bit more like statesmen, and we, the not disinterested citizens of our nation, to act more like patriots in support of the common good rather than pursuing only our own narrow self-interests.

Perhaps the key is that we as a nation have forgotten to put God first, because having laid that as the cornerstone of our lives, everything else comes into proper order.

QUESTIONS:
How do you think people’s faith — whatever their politics — might become visible in their discussion of issues with others? How might this encourage a more civil tone?

October 16, Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle A. Readings:
1) Isaiah 45:1, 4-6
Psalm 96:1, 3-5, 7-10
2) 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b
Gospel) Matthew 22:15-21

By Jeff Hensley

Over the last year, I’ve lost, to death, two very special friends who believed strongly that the Gospel was not to be brought in word alone, “but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction,” as Paul stated in his First Letter to the Thessalonians.

Both of these friends were 15 or more years older than I, but one was active in leadership in the local Catholic charismatic renewal before me, and the other was an active leader in the renewal after me. Both were fine Catholics, admired by others for their character and leadership. Each was someone to whom others turned for advice, comfort, and counsel.

These two men would agree with today’s responsorial psalm response, which begins:
“Give the Lord glory and honor. Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.”

Also, each of them, though their politics were vastly different, would have found no problem with Jesus’ brilliant answer to the Pharisees’ attempt to trip him up which ends with Jesus saying, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

Each of these men entered into dialogue with others in a reasonable fashion, discussing the political issues of the day and how to go about resolving them. But they also knew, given their different political bents, any resolutions of the issues of the day, other than those involving the sacredness of human life, would involve compromise.

Perhaps there is a pattern here in my two friends’ lives that would help today’s politicians to act a bit more like statesmen, and we, the not disinterested citizens of our nation, to act more like patriots in support of the common good rather than pursuing only our own narrow self-interests.

Perhaps the key is that we as a nation have forgotten to put God first, because having laid that as the cornerstone of our lives, everything else comes into proper order.

QUESTIONS:
How do you think people’s faith — whatever their politics — might become visible in their discussion of issues with others? How might this encourage a more civil tone?
La enseñanza social católica nos llama a trabajar por el amor y la dignidad de todos

Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo,

En el mes de septiembre, la Diócesis de Fort Worth ha sido bendecida al recibir las convenciones nacionales de dos importantes organizaciones que hacen un trabajo importante en el área de la doctrina social católica. En primer lugar, la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl celebró su conferencia nacional en Grapevine desde el 31 de agosto hasta el 3 de septiembre.

En mis años de ministerio sacerdotal, y ahora como obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, siempre he valorado mucho el trabajo de la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl. Cuando fui estudiante en el Seminario Kenrick de St. Louis, Missouri, aprendí mucho sobre el patrimonio y la vida de San Vicente de Paúl, y la familia vicenciana (incluyendo Federico Ozanam y la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl) de los sacerdotes de la Congregación de la misión y las hijas de la caridad. Esas fueron una parte importante de mi formación que sigue conmigo en la actualidad. Tengo un icono de San Vicente de Paúl y Santa Luisa de Marillac en mi capilla dentro de la casa parroquial de la catedral aquí en Fort Worth.

La Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl es un verdadero testimonio de la misión de la Iglesia para llegar a aquellos que están en necesidad, y hacerlo con la compasión y el amor de Jesús mismo. A través de su trabajo, la Sociedad ha tenido un gran éxito en la reforma de la mentalidad de los estadounidenses hacia el problema de la pobreza y la necesidad, y haciendo la misericordia y el amor de Dios accesibles para aquellos que están en necesidad. En nuestro país, la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl es la columna vertebral de la red de caridades católicas de la diócesis de Fort Worth, que es una de las más importantes del país.

Sé de primera mano que la presencia de las Caridades católicas de la diócesis de Fort Worth sigue siendo un instrumento de la misericordia y la esperanza a miles de personas cada día. Estoy muy agradecido por su trabajo y su presencia aquí en la diócesis y en todo el país. Agradezco a Heather Reynolds, todo su trabajo para establecer una civilización de amor en que la dignidad de cada persona se promueva y proteja, y nos enseña que todos somos — como miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia — estemos llamados a seguir el ejemplo del buen samaritano, responder a los sufrimientos de los demás, y dar rienda suelta al amor de Cristo. Como el beato Papa Juan Pablo II nos enseñó:

Sigue la parábola evangélica, se podría decir que el sufrimiento, que bajo tantas formas diversas está presente en el mundo humano, está también presente para traidorar el amor al hombre, precisamente ese desinteresado don del propio y yo en favor de los demás hombres, de los hombres que sufren. Podría decirse que el mundo del sufrimiento humano invoca sin posa otro mundo: el del amor humano, y aquel amor desinteresado, que brota en su corazón y en sus obras, el hombre lo debe de algún modo al sufrimiento. No puede el hombre « próximo » pasar con desinterés ante el sufrimiento ajeno, en nombre de la fundamentada solidaridad humana; y mucho menos en nombre del amor al próximo. Debe « parar », « conmoverse », actuando como el Samaritano de la parábola evangélica. La parábola en sí expresa una verdad profundamente cristiana, pero a la vez tan universalmente humana. No sin razón, aun en el lenguaje habitual se llama obra « de buen samaritano » toda actividad en favor de los hombres que sufren y de todos los necesitados de ayuda.

— Sobre el Sentido Cristiano del Sufriimiento Humano, Salvifici Doloris, 29

Animó a todos a tomar algún tiempo para estudiar la Doctrina social de la Iglesia, tal como se presenta en el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, así como algunas de las más recientes enseñanzas sociales papales. El Consejo pontificio para la justicia y la paz también ha publicado el Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia, que es otro recurso excelente para estudiar la enseñanza social católica. Este recurso puede ser adquirido a través de www.usccbpublishing.org.

Por último, también quisiera aprovechar esta oportunidad para reflexionar sobre el décimo aniversario de los ataques terroristas del 11 de septiembre de 2001. Como hemos visto, una vez más el horror que se desató en ese día terrible, tenemos que orar por los que murieron y por el que la sanación, fe y perdón puedan continuar entre sus familias y seres queridos. También tenemos que seguir recordando con gratitud y amor a los héroes caídos de ese día: los bomberos, policías y otros socorristas valientes que dieron el máximo sacrificio por ayudar a que los demás llegaran a lugares seguros. Elles realmente vivieron las palabras del Señor: “No hay amor más grande que dar la vida por sus amigos” (Juan 15:13). Me gustaría concluir con las palabras del beato Papa Juan Pablo II de la audiencia general del 12 de septiembre de 2001, el día después del ataque a nuestro país. Estas palabras las ofrezco para nuestra reflexión y oración, ya que nuevamente estamos recordando los acontecimientos del 11 de septiembre de 2001:

Ayer fue un día tan solemne en la historia de la humanidad, una terrible afrenta contra la dignidad del hombre. Desde que recibí la noticia, seguí con intensa participación el desarrollo de la situación, elevando al Señor mi presente oración. ¿Cómo pueden verificarse episodios de una crueldad tan CONTINUADA A LA DERECHA
Parroquia sirve como refugio para víctimas desplazadas por incendios forestales en Texas

**BASTROP, Texas (CNS) —** La parroquia Ascensión en Bastrop, ha estado sirviendo como refugio y centro neurálgico para los esfuerzos de socorro relacionados con los incendios forestales en el estado. Hasta el 7 de septiembre, incendios forestales han sido listados como desastres por los Servicios de protección de Texas. Parte de la zona del fuego en la parroquia de la Diócesis de Bastrop está en el corazón del centro neurálgico para los esfuerzos de emergencia del estado. (Foto CNS / Mike Stone, Reuters)

**Obispo pide a ‘supercomité’ recordar pobres en conversaciones de recortes**

**WASHINGTON (CNS) —** Los directores de los comités de política internacional y nacional pidieron al Comité conjunto selecto sobre reducción del déficit, popularmente conocido como el “supercomité”, recordar a los pobres y vulnerables mientras diseñan un plan para atender el déficit financiero de la nación. "En este esfuerzo ustedes examinarán datos, tablas y presupuestos alternativos interminables", dijeron el obispo Howard J. Hubbard de Albany, Nueva York, director del Comité sobre justicia y paz internacional, y el obispo Stephen E. Blair de Stockton, California, director del Comité sobre justicia y desarrollo humano nacional, en su carta del 31 de agosto.

"Detrás de todos esos números hay personas que servimos todos los días en nuestras parroquias, escuelas, hospitales, refugios y comedores públicos. Los más pobres y más vulnerables no tienen cabilderos poderosos, pero tienen las más apremiantes necesidades y un reclamo especial a nuestras conciencias individuales y opciones nacionales, especialmente en estos tiempos de desempleo masivo, creciente pobreza y creciente hambre", dijeron.

El supercomité, compuesto por seis miembros del Senado y seis de la Cámara de representantes, y divididos igualmente entre demócratas y republicanos, fue creado como parte de un trato logrado en agosto para aumentar el límite de la deuda nacional. Este se reunirá por primera vez el 16 de septiembre y, para el Día de acción de gracias, tiene que recomendar recortes por $1.5 millones de millones distribuidos durante 10 años. Si sus recomendaciones no son aceptadas, se activarán recortes de $1.2 millones de millones distribuidos durante 10 años, la mitad involucrando gastos de defensa.

"Un marco de trabajo justo para presupuestos futuros no puede depender de recortes desproporcionados en servicios para personas pobres y vulnerables. Estos programas tienen que hacerse más eficaces, eficientes y receptivos, y debemos trabajar para fortalecer y mejorarlos sobre una base continua", dijeron los obispos Hubbard y Blair.

"Sin embargo, sería erróneo equilibrar presupuestos futuros, haciendo aquí en el 2012, programas en que ya son más indefensos, para recortar programas que la ayuda extranjera, programas de vivienda asequible, nutrición infantil y servicios médicos", dijeron.

"Un marco de trabajo justo también requiere un sacrificio compartido por todos, incluyendo aumentar los ingresos adecuados; eliminar gastos militares innecesarios y otros; y atender justamente los costos a largo plazo de los programas de seguro médico y jubilación".

Los dos obispos ofrecieron al supercomité criterios morales para tomar decisiones presupuestarias.

"Toda decisión presupuestaria debe ser evaluada por si protege o amenaza la vida y dignidad humanas", dijeron.

**Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada**

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

- Llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de ayuda extranjera, al número de emergencia (817) 530-2655, Ext. 201, o mandarle correo electrónico a jlocke@fwdioc.org
- Llamar al número de emergencia para el abuso sexual (817) 530-2652, Ext. 900
- Llamar al Centro Católico al número: (817) 530-2652, ext. 102 y preguntar por el canciller/moderador de la curia, el padre Stephen Borg.

Llamar al Ministerio de familias de Texas Servicios de protección (Servicios de protección de niños) al número (800) 252-5400.

**Noticias de la Iglesia**

**Rastros de la cruz**

En medio de la nutrida concurrencia a la Misa de clausura de las Jornadas Mundiales de la Juventud, en la base aérea de Cuatro Vientos de Madrid, el 21 de agosto. (Foto CNS/Paul Haring)

**Miercoles para reportar abuso**
Se honra a la Virgen María con ‘gran procesión’, para celebrar la fundación de Los Ángeles en su 230º aniversario

Por Beth Griffin
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — La política es algo bueno; la participación dentro de la vida pública es una obligación moral, y los católicos necesitan realizar un mejor trabajo al ligar sus creencias con su participación política, de acuerdo con un orador que tomó parte en una conferencia en el que se llevó a cabo el 6 de septiembre, y que llevó el título de Ciudadanos fieles: votantes, obispos y elecciones presidenciales.

En ese programa, organizado por la Universidad jesuita de Fordham, se concentró el trabajo en una exploración del documento sobre responsabilidad política, publicado cada cuatro años por los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos.

“El proceso de polarización se escurre dentro de nuestra vida de iglesia, y con frecuencia nos debemos preguntar si nuestra fe le da forma a nuestra participación política o, al revés, lo político le da forma a nuestra fe. Podemos ciertamente reparar el trabajo en nuestra Iglesia, pero no debemos dividir nuestra comunidad de fe”, dijo John Carr, director ejecutivo del Departamento de justicia, paz y desarrollo humanos, que depende de los obispos de los Estados Unidos.

“Todos nosotros, tanto obispos, como profesores, miembros del personal, seglares, académicos y estudiantes, necesitamos realizar un mejor trabajo para ligar nuestras creencias con nuestras acciones en la vida pública”, añadió.

Desde el año 1976, los obispos católicos de los EE.UU. publican cada cuatro años un documento en el que explican cómo se debe ligar las enseñanzas de la iglesia con la responsabilidad de participación política.

“En estos tiempos en los que vivimos dentro de un ambiente de intenso cinismo y, francamente, frustración justificable para con el proceso político, la cosa que la Iglesia enseña y que los obispos han dicho, que va contra corriente de la cultura actual, es que la participación en la política es una buena cosa, que es una obligación moral y que es una parte esencial de ser ciudadano de los Estados Unidos y católico”, dijo Carr. “Y eso es quizá más en contra de la corriente en lo que se refiere a lo sagrado de la vida, a que la guerra es el último recurso, que los pobres deben ponerse primero y que al matrimonio no se le debe de dar otra definición de la que ya tiene”.

Y dijo que los católicos comparten una unión de fe y no de participación política. “Somos iglesia y no camarilla de cabilderos. Somos una comunidad de fe y un grupo de intereses creados. Lo que nos une a todos es la palabra de Dios y las enseñanzas de la Iglesia; no la política ni la ideología”. Carr dijo que en el documento Ciudadanos fieles se fundamentan los principios básicos y se aplican asuntos de suma importancia que tiene resolver el país. Históricamente, las versiones del documento han compendiado las enseñanzas de la Iglesia, con énfasis en el papel de los laicos y con énfasis para la participación y el compromiso. “Lo que llevemos a la vida pública no es solamente lo que creemos, sino también lo que realizamos. ¿Quién le da refugio al que no tiene hogar? ¿Quién le da de comer al hambriento? ¿Quién le da de beber al que no tiene agua? ¿Quién atiende a los pobres?”

En el documento Ciudadanos fieles, se nos exhorta a la formación de conciencia y a la práctica de la prudencia, dijo Carr. Se les dice a los católicos que resistan el mal y que actúen con responsabilidad positiva para lograr que las cosas se tornen mejores. Se dice que las personas deben distinguir entre asuntos morales que no son de la misma importancia, como por ejemplo, dijo: “Un millón de abortos no es lo mismo que un recrete en el programa de WIC”.

“Necesitamos contar con mayor número de católicos en ambos partidos políticos dentro de la vida pública, llevando nuestras creencias a la plaza pública y luchando por ellas”, dijo Carr. “Necesitamos más diálogo dentro de nuestra iglesia y necesitamos entender si la política no trata de nuestros valores fundamentales, entonces solamente se trata de dinero, egoísmo y poder”. Robert George, profesor de jurisprudencia y director del Programa James Madison sobre ideales en Estados Unidos e instituciones de la Universidad de Princeton, afirma que en ninguno de los partidos políticos sobreseíen se encarnan por completo los principios señalados por los obispos.

Vidjo que el partido republicano necesita ‘mayor dosis de pensamiento social católico, y que el partido demócrata necesita una dosis más fuerte de mensajes de la tradición católica, referentes a una actitud que refleje respeto por la familia y por la vida’.

Los católicos deben ligar sus creencias con participación política, dice orador, en conferencia sobre Ciudadanos fieles
Whether it’s at home, his home parish of Holy Family in Fort Worth, or his Cistercian community, newly ordained Father Ambrose Strong has always had the support of

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer / Correspondent

When Michael Strong was ordained to the priesthood Aug. 14, he became part of a strong community of monks and brothers at the Cistercian Abbey of Dallas. But the change might have seemed small to him, because the young man sprang from other communities of strength: a solid family that constantly supported him, a succession of pastors and teachers who guided him, and a parish that glowed with pride at the very mention of him.

So it happened that a beaming white-habit clad novice, newly named Brother Ambrose, first was pictured on the cover of the Holy Family Family-gram, the parish newsletter. It was fall of 2005, and he wrote, “Three young men, including myself... on August 19 took the habit and began our novitiate.”

Brother Ambrose’s letters to the parish newsletter would continue from then until he had finished his studies, advanced degrees and formation, and become a Cistercian priest.

“I first noticed him when he was an altar boy,” said Shirley Masinger, Holy Family parishioner, who has watched the young man’s progress, and initiated his correspondence with the parish. There was something special about that little altar boy, she remembered, noting that later, his ongoing letters had made a positive impact on their efforts to encourage vocations.

Fr. Ambrose’s own vocation began long before the family knew about it, his mother, Terry said. Baptized in June of 1983, the boy studied from third to eighth grade at Holy Family, ninth through twelfth at Nolan Catholic High School, then earned his bachelor’s degree at the University of Dallas. Throughout the process, she said, he had mentors — Holy Family teachers Genni Sayers and Mary Ann Wood, pastor Father Joe Pemberton, Nolan principal Brother Oscar Vasquez, SM, (who has since then been ordained to the priesthood), and religion teacher Mark Rist — who made impressions and contributed to his vocation.

But the final link was Cistercian Abbott Father Denis Farkasfalvy, whose counsel Michael Strong sought, finally, in his sophomore year at UD, when he requested to make a Christmas retreat at the abbey. “That was it,” his mother said.

“All we did was provide Catholic schools, and surround our children with good people. We tried to surround them with God, and we did not let up on it.

“If God wants you, he wants you.”

Terry Strong said the first year in the Abbey was tough on the family, because the process allowed only e-mails and visits once each month. “They cut you off completely,” said the mother of two younger children, Mary Ellen and Robert, both of whom have now graduated from Texas Christian University.

“The abbey wants them to separate themselves and see what happens,” she said. “I understand it now. As the process went on, the family was allowed to visit each other much more frequently, and vacation together in the summers.

The siblings, she said, are in awe of their older brother.

“It totally has set an example for them to live right. They think twice when something difficult comes up.”

Celebrating the ordination liturgy was Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell, who, in addition to Brother Ambrose, also ordained Brother Thomas Liposito to the priesthood, and Brothers Lawrence Brophy and Stephen Gregg to the diaconate. The Mass took place at Our Lady of Dallas Abbey Church.

The church, a contemporary example of Cistercian architecture, is constructed of massive slabs of Texas limestone, and, according to the Abbey website, reflects simplicity, poverty, and seclusion. The assembly is seated in pews on the floor of the sanctuary, while the monks sit in wooden seats near the altar, and chant the liturgical prayers.

In his homily, Bishop Farrell spoke of St. Benedict, whose rule the community follows.

“Please reflect on the words of your holy father Benedict in his rules for monks,” the bishop said. “‘The abbot ought to arrange things so that the strong have something to strive for, and the weak have nothing to fear.’…”

“The rule of St. Benedict and our Scripture readings, remind us of the wideness of God’s mercy, and that every race, language, and tongue are invited to be part of God’s family, life, and love in this world. You hear this rule, you know this rule, we hear these Scriptures in our ordination day.

“You are now about to be ordained to the ministry of the word and the ministry of the sacraments. May these readings and may the words of St. Benedict remain with you always and guide you in your priestly life. May God who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion.”

At the ordination, Fr. Ambrose said he “felt available for God, and for receiving the sacrament after so many years when that had been a goal. There was no uncertainty or even nerves; it was a peaceful coming to completion of all that had happened to me.

“And the sense of uplifting, gratitude, happiness, and joy was enhanced by having so many family members and friends there to show support,” he said. “Holy Family Parish has always been my second home.”

Not many people get to see their children with or even near a pope. But Terry and Garland Strong had that privilege last Holy Thursday when their son Michael (Brother Ambrose), and his Cistercian Brother Thomas, served Mass with Pope Benedict XVI.

The two were finishing two years of graduate study in Rome, and with other Cistercian seminarians would be chosen to participate in the 2011 Chrism Mass. “There were hundreds of cardinals and thousands of priests,” said Terry who recorded the Mass off a television broadcast. “Michael was one of two main deacons to serve.”

A breath-taking moment, she described, was seeing Pope Benedict walk up that long aisle at St. Peter’s Basilica, with Brother Thomas and Brother Ambrose on either side of him.

“And then the three of them walked up the steps,” Terry Strong said, “and they bent, together, and kissed St. Peter’s altar.”

That Holy Thursday Mass, which was so spiritually enriching and personally joyful then, was to be enhanced in a way Michael/Brother Ambrose’s mom did not foresee. Her son had requested a vial of the holy chrism that had been blessed by the pope. Michael Strong, said, “and they bent, together, and kissed St. Peter’s altar.”

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I would say it was a collective effort by my church family that fostered my religious practices and led to my accepting my vocation... The Rosary/share group of women had a huge impact on me because they introduced me to the idea that everyone can live a radical life for Christ no matter what the vocation, and then they prayed for religious vocations constantly. Once I accepted that I wanted to live my life in God’s will and not my own, it was only a matter of time.

— Sr. Mary Clare Bezner, OSB

Sr. Mary Clare ...

it was the dreams I had for family. It was the beautiful family I grew up in. It was to leave it all. He wanted me to give it up and let Him have it and follow Him,” she said. Sr. Mary Clare said she told her family that day.

“I went from ‘No, I’m not going to do this,’ to ‘I’m doing it and there’s no going back,’’ she said.

Sister Mary Clare said she thought her mom would be surprised.

“But she told me that she had told people before that if anybody in our family would become a sister, it would be me, but I had no idea. She had never mentioned being a religious to me. So I thought it would be something she wouldn’t like. But really, she was all in favor of it.”

Sr. Mary Clare said her parents, Skipper and Barbara Bezner raised her in a loving, Catholic home along with her siblings, Jennifer, Jeff, and Jacque in Lindsay. Her paternal grandparents, Joe and Anna Bezner, live in Lindsay and her maternal grandparents, Richard and Florence Schumacher live in Gainesville. She said that the small Catholic community in Lindsay played an important role in her spiritual life.

“I would say it was a collective effort by my church family that fostered my religious practices and led to my accepting my vocation,” Sr. Mary Clare said. “I had many friends growing up who were faithful Christians, and we talked and prayed often — especially when we were older, in our 20s. The Rosary/share group of women had a huge impact on me because they introduced me to the idea that everyone can live a radical life for Christ no matter what the vocation, and then they prayed for religious vocations constantly. Once I accepted that I wanted to live my life in God’s will and not my own, it was only a matter of time.”

And after looking at many different communities and even after spending a week with the Olivetan Benedictines, it wasn’t until she prayed with them in a chapel in Muenster that she realized that’s where God wanted her to be.

“I was praying, and I didn’t even know what I was doing because I was just following what they were doing. Then I thought, ‘This is what I’m supposed to be doing, and these are the sisters I’m supposed to be doing it with. This is it. I’m done. I can actually go,’” Sr. Mary Clare said.

At her profession, she and Sister Mary Beth, read their vows — which they had each written out before the ceremony — and signed them on the altar. After this, the two sisters participated in the “Suscape,” kneeling and raising their hands while leading the congregation in singing “Receive me, oh Lord, according to your Word and I shall live, and do not fail me in my hope.” They sang this verse three times in honor of the Trinity.

The two sisters then lay prostrate before the altar under a pall, which signifies their death to their old lives, covered with the same pall that will be used when they die. While on the ground, the bell is tolled and the Litany of Saints is sung, signifying their complete death to their old lives and rising as new brides of Christ. “I really felt like I was floating. I can’t explain it,” Sr. Mary Clare said.

When the Litany of the Saints was completed both sister arose, and were given gold rings by Bishop Taylor. “It’s symbolic of the Church receiving you as Christ’s bride,” she said. “I can’t imagine that anyone could possibly feel more like a bride than I do.”

“When you look at a community, you think you want certain things, but really and truthfully, your call is from God, so God has to be the one to put you in the right community,” Sr. Mary Clare said. “It’s got to be the one He made you for. It’s kind of like saying you’ll marry any man,” she said laughing. “You’ve got to marry the man God made for you or it won’t work.”

Sr. Mary Clare is now the associate to the director of religious education for pre-K-12th grade at Blessed Sacrament Church in Jonesboro. She also works in the Hispanic ministry at the church and is the vocations director for the Olivetan Benedictine community.

“I love our prayer life. And serving God’s people,” she said.

Vocations
**October Dates**

1. **MATTHEW KELLY: LIVING EVERY DAY WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE**
   9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - St. Mary’s Parish in Gainesville and First Christian Church of Gainesville, 401 North Dixon St., Gainesville. For information, visit www.DynamicCatholic.com or call (940) 902-9399.

2. **ST. JUDE 37TH ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL**
   11 a.m. to 10 p.m. - St. Jude Parish, 500 E. Dallas St., Mansfield. For information, contact Russ Hart at (817) 238-6609.

3. **ST. MARIA GORETTI KOUNTRY KARNIVAL**
   Saturday and Sunday - St. Maria Goretti School, 1200 S. Davis Dr., Arlington. For information, contact the school office at (817) 275-5081.

4. **CALIX SUPPORT GROUP**
   10 a.m. - A monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and those struggling with addiction and seeking recovery. Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth. For information, contact Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 431-9369.

5. **OUR LADY OF MERCY, HILLSBORO, FALL FESTIVAL**
   11 a.m. - Our Lady of Mercy Parish, 1135 Hwy., 107 Crestridge Dr., Hillsboro. For information contact Barbara Cleveringen at (214) 564-9267.

6. **ST. FRANCES CABRINI, GRANBURY, PARISH MISSION**
   7 to 8:30 p.m. - Tuesday through Thursday - St. Frances Cabrini Parish, 2301 Action Hwy., Granbury. For information, call (817) 326-2131 or e-mail mhenandez@stfrances.net.

7. **GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP**
   Noon to 1 p.m. each Wednesday through Nov. 9 - St. John the Apostle Parish, 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills. For information, contact Kathy Campbell at (817) 870-7117.

8. **AN EVENING OF PRAYER AND SHARING WITH THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR**
   4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Our Lady of Victory Center, 909 West Shaw St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Sister Yolanda Cruz at (817) 923-3091 or by e-mail at sycruz@sbcglobal.net.

9. **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FALL FESTIVAL**
   Friday, 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. - Immaculate Conception Church, 2255 N. Bonnie Brae, Denton. For information, contact Teresa Meyer at (972) 977-9841.

10. **CATHOLIC RESPECT LIFE SPEAKER SERIES**
    7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Good Shepherd Parish, 1005 Tinker Rd., Colleyville. For information, contact the parish office at (817) 421-1287 or the Catholics Respect Life Office at (817) 560-3452, ext. 257.

11. **TASTE OF ST. BART’S FALL FESTIVAL**
    Noon to 4 p.m. - St. Bartholomew Church, 3616 Altamura Blvd., Fort Worth. For information, contact the parish office at (817) 292-7703.

12. **WHITE MASS FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**
    7 p.m. - St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Deacon Bruce Corbett at (817) 880-5479 or Patricia Gonzales at (817) 560-2452 ext. 254.

13. **NOLAN CATHOLIC 50TH ANNIVERSARY HOMECOMING**
    Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Game, 7:30 p.m. - Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, call (817) 395-0249 or e-mail alumni@nolancatholicchs.org.

14. **RETROUVAILLE WEEKEND**
    Ministry offering tools for couples to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. For information or to register, call (810) 560-3300 or visit the website at www.retrovaille.org.

15. **STEAK DINNER / SILENT AUCTION**
    6:30 p.m. - Holy Redeemer Parish, 16290 Old Weatherford Rd., Aledo. For information, call the parish office at (817) 441-3500.

16. **HOLY SPIRIT SISTERS HOST ‘COME & SEE’**
    Discernment retreat for women ages 18-45 - Motherhouse, 300 Yucca St., San Antonio. For information, visit www.hsp.org or contact Sister Gabrielle Hession at (210) 533-5149 or sgheission@hotmail.com.

17. **WORLD YOUTH DAY AT SIX FLAGS**
    11 a.m. to 7 p.m. - Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington. For information, contact Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry at (817) 560-2452, ext. 255.

18. **FORT WORTH Diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, Other Sexual Minorities, Families, Friends**
    7 p.m. - Catholic Renewal Center, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Warren Murphy at (817) 927-5383 or Dorene Rose at (817) 529-7370.

19. **ST. JUDE THADEUS PARISH FESTIVAL**
    10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. - St. Jude Thadeus Church, 600 Davey Dr., Burkburnett. For information, contact the parish office at (940) 569-1222.

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### Classifieds

**Part-time Administrative Assistant**

The Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas is seeking a part-time administrative assistant to help primarily in the Risk Management Department at the Catholic Center. Main duties will include providing timely and accurate clerical support to the Claims/Risk Manager by answering all calls, processing electronic and standard mail, photocopying documents, and maintaining an accurate filing system for all claims and safety inspections. This position is expected to be 20 hours per week. Some allowance for flexible scheduling may be considered. The qualified applicant will be a practicing Catholic with a high school diploma, will have a minimum of three years secretarial experience, will have good organizational skills, and be experienced with Microsoft Office software, copy machines, and general office equipment. English/Spanish bilingual applicants are highly preferred. The Diocese of Fort Worth offers excellent pay and benefits to its employees. If interested in this position, visit www.fwdioc.org for a full job description and on-line application. Complete the application on your computer and save it. Then submit it via e-mail, along with your résumé, to msmeroth@fwdioc.org. Qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview by Mark Smeroth, director of Human Resources. Application deadline is Sept. 30.

**Youth Ministry Coordinator**

St. Patrick Cathedral is seeking a full-time youth minister (50 hrs. per week) to develop and coordinate a holistic youth ministry. Degree in religious education or certificate in youth ministry with some experience preferred. Salary competitive, generous benefits provided. Send résumé to Father Joseph Pemberton, St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, Texas 76102.

**General Construction Services**

General construction work/repairs inside and out including: flooring, painting, doors, windows, roofing, concrete, backhoe, and tractor services. Custom mowing lots and acres. Call (817) 732-4083.

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### Hawaiian Cruise

Deacon Patrick Burke, Pastoral Adm. of Christ the King Parish, Iowa Park will host a 14-days Hawaiian Island Cruise, April 14-28, 2012, visiting LaHaina, Honolulu, Kauai, Hilo, and Ensenada, Mexico. Round-trip from DF to LA and then cruising to the Hawaiian Islands aboard the Sapphire Princess. Prices starting at $1,745.00 (plus taxes). For more information, or a cruise brochure, contact Deacon Burke at (940) 592-2802 or cell: (940) 337-3319; e-mail: crkip@sbcglobal.net.
After a 10-year journey, Lindsay native Sister Mary Clare Bezner, professes final vows as an Olivetan Benedictine sister and

**Rises to new life as a bride of Christ**

By Jenara Kocks Burgess / Correspondent

On the feast day of the Assumption of Mary, Lindsay native Sister Mary Clare Bezner’s 10-year journey toward sisterhood ended and her new dedicated religious life began as she professed her perpetual vows to become an Olivetan Benedictine sister at Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Approximately 70 family members and friends from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including many from her home parish of St. Peter in Lindsay, and nearby Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster, attended the ceremony.

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor of Little Rock celebrated the Mass at 2 p.m., Aug. 15, at Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro. Another member of Sr. Mary Clare’s community, Sister Mary Beth Hackley, also professed her perpetual vows that day.

Sister Mary Clare Bezner said her call to religious life first came when she spent a year in Honduras for the Diocese of Fort Worth in 2000-2001. She worked at a clinic for women and children and a home for the elderly during her year of service.

“I encountered some beautiful young sisters who were joyful there,” she said. “I was also reading a Christian novel, and in the book, the main character became a sister. While I was reading that, in my heart, I felt deep down that the Lord wanted me to be a sister. I just knew it, and I actually got very upset,” she said, indicating her reluctance to hear what the Lord was saying. “But I know it was my first call. Mary said ‘yes’ when she was asked, but I said ‘NO,’” she recalled, laughing.

Sr. Mary Clare said she didn’t tell anyone about that call at first. She returned to the United States in 2001 and got a job as a nurse.

“Then I started going to a prayer group and praying the Rosary every week,” Sr. Mary Clare recalled, adding that she began praying by herself more frequently, and attending daily Mass. “When that started, I was still looking for someone to marry, thinking that was what I wanted to do,” trying to ignore, she said, that God had already called her to religious life.

Sr. Mary Clare said for the next two years, during that prayer time with her church and women’s prayer group, she started growing closer to the Lord and really felt that she wanted to serve Him even more.

“I said I would even have as many children as He wanted, if He would just let me get married. I would do whatever He wanted, just don’t let me be a sister,” she said.

The turning point came one day in 2004 when Sr. Mary Clare was attending a Bible study in Muenster.

“We were reading the story of Abraham and Isaac. And Abraham was asked to sacrifice the only son God had ever given him and the leader of the scripture study said, ‘If there is something you’re supposed to be offering on the altar, what is it? It could even be something that is considered good by the eyes of the world but God is asking you to give it up.’ I knew immediately ...