Catholic school tuition assistance is one of many programs aided by Sharing in Ministry

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Providing a Catholic school education for their children was always a priority for Rachel and Tim Smith (names changed for privacy).

“It’s something we discussed while going through our engagement encounter,” remembers the mother of four and longtime member of St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth. “We wanted a big family,” she said, and for their children to attend Catholic schools. “I hoped to give my youngsters all the benefits I didn’t have.”

Raised in a family of five children, Rachel never attended a Catholic school because her parents couldn’t afford the tuition. But her husband graduated from St. Andrew’s and knew firsthand the difference a Catholic education can make.

“We wanted to surround our children with people who put God first in their lives,” Rachel explains. “Faith should be a day-to-day experience. Not something that just happens on Sunday.”

Thanks to the tuition assistance program funded by Sharing in Ministry, the Smiths have watched two offspring graduate from Catholic elementary school and high school. Two younger children still attend St. Andrew’s.

“We both have health problems. See Sharing…, P. 12

Episcopal bishop resigns, says he will become Catholic

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Saying that God is calling him to become a Catholic, the Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande asked his fellow bishops to accept his resignation Sept. 25.

The request, required by church law, came from Bishop Jeffrey Steenson during an executive session on the closing day of the Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops meeting in New Orleans. He also said he intended to seek release from his Episcopal ordination vows by the end of the year.

The consent of a majority of the House of Bishops is required for a bishop to resign before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 72 or being declared incapacitated.

See Episcopal Bishop…, P. 8

Life Chain — Three-year-old Wil Crawford gives a thumbs-up to Father Michael Kmiotek, CFR, at the Life Chain location on Hwy. 377 in Keller. At least 17 communities within the Diocese of Fort Worth participated in the 20th annual National Life Chain Oct. 7. The observance, which takes place each year on the first Sunday in October, is an opportunity to give a prayerful, peaceful witness to the tragedy of abortion. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen) See story, p. 2

Congress urged to ‘stand up for children’ by overturning SCHIP veto

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A top official of Catholic Charities USA called on Congress to “stand up to the president for our nation’s children” by overturning President George W. Bush’s veto of expanded funding for the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP.

Candy Hill, senior vice president for social policy at the Alexandria, Virginia-based organization, spoke at a telephone news briefing Oct. 2, the day before Bush vetoed the legislation that has received wide support from religious, health care, labor, and consumer groups.

It was the fourth veto of Bush’s presidency; he has said expanding the program by $3.5 billion would be a step toward socialized medicine and could lead many families to drop their private health insurance in favor of coverage by SCHIP.

“Because the Congress has chosen to send me a bill that moves our health care system in the wrong direction, I must veto it,” Bush said in his veto message. “I hope we can now work together to produce a good bill that puts poorer children first, that moves adults out of a program meant for children, and that does not abandon the bipartisan tradition that marked the enactment of SCHIP.”

The Senate approved the legislation by a veto-proof vote of 67 to 29 Sept. 27. But supporters of the legislation said they hoped to find 19 votes in the House to see Catholic officials…, P. 15


Primitive but effective, soup pots continue to feed earthquake victims in Peru

By Patricia Zapor

SAN CLEMENTE, Peru (CNS) — A system of feeding thousands of people along Peru’s central coast through a network of open soup pots in the streets would have seemed primitive two months ago.

But after an Aug. 15 earthquake flattened more than 70,000 homes in the region 130 or so miles south of Lima, the “olla” that feed people in their neighborhoods are a welcome indication that there is at least some kind of system at work.

For the first 10 days after the quake, the people of San Clemente might as well have been 130 miles to the west, on an island in the Pacific Ocean.

“We had no help at all for the first 10 days,” explained Saravia Atuncar, a member of St. Martin de Porres Parish in San Clemente. He and other parishioners met with two U.S. reporters and representatives of Catholic Relief Services—Peru in a church hall Sept. 26 to explain how the community has coped with the disaster.

The town of 25,000 people had about 1,500 houses destroyed in the magnitude 8 earthquake. See Quake survivors…, P. 13
Veteran pro-life volunteer Dennis Helgeson has only missed the event twice in the past 10 years.

Trini Phillips became a first-time participant after deciding, “one hour is nothing compared to what’s going on.”

Fourteen-year-old Nicole Stevens added a little technology to enhance her silent protest. The rosary on her iPod would help drown out the roar of nearby traffic.

Their backgrounds and experiences are different, but all three Catholics shared a common purpose Oct. 7 as they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with other pro-life Americans during the 20th annual National Life Chain.

In an effort to create a visual, peaceful, and powerful statement, thousands of participants lined sidewalks in 1,300 communities across the country for one hour on an autumn Sunday afternoon to pray for an end to abortion.

Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Worth joined members of other Christian denominations at 17 different urban and rural locations. Carrying signs that read, “Abortion Hurts Women,” “Jesus Forgives & Heals,” and “Abortion Kills Children,” the protesters drew attention to an issue that many Americans choose to ignore, according to Larry Stevens, a local Life Chain organizer.

“This is the only national pro-life event that takes place coast to coast,” said Stevens, as he handed out posters at Loop 820 and Rufe Snow Drive in North Richland Hills. “Are we going to save a baby today? I don’t know. This is largely to remind people of what’s going on and to get them more involved in pro-life activities. It does make a difference.”

These young people were among those showing their support of adoption, their opposition to abortion, and the availability of pardon and reconciliation from Jesus and his church, as they stood along Rufe Snow Drive in North Richland Hills.

Father Michael Kmiotek, is one of several Franciscan Friars of the Renewal who joined parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller, Oct. 7, as they took part in the ecumenical Life Chain prayerful demonstration along Hwy. 377 in Keller. They were joined by several members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, a New York-based religious order that opened a friary in Fort Worth several months ago.

“People are on fire for Christ here,” Fr. Kmiotek added. “After seeing things in the media, you’d never think so many people were pro-life, but they are, and this is a good sampling of that,” he explained. “It’s great to see so many kids out here too. This is a beautiful, silent witness.”

More than 200 Life Chain participants, most of them parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, braved hot, humid weather to stand outside a busy shopping center on Hwy. 377 in Keller. They were joined by several members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, a New York-based religious order that opened a friary in Fort Worth several months ago.

And, despite the controversy and divisiveness that surrounds the abortion issue, participants in northern Tarrant County saw the car horn.

“People are on fire for Christ here,” said Brian Cox, a St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner and veteran of two other Life Chain events. “We’re out here hoping to change the hearts of people.”

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Waters over Great Barrier Reef become open-air chapel for World Youth Day cross

By Dan McAloon

Cairns, Australia (CNS) — The navy patrol boat HMAS Broome took a break from security operations along Australia’s northern border to transport the World Youth Day cross, icon, and aboriginal message stick to the aqua blue waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

The trip fulfilled another milestone in the epic journey that is taking the symbols around the Australian continent for a year before World Youth Day, July 15-20, in Sydney.

Anchored off Fitzroy Island, nearly 14 miles east of Cairns in the Coral Sea, the HMAS Broome became a rocking open-air chapel for a prayer service Sept. 22. Deacon Matt Ransom, officiating for the Cairns Diocese, began the service quoting the Book of Genesis about God creating the world.

He led the group in a prayer for the Cairns Diocese, began the service quoting the Book of Genesis about God creating the world. The trip fulfilled another milestone in the epic journey that is taking the symbols around the Australian continent for a year before World Youth Day, July 15-20, in Sydney.

In this column and the next, I hope to give you some positive benefits for the Church to maintain such a practice.

First, however, you need to know that celibacy has played a large role in the history of many of the great religions.

For other religions, celibacy is most closely connected with asceticism, a practice of self-restraint from worldly desires in order to remain in a pure state of holiness with God. Today, both Jews and Christians believe that as Catholics and Christians we come to see the great good of celibacy and the religious life of priests, brothers, and sisters as a calling from God and that any parent would be honored to have a son or daughter who heralds the Good News of Jesus Christ with such passion and love for God and neighbor.

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

Beginning Experience weekend offers help to those grieving loss of spouse

Vocation awareness — Does anything good come from celibacy?

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Other Christian denominations can’t understand it. Catholics are often bewildered by it, and yet, celibacy remains as the norm for the priesthood and religious life.

In this column and the next, I hope to give you some positive benefits for the Church to maintain such a practice.

First, however, you need to know that celibacy has played a large role in the history of many of the great religions. For other religions, celibacy is most closely connected with asceticism, a practice of self-restraint from worldly desires in order to remain in a pure state of holiness with God. Today, both Jews and Christians believe that as Catholics and Christians we come to see the great good of celibacy and the religious life of priests, brothers, and sisters as a calling from God and that any parent would be honored to have a son or daughter who heralds the Good News of Jesus Christ with such passion and love for God and neighbor.

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

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or separation. The next weekend session will be offered Oct. 26-28 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

For more information about the Beginning Experience ministry or to register, call the Catholic Renewal Center at metro (972) 601-4091 or e-mail the Fort Worth/Dallas Beginning Experience team at dfwbv@hotmail.com.
Deaf Ministry Program discontinues interpreting services at Sacred Heart

The Deaf Ministry Program has announced that it has discontinued offering interpreting services at Sacred Heart. The decision was made after consulting with the Deaf community and determining that the services were no longer needed.

Presentation to be offered on Vatican II at Most Blessed Sacrament

The diocesan Office of Adult Catechesis and RCIA will host a presentation on Vatican II. The presenter will be a Vatican II expert who will discuss the impact of this important event on the Church.

Correction

In the Sept. 28 issue of the North Texas Catholic, the story on the airport chaplaincy program misstated that Bishop Vann was once a seminarian in Rome. In fact, Bishop Vann had already been ordained to the priesthood prior to pursuing his graduate studies in Rome.

People of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth

Theology of the Body workshop to be offered at St. Maria Goretti

The program will be presented by Christopher West, four weeks of sessions on the theology of the body. The series will be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. each Tuesday from Oct. 19 to Nov. 16.

Red Mass to be celebrated Oct. 19 at the cathedral

The 2007 Red Mass, offered for judges, attorneys, law school professors, students and government officials, and those of all faith traditions who work in any capacity within the legal profession, will be celebrated at 6 p.m. Oct. 19 at St. Patrick Cathedral. This annual event is sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Divine Ministry and is a traditional event that celebrates the Church's support of the legal profession.

Parental Survival Course to be offered Oct. 27 in Keller

Dr. Ray Guarneri, a clinical psychologist, will speak at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, located at 160 Wills Lane in Keller, Oct. 27. Dr. Guarneri will present a program entitled “Parental Survival Course: Turning Trials to Triumphs” from 9 a.m. to noon.

Marriage enrichment program to be offered in two locations

A one-day marriage enrichment program, entitled “Today … Tomorrow … Forever,” will be offered Nov. 18 at St. Jude Thaddeus Parish, 600 W. Loop 288 East in Burleson, and Nov. 17 at the Cathedral, 800 West Loop 288 South in West Fort Worth. The program, sponsored by the diocesan Family Life Office, will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at each location.

Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth to offer vocation retreat Nov. 17

The Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth will host a vocation retreat for young women. The retreat will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth convent, located at 1814 Egyptian Way in Grand Prairie.

Series on Catholic Social Teaching continues at St. Michael

St. Michael Church, located at 3713 Harborwood Road in Bedford, is currently hosting a series on Catholic Social Teaching. The Thursday evening sessions, being offered through Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, will start at 7 p.m. By participating in these seminars, according to information from the parish, participants will gain a better understanding of current social justice issues, possible solutions, and how their faith is calling them to act.

Retrouvaille weekend Oct. 19-21 to offer help for hurting marriages

A Retrouvaille weekend, part of a three-month process which combines a live-in weekend with post-weekend follow-up sessions, will be offered. The program, entitled “Today … Tomorrow … Forever,” will be offered Nov. 18 at St. Jude Thaddeus Parish, 600 W. Loop 288 East in Burleson, and Nov. 17 at the Cathedral, 800 West Loop 288 South in West Fort Worth. The program, sponsored by the diocesan Family Life Office, will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at each location.

Mount Carmel Center to offer morning of reflection Nov. 14

Mount Carmel Center, an institute of Christian spirituality located at 4901 N. Denton Tap Road in race, will host a morning of reflection on Nov. 14, from 10 a.m. to noon. The program, entitled “All That We Have for Our Children: The Treasure,” will be led by Father Stephen Sanchez, OCD. The retreat, which is designed to assist those entering a vocation or those who are already considering a vocation in the religious life, will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Mount Carmel Center, located at 4901 N. Denton Tap Road.
DCCW Assembly to be held Oct. 25

With the theme "Bearing Light to Women in Our World," the Fort Worth Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) will hold its biennial DCCW Assembly Oct. 25 at Sacred Heart Church, 1501 9th Street in Wichita Falls.

Keynote speaker Kay Kegovits, a parishioner at St. Maria Goretti Church in Arlington who is described in promotional materials as a "dynamic and faith filled presenter," will focus upon "Spirituality and Women" in her presentation to the assembly.

Bishop Kevin Vann will preside at the assembly Mass.

Reports from officers will be heard during the day, workshops will be offered, and participants will vote on bylaws changes that have been proposed and distributed to members.

Each parish has been asked to contribute a $25 gift or gift certificate to be offered at a silent auction in order to raise funds for the Fort Worth chapter of the DCWC. The $20 registration fee includes all meals, lunch and assembly materials, the fee is $25 if received after Oct. 15.

According to the mission statement for the national organization, the council "acts through its membership to support, empower, and develop Catholic women as they discern spirituality, leadership, and service. NCCW (National Council of Catholic Women) programs respond to God's call to holiness in the church and society in the modern world."

For more information about registration, contact the assembly, contact Betty Kalina at (817) 275-0787.

Singles Silent Retreat will be held at Montserrat Nov. 16-18.

A silent retreat for singles will be held at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat Nov. 16-18. The retreat will begin at 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 16, and conclude throughout lunch on Sunday, Nov. 18.

Father Nathan Stone, SJ, will serve as retreat master for the weekend. Included in the retreat fee of $40, is an author and speaker who has been leading individuals and groups in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises for the past 10 years.

Participants in the retreat weekend will be given the opportunity for private prayer and meditation on topics offered by the retreat master. The Mass and community prayer will be offered at the retreatsite.

St. Francis Village to hold fall festival

St. Francis Village, a retirement community located at 4070 St. Francis Village Road in Crowley, will hold its fall festival Saturday, Oct. 13, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will include a variety of vendors and activities.

The village will have a "Viking Run" to be held Saturday, Oct. 13, at 8 a.m. The event will take place from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The run will include a 5K run/walk and a 1-mile timed walk.

A pancake breakfast will be served in the school cafeteria at 8:30 a.m. The event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 13.

St. Michael Parish to host craft sale Oct. 13-14

St. Michael Church, 5731 Harwood Road in Bedford, will host a craft fair Oct. 13 and 14. The fair will feature a wide array of items.

For more information, contact the parish at (817) 924-8917.

Holy Spirit Novena to be offered at St. Maria Goretti Parish

St. Maria Goretti Parish, located at 1300 South Davis Drive in Bedford, will host a Holy Spirit Novena in praying the Holy Spirit Novena at Masses beginning Thursday, Oct. 15, and continuing through Friday, Oct. 24.

Novena prayers will be offered after the homily at the parish’s Masses. Novena masses will be at an additional 6:30 p.m. Mass on weekday evenings. On Sunday, Oct. 21, the parish will offer a special 8 a.m. Mass with novena prayers, and all regular weekend Masses will include the novena prayer.

The novena will conclude with the 6:30 p.m. Mass on the feast of All Souls, Nov. 2.

For more information about the novena, are available at a parish, a donation of $5 is requested. All are invited to remember a loved one or a friend in prayer.

For more information, contact Cindy Alford at (817) 274-0464.

Sisters of St. Mary invite women to ‘Come and See’ Oct. 21

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur are hosting a “Come and See” weekend at St. Mary of Namur, 6025 West 90th Street in South Fort Worth. Single women ages 18 to 45 are invited to attend and to learn more about life as a religious sister.

The day will begin with Mass at 10:30 a.m. in the convent chapel. Following by dinner with the sisters, a presentation, and time for sharing.

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in Fort Worth are members of an international congregation of Catholic religious women founded in Namur, Belgium, in the early 1800s. Recently, they are finding themselves part of a national trend of having young women seriously considering — and increasingly choosing — life as a religious sister. The sisters have noted an increase in the number of inquiries locally over the past five years. Three women, as pre-candidates, are in the initial stages of membership, and the sisters are discerning transition into the congregation.

For those persons interested in a more extended visit with the sisters, inquiries are welcome regarding a “Come and Stay Weekend,” Oct. 19-21. For more information, contact Sister Margaret Miller, SSFN, at smargm@airmail.net or call her at (817) 429-4009. More information may also be found online at www.ssfmn.com.

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A pancake breakfast will be served in the school cafeteria at 8:30 a.m. The event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 13.

The race is a memorial to Judi K. Cooley, 53, who died July 13 from lymphoma. The proceeds from the event will benefit the Karen Lewis family.

The 28th annual parish barbecue will be held at St. Mary Church, 105 Barret Street in Henrietta. The event will be held Oct. 21 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the parish hall. Meals will be sold for $8 per adult, $4 per child, and under may eat free of charge. Proceeds from the event will benefit the parish building fund. For more information, call (940) 538-4214.

University Catholic Community at UTA to offer retreat Nov. 3-4

The University Catholic Community at the University of Texas at Arlington will hold a retreat the weekend of Oct. 3-4. The retreat will be held at the UCC Campus Ministry building, located at 1010 Benge Dr. in Arlington. The retreat will begin at 5 p.m. Saturday and will conclude after the 5:30 p.m. Mass on Sunday.

The retreat, which will focus on spiritual renewal for the fall semester, will offer time for praise and worship, individual quiet time, music, workshops, and reflections from guest speakers. Retreat participants will take part in a service project on Sunday.

St. George School to host fall carnival Oct. 13

Everyone is invited to come and join in the fun and festivities at the St. George School Fall Carnival Oct. 13 from noon to 8 p.m. Carnival games for people of all age, every pony ride, and a “Spook House” are among the planned activities. A wide variety of foods will be available to enjoy, including ethnic dishes, roasted corn on the cob, funnel cakes, hamburgers, and hot dogs. Entertainment will include the Dixie ducks and dragon dancers and magicians.

St. George School is located east of downtown Fort Worth off of Bellknop Street at 4320 Montgomery Avenue.

For more information, call the school office at (817) 285-4876.
Ordinarily warm and gregarious, diocesan Director of Vocations Father Kyle Walterscheid at first appears hesitant to talk about himself.

He manages to get out the basics: born and raised in Muenster; the youngest of seven children; Catholic school education, kindergarten through 12th grade.

However, once the subject turns to the church, to his call, to the priesthood, Fr. Kyle’s initial shyness disappears. His eyes shine. He becomes animated and relaxed. Within minutes, anyone listening can see that this man is uniquely qualified to be a fisher of men and women.

“It’s not promoted,” he explains, when asked what challenges a vocations director must face. “We’re not supporting it enough as parishes and as parents. I think parents so often get scared to even think about their son or their daughter choosing the religious life.”

Why?

“I don’t know exactly why,” Fr. Kyle admits. “I don’t have that statistic.”

Facts and figures carry weight with this former engineer who lived with a call that began long before he knew he really had a long talk with you.”

“So we did,” Fr. Kyle goes on. “I had a long talk with him, and he thanked me for my honesty. Then he said, ‘I’ve always been able to see that you would be a good pastor.’”

His friend’s observation left Kyle speechless. “I was shocked that anyone would see that in me,” he says, “because I didn’t see that in myself. I saw myself as an engineer, not as a leader. People saw me as a leader because I was successful in engineering, but I didn’t think I had the tools for leadership, and I think that weakness and vulnerability is the reason I didn’t pursue the call.”

“All of the skills I used in engineering, I just didn’t realize the leadership was there, because I’d never used it. I was using the area of my strength and that I thought I was best designed for. I thought that was engineering.” Now Fr. Kyle laughs. “I think God just had his humor and said, ‘Well, I want you to do this because you’re good at it so that you’ll be able to use those skills in another area.’ And that’s kind of how I’ve taken it, that I’ve used those skills in different ways in what I’m doing today.”

And so, five years after his ordination, it comes back to facts and figures. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a devoted community of the faithful to guide that child to a vocation to the priesthood or religious life.

The statistics have shown this “20 percent everywhere I’ve gone, every youth ministry, every parish that I’ve visited,” Fr. Kyle says. “It’s consistently the same, whether it’s a small group or a large group… And then 5 percent, or better than 5 percent, of all teenagers will end up saying, ‘I have a strong inclination [that] God’s calling me to consider religious life.’

While visiting various portions of the diocese in the last year, Fr. Kyle has surveyed the people he meets about the call to religious life. He has found that more than 20 percent of the high school-age youth believe God is calling them to consider religious life.

The statistics have shown this “20 percent everywhere I’ve gone, every youth ministry, every parish that I’ve visited,” Fr. Kyle says. “It’s consistently the same, whether it’s a small group or a large group… And then 5 percent, or better than 5 percent, of all teenagers will end up saying, ‘I have a strong inclination [that] God’s calling me to consider religious life.’

One in 20,” he emphasizes. “That tells me that God is consistent in his calling throughout the generations,” says Fr. Kyle. “It’s there.”
Fort Worth Diocese releases new Victim Outreach / Safe Environment brochure

The diocesan offices of Victim Assistance Ministry and the Safe Environment Program have released a new brochure, available for distribution in parishes, schools, and other diocesan programs. The brochure is now available in English and is being printed in Spanish and Vietnamese.

Entitled “Recognize, Respond, Refer,” the new brochure provides continuity with themes emphasized in the Teen Safe Environment training materials used in the Fort Worth Diocese. Environment training materials emphasized in the Teen Safe Environment Program provides continuity with themes used in the Diocese of Fort Worth's Safe Environment Program.

The new brochure also describes Fort Worth’s Safe Environment Program and reviews the requirements for training and compliance with the diocese’s Code of Conduct.

“This new brochure reflects the commitment already made by thousands of adults, teens, and children who have received Safe Environment education in our parishes and schools,” says Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator for the diocese. “It also serves as a reminder of a church’s commitment to remain a safe and healthy place for all persons.”

In his introduction to the new brochure, Bishop Kevin Vann writes: “This pamphlet highlights the policies and procedures which all members of the community are expected to uphold in their participation in the church. As the bishop of Fort Worth, I ask you to be aware of, and actively support, these high standards of conduct. … I ask for your help in continuing to educate and promote and support this culture of safety.”

To order copies of the brochure for parishes, schools, or diocesan programs, contact Ruth Smith, director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection, at (817) 560-2452 ext. 180 or Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, at (817) 560-2452 ext. 201. For answers to questions regarding Safe Environment Programs, contact Ruth Smith. To report sexual abuse to the diocese or to ask about how to report abuse to the state or civil authorities, call Judy Locke. For more information on Victim Outreach and Safe Environment Programs, visit online at www.fwdiocese.org and click on the box on the right marked “Victim Outreach/Safe Environment Program.”

Holy Rosary School in Arlington to host fall festival Oct. 20

Holy Rosary School, located at 1955 S.W. Green Oaks Blvd in Arlington, invites everyone to a day of “exciting games, delicious food, and fabulous entertainment!” at the school’s annual fall festival Saturday, Oct. 20. The festival will begin at 11 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m.

For more information, call the Holy Rosary School office at (817) 419-6880.

Make plans now to celebrate World Marriage Day Feb. 10

World Marriage Day is celebrated nationally on the second Sunday in February. This year it falls on Feb. 10.

The day honors the husband and wife as the head of the family, the basic unit of church and society, according to information from the diocesan Family Life Office. “It salutes the beauty of [the couple’s] faithfulness, sacrifice, and joy in daily married life.”

For ideas on how to incorporate the observation of World Marriage Day into the parish liturgical celebrations, download the package from the Internet at www.wm.wwme.org, clicking on “WMD: Clergy/Family Life Package.”

For more information on programs promoting marriage and family life, call the diocesan Family Life Office at (817) 560-2452 ext. 304 or ext. 256, or visit the diocesan Web site at www.fwdiocese.org.

NTC deadlines for submission

The North Texas Catholic is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly. The deadline to submit information is noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published.

Items for the Oct. 26 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Oct. 17. Items for the Nov. 9 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Oct. 31.
Episcopal Bishop Steenson, former rector of St. Andrew Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, says he will become Catholic

From Page 1

incapacitated. The bishops did not act on the request, however, because Episcopal Church law also requires prior notification of all diocesan standing committees.

“It is indeed painful to lay down this ministry, but I realize that an effective leader cannot be so conflicted about the guiding principles of the church one serves,” Bishop Steenson said in a statement to the House of Bishops. “I hope my decision will encourage others who believe they can no longer remain in the Episcopal Church to respect its laws and withdraw as courteously as possible for the sake of the Christian witness.”

In an earlier letter to the bishops, the 55-year-old Bishop Steenson, who has headed the diocese based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, since January 2005, said his “conscience is deeply troubled about where the Episcopal Church is heading, and this has become a crisis for me because of my ordination vow to uphold its doctrine, discipline, and worship.”

The resignation came as the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, the U.S. branch of the Anglican Communion, was meeting in New Orleans to consider a response to conflicts with the worldwide communion on issues such as the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of openly homosexual bishops.

Lengthy excerpts from the bishop’s Sept. 21 letter were published by Episcopal News Service and The Living Church, a weekly magazine dedicated to the promotion of “orthodox, catholic Anglicanism within the life of the Episcopal Church.”

Bishop Steenson told The Living Church in an interview to be published in a forthcoming edition, “I believe that the Lord now calls me toward the Catholic Church. “It amazes me, after all these years, what a radical journey of faith this must necessarily be,” he added. “To some it seems foolish; to others disloyal; to others an abandonment.”

Catholic Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe, New Mexico, whose archdiocese also is based in Albuquerque, welcomed Bishop Steenson into the Catholic Church in a statement and said he had “been in dialogue with him for several years ... this is not a sudden change of heart for him.”

“Bishop Steenson had always hoped that there would somehow be a union with the Anglican church and Rome; however, it appeared to him that this union was never going to happen,” the archbishop added. “I believe he will be entering a period of discernment about his immediate future.”

Less than a week before his Sept. 21 letter, Bishop Steenson helped arrange for members of the diocese’s Pro-Cathedral Episcopal Church of St. Clement in El Paso, to buy the cathedral property for $2 million and sever all ties to the Diocese of the Rio Grande.

He told members of the congregation in a Sept. 16 letter that he agreed “with the leadership of St. Clement’s about where the Episcopal Church seems to be heading.”

But as a bishop he said he was obliged to uphold “the perspective of the Episcopal Church ... that all real and personal property of a congregation is owned not by the local congregation but by the diocese and Episcopal Church.”

Bishop Steenson would be the third Episcopal bishop this year to resign his post and join the Catholic Church. The others were former Bishop Dan Herzog of Albany, New York, and former Bishop Clarence C. Pope of Fort Worth, whose resignations were formally accepted Sept. 25 by the House of Bishops. Bishop Steenson is the former rector of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in downtown Fort Worth.

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Local delegates attend NCCW convention in Columbus, Ohio

Kathy Thome is in her own words, “passionate” about the work of the Fort Worth Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) and all that the council has to offer to Catholic women in every part of the diocese. “DCCW provides women with the opportunity to grow spiritually, to develop leadership skills, and most of all, to nurture family values,” the longtime parishesioner at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Fort Worth explained, noting that she has been active in DCCW since moving to Fort Worth in 1978. Thome, who currently serves as the director of the San Antonio Province of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW), actively networks with the DCCW members in each of the five Texas dioceses she represents. That means putting many miles on her car and many long-distance minutes on her phone bill, admitted Thome, who travels often across the Diocese of Fort Worth and to the Archdiocese of San Antonio as well as the dioceses of Amarillo, Dallas, and Lubbock — all of which are under her directorship.

Recently, Thome also traveled to Columbus, Ohio, along with six other representatives from the Fort Worth DCCW, to attend the National Council of Catholic Women Biennial Convention Sept. 20-23. Father Ivor Koch, former pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, accompanied the local group in his role as moderator for the San Antonio Province.

Local delegates to the convention also included Joyce Brown-Thomaz from Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, Connie Soto of St. George Church in Arlington, and Judy Shaw and Nan Ruddy, both of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls.

“We all had a wonderful experience at the convention,” said Thome, adding that the theme of the convention, “Bringing Light to Our Global Society,” was especially meaningful to her because of the NCCW’s long-standing partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the U.S. bishops’ relief and development agency.

We work very closely with CRS and have many other important ministries, as well,” explained Thome, noting that since 2005, NCCW members from all over the country have donated more than $44,000 to assist Our Mother of Mercy School in Magnolia Ave. in Fort Worth, the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia Ave. in Fort Worth, the recitation of the rosary. Mass will be offered after Mass.

The delegation from the Fort Worth Diocese attending the NCCW convention included (l. to r., front) Father Ivor Koch, San Antonio Province moderator; Joyce Brown-Thomas, Fort Worth DCCW president-elect; Connie Soto, Central/Deadney president; Kathleen Thome, San Antonio Province director; (back) Judy Shaw, San Antonio Province secretary/treasurer; Nan Ruddy, Fort Worth DCCW secretary; and Marie Brown, Fort Worth DCCW Concerns chairman. The convention was held in Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 20-23.

In the convention’s keynote, popular author and motivational speaker Matthew Kelly examined the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the human person with his presentation on “Becoming the Best Version of Yourself,” according to Catholic News Service.

Kelly urged people to practice “carefree timelessness.”

“Spiritually, we need to reconnect ourselves with our God. Our lives are being kidnapped by the urgent. But the most important things are hardly ever urgent,” he said.

Asking the assembly to consider what God wants of us, Kelly suggested, “Most believe God wants them to do the one thing they don’t want to do, the hardest thing... but that’s not true,” he said. “God has an amazing dream for you, to be the best version of yourself, to do things that draw out the best version of the best person we can be,” he added.

“The primary purpose of work is that we develop character. We become a better version of ourselves when we work hard, and that helps us live the dream, by challenging and encouraging each other to become the best version of ourselves,” he said, according to Catholic News Service.

Kathy Thome’s frequent participation in the national conventions has provided her with valuable resources that she always enjoys bringing back to share within her home diocese, said Thome. “It has now been 10 years since NCCW made the commitment in a resolution to address violence toward women in our society,” she explained.

“We all have been working on the issue at the parish and the diocesan levels for the past 10 years, and I am bringing a great deal of new information back from the convention which I will be sharing at our upcoming assembly.”

Catholic women of the diocese may join DCCW through their parish or through individual memberships, said Thome, and all members are encouraged to attend the general assembly, which will be held in Wichita Falls, Oct. 25, at Sacred Heart Church.

“It’s wonderful to be a part of an organization where everyone shares one common goal,” reflected Thome. “Empowering and supporting women in their faith, that’s really what this organization is all about.”

For more information about the DCCW General Assembly or for more information about DCCW membership, contact Betsy Kalina at (817) 275-0787.

Contributing to this story were Laura Troiano and Nicki Prevou.

Father Charles Becker to speak at St. Mary’s Oct. 16

The Fort Worth Queen of Peace Center will host a program entitled “The Blessed Mother Speaks to the Apostles of the Last Times” Oct. 16 at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia Ave. in Fort Worth. The event will begin at 6:45 p.m. with the recitation of the rosary. Mass will follow, and the presentation, given by Father Charles Becker, will be offered after Mass.

Fr. Becker, who has made over 40 pilgrimages to Medjugorje, has made frequent appearances on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN).

For more information on the presentation, call (817) 244-7733, (817) 558-9805, or (817) 244-8191.
On Oct. 11 we celebrated the 45th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II. This great council convened by Blessed Pope John XXIII is one of the most profound movements of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Church.

We are still very much living in the wake of the Council, and in many ways, the dust is still settling even after almost half a century. But what do we know about Vatican II today and what is its legacy? Let’s take a brief look at just a few of the more profound contributions of Vatican II to the life and mission of the Church.

1. THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF THE CHurch:

Undoubtedly one of the great contributions of Vatican II would be its teaching on the very mission and identity of the Church. From this flows the powerful Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, meaning “Light to the Nations.” Lumen Gentium teaches us nothing new about the Church, but gives us a greater insight and understanding of the Church’s identity and mission: to be the visible presence and instrument of Christ, to be the great “sacrament” of salvation that brings in a real, living, and tangible visible presence and love. No person is exempt from this ultimate and high calling. As Lumen Gentium states: “Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission.” (1)

This does not mean that there is an eighth sacrament, but that the Church itself is the sacrament, the one visible instrument who Christ himself established to be his saving presence and vehicle of grace working in the world. It is through the Church that the seven sacraments flow, and it is also within the Church that we as the People of God are also called to be instruments of salvation through our faith, witness, and holiness. This sacramentality of the Church stands as the very foundation of the Council’s vision of the mission and identity of the Church.

2. THE ROLE OF THE LAYITY IN THE CHURCH:

Flowing directly from this vision of the mission of the Church as the sacrament of salvation also comes the Council’s teaching on the role and mission of the laity. This also is one of the greatest contributions of Vatican II. The laity through baptism are intimately joined to the triple mission of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, and are prepared by Christ and called by him to be his witnesses of the Gospel especially and uniquely in the secular culture. As Lumen Gentium states:

But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity. (31)

Thus, the Council empowers the laity to be a living witness and presence of Christ in the ordinary places in the world where they can be the effective witnesses of Christ. The role of the laity is very crucial if the new evangelization envisioned by the Vatican II is going to be successful and this role must realized and lived daily by the lay faithful.

3. THE ENRICHMENT OF FAITH:

This is another theme that is at the heart of the vision and mission of Vatican II and one that was also very much emphasized by Pope John Paul II. The enrichment of faith resides on two principles that were set forth by Pope John XXIII at the beginning of the Council: ressourcement and aggiornamento. Ressourcement means that to be effective in teaching, spreading, and living the Gospel, we must return to and have direct contact with the sources of the faith: Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers, Sacred Tradition, and the spirituality and writings of the saints. The Council brought to the forefront in its teaching this richness of faith found in these sources that should always be at the heart of our journey of faith seeking understanding.

At the same time but not opposed to the idea of returning to the sources of the faith is aggiornamento which means “opening up” and is a missionary openness to the modern culture and the world. Thus, strengthened and empowered by the truth of Christ, the Church is called to go out into the world and engage the culture in a dialogue of faith, bringing the teachings of Christ into the world and shaping and influencing the modern culture. This vision of the Council Fathers is the foundation of the “new springtime of evangelization” in which the faith is to be renewed, enriched, and more faithfully lived through effective catechesis, evangelization, and works of charity.

4. THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS:

This is the key to understanding Vatican II. The universal call to holiness is the main focus and motivation of the Council Fathers. All of us, no matter our calling or state in life, are called to be holy, to be like Christ, and to live forever in his presence and love. No person is exempt from this ultimate and high calling. As Lumen Gentium states: “Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ, whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society.” (40)

Thus, all that Vatican II taught and did—the reform of the liturgy, the teaching on the mission and identity of the Church, the focus on the enrichment of faith—all of that was to bring about more profoundly the holiness of the Church and each of its members. Vatican II was and is about bringing each person into a deeper communion with Christ. This should also be the ultimate goal of anything we do in the Church! If we learn anything from Vatican II, it is that the goal of any activity, planning, catechesis, or work in the Church should be holiness! Let us not forget this call to holiness each and every day of our lives.

In celebration of the 45th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, my office has invited Professor Douglas Bushman, STL, director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University, to speak on October 16th at 7 p.m. at Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington. Professor Bushman will be discussing the great legacy of Vatican II and the New Evangelization, especially in light of the writings and witness of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, who were two of the great minds who influenced the Council. If we really want to know Vatican II, we need to understand the Council through these two great giants of the Church. I invite everyone to come and learn more about this great movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church that not only happened almost 50 years ago, but is still very much working and unfolding in our midst today.

Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master’s degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. He is adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth. Lucas and his wife, Mary, have four children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, and Christian.
Elders Have a Gift
to offer the young— their faith

By Mary Morrell

As ancient cultures knew well, the special gift of elders is not in knowing everything but in being able to tell the stories.... There is wisdom in these stories, and that places seniors among the greatest treasure our parish families have.

Train up a child in the way
he should go; even when he
is old, he will not swerve
from it.  — Proverbs 22:6

Last week I went to dinner with friends, who ordered their perfect meal from the senior menu. I attempted to do the same, but was looked at with furrowed brow by the server. “M’am, you have to be a senior to order from this menu.” I proudly pulled my license from my pocket and said, “Here’s my proof.”

The young man tried to hide a snicker. “Fifty-five is not a senior in this restaurant,” he said, and proceeded to turn the menu over so I could order something else.

“Well, it is by AARP standards,” I muttered under my breath.

Who would have thought I’d be at a place where I was proud to be 55 years old? It’s not the case for many my age or older who often feel a terrible competition from the younger generation.

I think many of us seniors would benefit from having a fairy godmother of our own, perhaps an older version of Cinderella’s, a little bent here and there, with a few brown spots and definitely a knee problem. She would, unashamedly, wear purple dresses and red hats and eat ice cream sundaes when everyone else is eating sherbet. Children, especially, would love to be around her because she would be real, authentically herself, and fully aware of the hard-earned wisdom she had to share with others.

And rather than appear when we need help finding our Prince or Princess Charming, she would appear to us senior folks when we focus too much on how good we used to look or feel, or how we never accomplished our dreams or maybe even now, feeling that we have no purpose in life.

It’s then that our fairy godmother would do one of those, Cher “snap out of it!” routines, and remind us in no uncertain terms that we are “all that” and more, especially when it comes to having a purpose in the lives of our families, and especially, in the life of our Church.

My 25 years of work in religious education has shown me that, in many ways, our children are hurting and our families are hurting, and in that hurt they need their faith. But, for many families, faith and religion receives just a tiny portion of their attention, if any at all.

So what happens to our children? What legacy is being left to them and their relationship with God and the Catholic family to which they belong? There is a real disconnect for them, a loss of their sense of roots and an emptiness that comes from a lack of tradition and ritual.

How are they to come to know God, to learn to love God, and to learn to love an imperfect Church without someone to guide them?

I believe that seniors are an integral part of the solution. Seniors are the elders of the Church, the wise ones, the people who must share their story with the younger generation, so they may share the story with their children, keeping the cycle of faith and love alive and well in the American Church and in their homes, as well.

Mary was such an elder, one who guided, sustained and comforted the faithful of her time by her presence and holy example. She must be our example, too.

Children may be the future of the church but without elders guiding them through the present with our witness and our wisdom, the future will continue to look bleak, especially the future of the Church as we know it.

As ancient cultures knew well, the special gift of elders is not in knowing everything but in being able to tell the stories — whether it is the story of your family or the story of the parish, the stories that have happened over the many years of our lives, leaving us with gray hairs and wrinkles and bad knees and worse eyesight, or most importantly, the story of our faith. There is wisdom in these stories, and that places seniors among the greatest treasure our parish families have.

Tell the story of your Catholic faith to a child today. You can give them nothing greater.

Mary Regina Morrell is the associate director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey. She and her husband are the parents of six sons and live in Colonia, New Jersey.

When I traveled to Auschwitz a few years ago, one question played over and over in my mind: Did they know? Did the German people know what was happening in this camp near their own border, in their own occupied territories? With the trains coming and going year after year, with the long lines of prisoners and the billowing smokestacks, did they just turn a blind eye to the atrocities? Had they become desensitized to the point that they could no longer see the carefully choreographed death operations nearby?

Some concentration camps, like the one in Dachau, were set in comfortable suburbs right inside Germany itself, and the townsfolk could stroll past them during their daily routine. The grass in those suburbs continued to grow as green as anywhere else, young people got married, babies were born, men went to work, and life went on.

Walking through a place like Dachau or Auschwitz, one wonders: Could it ever happen again? Could a similar scenario play out today in middle-class America? Most would instinctively say “no” — after all, we live in a more enlightened time and culture. A more perceptive eye, however, can discern troubling parallels. Nowhere are these parallels more evident than in the bioethical issues of our day. Our society, in fact, faces virtually the same temptation that Germany did: the temptation to normalize certain well-scripted death operations in the midst of polite society.

If we look within our own culture and within our own time, we will see that suction machines have replaced smokestacks, and that fertility clinics and women’s health centers have replaced the barbed wire. Unborn humans and embryonic children are now dispatched with the same desensitized ease as camp inhabitants once were, and ne’er a word is mentioned in respectable society. Our great universities, which need to serve as a moral voice, remain mute or even foster such evil, as does the press, and few dare mention the pall of death that quietly permeates the air.

We need look no further than the Planned Parenthood clinics which are dotted across our country. Future generations are likely to be appalled by the statistics: nearly 2 million deaths per year. They are sure to wonder about a people that ended the lives of their own children at the rate of 1 every 23 seconds through elective abortion. They are sure to ask, “How could they?” and, “Did they know?”

We need look no further than the fertility clinics pres-
Sharing in Ministry helps diocese in forming Catholic leaders through diocesan lay ministry formation program

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problems and medical bills, so there’s no way we could pay the full cost of tuition,” says the grateful mom, who volunteers at the church and school to repay the generosity embodied in their tuition grants. “I wish more people could benefit from this program the way we have.”

The $100,000 from Sharing in Ministry given to Catholic school parents demonstrating financial need, coupled with money raised through the Bishop’s Scholars Fund, is part of an initiative by the Diocese of Fort Worth to make a Catholic school education affordable and accessible to those who want it. People of the diocese have had the option of receiving a Catholic school education for more than 100 years. Continuing to provide Catholic youngsters with a quality, faith-based learning environment is one of the objectives outlined in the 2007-2008 Sharing in Ministry appeal.

The ongoing appeal, with the goal of raising $2.7 million, supports a variety of charitable, educational, and spiritual ministries in the diocese which individual parishes could not provide for themselves.

“Once a year, the church asks every family in the diocese to make a pledge in support of ministries and programs that serve thousands of their fellow Catholics in parishes throughout the diocese,” says Pat Miller, director of the Office of Stewardship and Development. “Continuing these programs ensures that we have a vibrant and healthy church for future generations.”

Online giving is available at the diocesan Web site — www.fwdioc.org — for parishioners who have not had an opportunity to fill out a pledge card in church. Deacon formation, family life outreach, increased services from Catholic Charities, and grants to needy parishes and schools are among the programs made possible by donations to the diocesan appeal.

“Tuition assistance and the grant money given to schools for operating expenses and major improvements demonstrate the commitment Bishop [Kevin] Vann and the diocese has toward the ministry of Catholic schools,” says Catholic Schools Superintendent Don Miller, referring to the impact Sharing in Ministry has made in the lives of students.

While the Catholic classroom isn’t the only place where catechesis and evangelism takes place, the continuing success of the Catholic school system is vital to the church’s future. U.S. Catholic bishops, recognizing the value of Catholic education to the church and nation, have asked each diocese to make its schools available, affordable, and accessible.

“And we’re making an effort to do that,” Superintendent Miller points out.

The generosity of parishioners in the Diocese of Fort Worth provided 633 families with need-based scholarships for the 2007-2008 school year. There are currently 6,659 students enrolled in 19 diocesan elementary and secondary schools. Those numbers will increase when Our Lady of Grace High School joins the list of diocesan schools after it receives accreditation this fall, Don Miller said.

Money from the Bishop’s Scholars Fund and Sharing in Ministry allowed the Catholic Schools Office to distribute $436,000 in tuition assistance to qualifying families. Requests for tuition assistance, however, totaled more than $2 million.

“We’re working to increase [tuition assistance] to $600,000 next year,” he adds. “We want as many children as possible to experience a Catholic school education.”

And many classroom teachers who provide that education benefit from another Sharing in Ministry funded program. Each summer, the Light of Christ Institute (LCI) offers a certification course designed specifically for Catholic school religion teachers. Participants attend class from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. every day for two weeks.

The special summer session, which accommodates the busy schedule teachers have during the academic year, is just one of the ways the Light of Christ Institute helps form and educate Catholic leaders. Developed more than 10 years ago, the lay ministry formation program takes three years to complete and offers the two highest levels of Catechetical Certification available through the Diocese of Fort Worth.

There are three levels of certification: Echoes of Faith is the primary tool to achieve the Basic Catechetical Certification and is achieved by working with a parish’s director of religious education and the Echoes of Faith program.

And a half years of the program, which is offered in both English and Spanish in several locations around the diocese. The highest level of certification involves a practicum, which is done in the final semester of the three-year program. There are also opportunities of specialized study in other areas of pastoral ministry, such as hospital ministry, the Marriage Tribunal, prison ministry, or marriage preparation.

“People who have completed the Light of Christ program serve more effectively because they are more knowledgeable of who Jesus Christ is in their own lives,” says Pedro Moreno, the institute’s director since 1998. “And the closer they get to Jesus Christ, the better they can reflect the light of Christ to others.”

The program is not designed for those interested in graduate-level theological studies. It is primarily an adult catechetical formation program because of financial difficulty. “This is the only adult formation program that’s diocesan sponsored,” Moreno adds. “It’s a rewarding experience, with some people going on to pursue biblical studies, degree programs, or ordained ministries.”

Bill Ross, a eucharistic minister and lector at St. Andrew Church, decided to enroll in the Light of Christ to learn more about his faith. Recently retired from Lockheed-Martin, the former religious education teacher enjoys the conveniences of a morning class held at The Catholic Center in West Fort Worth each Thursday.

“It’s given me a great overview of what’s going on in the church,” says Ross, who attends the sessions with his wife, Tessa. “Last year we studied the Old and New Testaments with Sister St. John [Begnaud, SSVM] and that was very enlightening.”

With his interest in the Bible rekindled, the retiree decided to enroll in the Catholic Biblical School — a four-year program offered at the University of Dallas. After completing his coursework at the Light of Christ Institute and UD programs, Ross is considering becoming a high school religion teacher.

“The idea is to get people more involved in catechesis and evangelization, and I think [LCI] does that,” Ross says. “It’s a wonderful way to make new friends and hear interesting speakers while personally growing in faith.”

Pedro Moreno (right), director of the Light of Christ Institute, leads a discussion during an LCI class at The Catholic Center Oct. 4. LCI, the diocesan lay ministry formation program, benefits from donations made to Sharing in Ministry. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)
**International**

**Quake survivors aided by neighborhood-based distribution networks**

SOUP POTS IN PERU — Residents of San Clemente, Peru, gather Sept. 26 for their midday allotment of soup, cooked in open pots on the street. The system of providing food through a network of neighborhood “comedores,” or common pots, with staples provided by relief agencies such as Caritas Peru and Catholic Relief Services, continues to be the main source of meals for thousands of families nearly two months after an Aug. 15 earthquake. (CNS photo/Patricia Zapor)

**Indian priest says his cure was miracle through Blessed Mother Teresa**

GUWAHATI, India (CNS) — The sainthood cause of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta could cross its last hurdle if the Vatican approves an allegedly miraculous cure that a priest claims he witnessed in an unexplainable man—of Guwahati.

Nearly six weeks after the earthquake, heavy equipment had arrived in San Clemente just that week to remove the tons of debris that had been cleared by hand up to that point, said Atuncar. People who lived near where the trucks stopped rushed in and got supplies. Those who lived farther away, or didn’t hear that a truck had arrived, or couldn’t get there in time, were out of luck.

A copy of the priest’s files and medical records and, according to the priest’s notes, the surgeon affirmed that the disappearance of the calculus (stone) was beyond medical explanation.

The Peruvian civil defense institute reported Oct. 1 that more than 2,700 “ollas” were operating in the four provinces affected by the quake.

Atuncar said a major concern was the irrigation. In other words, water levels dropped dramatically. The chief surgeon then ordered another ultrasound by the same radiologist who did the Sept. 4 tests, but that also proved negative.

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that killed 519 people in the region and left 18 dead in San Clemente.

Like neighboring communities, San Clemente lost electricity, water, and sewer services. Many roads were blocked by debris and downed power poles, Atuncar explained.

At the time of the earthquake, he was at an unexplainable man—of debris that had been cleared out of the church hall, which was undamaged. Half of his home collapsed, and the other half is so damaged it’s uninhabitable, Atuncar said. But he, his wife, children, and grandchildren are survived.

Although relief supplies — food, water, tents, blankets, medicines — arrived in the area relatively quickly, there was no system for making sure everyone got a share, he said. People who lived near where the trucks stopped rushed in and got supplies. Those who lived farther away, or didn’t hear that a truck had arrived, or couldn’t get there in time, were out of luck.

After a while, Atuncar said, people became desperate for food.

“They attacked the trucks when they came through,” he said. Since then, organizations such as Caritas, the Catholic Church’s relief and development arm, have helped overcome the inertia that gripped government officials and have helped overcome the inertia that gripped government officials.

A Peruvian priest says his cure was a miracle through Blessed Mother Teresa.

When it’s ready, the neighbors show up with their bowls. That day, the “olla” nearest St. Martin was filled with a hearty-looking, rich-smelling chicken noodle soup.

The Peruvian civil defense institute reported Oct. 1 that more than 2,700 “ollas” were operating in the four provinces affected by the quake.

As more people return to the area, people will generally available, people will generally available, people will generally available, people will generally available, people will generally available.

The Peruvian government has talked of loans to rebuild, but every few days the amount of those supposed loans changes — first about $20,000, then $1,300, then $3,000. And there’s still no sign of any money.

“It’s all an illusion,” Atuncar said.

Guerra said the people of San Clemente are beginning to talk about developing sustainable industries in their town, which was in one of the poorest parts of Peru before the earthquake. Young people who get any education typically leave San Clemente, he explained, and the most common form of employment is manual labor on a day-to-day basis.

“We know we need some form of stable economic activity,” he said, maybe something like sheep farming. “We know this, but we don’t know how to proceed.”

But he, his wife, children, and grandchildren are survived.

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**Indian priest says his cure was miracle through Blessed Mother Teresa**

GUWAHATI, India (CNS) — The sainthood cause of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta could cross its last hurdle if the Vatican approves an allegedly miraculous cure that a priest claims he witnessed in an unexplainable man—of Guwahati.

Nearly six weeks after the earthquake, heavy equipment had arrived in San Clemente just that week to remove the tons of debris that had been cleared by hand up to that point, said Atuncar. People who lived near where the trucks stopped rushed in and got supplies. Those who lived farther away, or didn’t hear that a truck had arrived, or couldn’t get there in time, were out of luck.

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Myanmar’s bishops call on Catholics to pray for their country

BANGKOK, Thailand (CNS) — The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Myanmar called on Catholics to pray for their country as street demonstrations by Buddhist monks against the military government escalated.

In a statement issued Sept. 26, the bishops said the church had been praying for the country, and, though it is not involved in party politics or the current protests, Catholics “are free to act as they deem fit.”

The Associated Church news agency UCA News in Bangkok obtained a copy of the statement signed by Archbishop Charles Bo of Yangon, general secretary of the bishops’ conference, and Archbishop Paul Zinghtung Grawng of Mandalay, president of the conference.

Journalists reported that security forces in Yangon were breaking up the demonstrations, beating and arresting protesters. The reports said several thousand people were killed.

Bishops in Yangon, general secretary of the bishops’ conference, and Archbishop Paul Zinghtung Grawng of Mandalay, president of the conference.

The reports said several thousand monks and students rallied Sept. 26 at the famous Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar’s largest city, despite a ban on public gatherings of more than five people and a nighttime curfew imposed the day before.

Monks have been demonstrating in Yangon and other cities against spiraling inflation, corruption, and the government’s continued suppression of democracy.

Government officials in Myanmar, formerly Burma, warned the monks to halt the protests after a reported 100,000 people joined marches in Yangon Sept. 24, but some media reported that 100,000 marched again Sept. 26 and several people were killed.

Buddhist monks and students called on the government to cease military operations.

A group of monks sit in protest after being halted by riot police and military officials as they attempted to proceed to the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar, Sept. 26. As many as 200 orange-robed monks were arrested outside the pagoda after leading protests against the military junta. (CNS photo/Reuters)

Sales of pope’s book on Jesus hits 2 million copies worldwide

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Two million copies of Pope Benedict XVI’s book, Jesus of Nazareth, have been sold worldwide. The first volume of the book was published in German, Polish, and Italian in mid-April, and in English in May, followed by dozens of other translations. The book, Pope Benedict’s first as pope, highlights what the Bible says about Jesus, what the moral implications of his teachings are, and how reading the Scriptures can lead to a real relationship with Jesus. The 400-page book has been the number one book on the Catholic Best-Sellers List for the past three months, according to the Catholic Book Publishers Association. An edition in the U.S. is due in March.

Clearing quake debris still the main focus of life in Peruvian towns

PISCO, Peru (CNS) — Six weeks after an earthquake flattened 80 percent of the adobe brick homes in Pisco, the town on the Pacific coast 140 miles south of Lima had only just started to rumble consistently with the more welcome sound of heavy equipment hauling away tons of rubble. The otherwise flat terrain around Pisco was growing new hills, composed of broken adobe bricks, broken furniture, and other unsalvageable remains of what had been a city of 116,000 people before the magnitude 8 earthquake on Aug. 15. Caritas Peru, the Catholic Church’s relief organization, reported a national death toll from the quakes of 519 people, with another 1,800 injured. More than 70,000 homes were destroyed, and 33,000 more were damaged. Pisco, Ica, Chincha, San Clemente, San Andres, and other shattered towns shake with seismic aftershocks only rarely now. But earthquake cleanup and repair are pretty much the only activity in town. Many of the farms and fishing boats that normally provide jobs in one of the poorest regions of Peru still sat idle in late September. The farmers and fishermen who eventually will repair their homes before new town planning gets on track are faced with the task of getting their homes in order, explained Walter Blake of Catholic Relief Services in Peru, the U.S. church’s overseas aid agency and part of Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of Catholic relief agencies. Eighty percent of the fishing boats in the nearby town of San Andres were put out of commission, he said.

OCP publishes Spanish-language guide to prayer, Bible readings

PORTLAND, Oregon (CNS) — Hoping to fill a gap in worship resources available to Hispanic Catholics, OCP in Portland has published a new Spanish-language guide to prayer and the daily Lectionary readings called Palabra, Vida, y Fe (Word, Life, and Faith).

Published twice a year, the book includes Scripture readings, reflections, saints’ profiles, and more for every day of the week. The second edition, available now, covers July through December 2007. “Catholic bookstores are packed with missals and weekly devotionals in English, but very few such resources exist in Spanish,” said Pedro Rubalcava, director of Hispanic ministries at OCP. “Of the few available, none covers half the year in one book, or contains extensive catechetical and prayer sections like the ones in Palabra, Vida, y Fe.” More information is available on the Web site at www.ocp.org, or by calling (800) 548-8749.

Catholic Charities USA honored for its fiscal accountability

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia (CNS) — The Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance has given its seal of approval to Catholic Charities USA, recognizing that it meets all standards for charity accountability.

The alliance, a national charity watchdog group formed in 2001 through the merger of the National Charities Information Bureau with the Council of Better Business Bureaus’ Foundation, reviews standards for governance and oversight, fiscal responsibility, truthfulness in representation, and willingness to disclose information to the public before granting the seal.

“"We are proud to receive this widely recognized and extremely reputable seal that symbolizes our commitment to accountability," said Father Larry Snyder, president of the Alexandria-based Catholic Charities USA, in a statement. Catholic Charities also was named earlier in 2007 as the eighth most fiscally responsible charity in the nation by Charity Navigator, which describes itself as "America’s premier independent charity evaluator."
Catholic officials encourage Congress to override SCHIP veto

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Florida, advocated on behalf of undocumented students hoping to attend college and people seeking refugee status or asylum in separate appearances Sept. 19 in Washington.

In a statement at the National Press Club, Bishop Wenski, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on International Policy and a consultant to their Committee on Migration, urged quick passage of the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors Act, known as the DREAM Act.

He called on elected officials to “resist the voices of dissension and fear this time, and vote for the DREAM Act,” which would allow young adults who are in the U.S. illegally through no fault of their own to attend college at in-state tuition rates and to become permanent residents.

Later that day, Bishop Wenski told a Senate subcommittee that Congress must correct the unintended consequences of recent changes in immigration law relating to the issue of legal status and access to health care they need and deserve, she said.

“From our perspective, today is one of those defining moments in our nation’s evolution … when Congress and the president either accept or reject the obligation of government to provide for the common good, in this case the common good of our nation’s most vulnerable children.” — Sister Catherine Pinkerton

The Catholic Church “… has witnessed the suffering of young persons who through no fault of their own reside in an undocumented status and are denied access to legal status in this country and an opportunity to continue their education.” — Bishop Thomas Wenski

but because they were dependent on their parents, he said.

“Should we forsake these young people because we lack the political will and courage to provide them a just remedy?” the bishop asked. “By investing in these young people, our nation will receive the benefits for years to come. It is also the right and moral thing to do.”

Addressing the Human Rights and Law Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee in the afternoon, Bishop Wenski cited particular cases of vulnerable refugees who have been unable to enter the United States because of the “material support” bar.

They include a Somali woman whose husband and daughter were killed in front of her and who later paid a ransom to have her kidnapped son released; a Sierra Leonean man who was forced to “wire funds” to a paramilitary group.

“Congress must direct this administration, as well as future ones, with clear and unambiguous language regarding the ‘material support’ bar,” the bishop said. “Such language should include a removal of the bar if an individual provides support to a terrorist group under duress,” including the threat of death.

Bishop Wenski said that although the bishops applaud Congress’ role in protecting the U.S. public from outside threats “we can rescue bona fide refugees from persecution without inhibiting our ability to prevent terrorist attacks.”

“The issue of ‘material support’ has seriously undermined the effectiveness of the U.S. refugee protection regime in offering safe haven to those who flee terror and persecution in this world,” he said. “We need not shrink from our responsibilities to the world refugees in order to obtain secure status for the American people.”

The Catholic Church, through its Migration and Refugee Services, assists an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 refugees each year and is the largest agency resettling refugees in the United States.

Bishop Wenski advocates in Washington for undocumented students, refugees

Don’t VETO Kids!

PROTESTING VETO — Children protest U.S. President George W. Bush’s veto of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, in front of the White House in Washington Oct. 1. Catholic Charities USA officials have vowed to fight to overturn the SCHIP legislation that the president vetoed Oct. 3. (CNS photo/ Jim Young, Reuters)
Poverty must be tackled by overhauling social structures, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) —

Handouts to the poor are not enough; poverty must be tackled by overhauling social structures that deny people basic human rights, Pope Benedict XVI said at his weekly general audience.

“It is not enough to give alms and help the poor on a case-by-case basis,” he said, citing the teachings of St. John Chrysostom.

The saint saw that a new structure, based on the Christian vision of the human family, is needed, the pope said.

Pope Benedict returned briefly to the Vatican from his papal summer villa south of Rome for his Sept. 26 audience in St. Peter’s Square.

The pope continued a catechesis he began Sept. 19 that focused on the life and writings of St. John Chrysostom, the fourth-century doctor of the church and archbishop of Constantinople, now Istanbul, Turkey.

Pope Benedict said St. John Chrysostom was one of the great forefathers of the church’s social doctrine, and with St. Paul the Apostle, he fostered the idea of a city built upon the primacy of the person.

St. John Chrysostom “corrected the traditional Greek vision of the polis, the city, in which large segments of the population were excluded from the rights of citizenship” and were trapped in poverty and slavery, the pope said.

St. John Chrysostom proposed a new kind of city inspired by Christian values, a city that had “a Christian soul and face” and in which “all people are brothers and sisters with equal rights,” the pope said.

A consequence of being part of the same human family is that people are then responsible for others and have a duty to act in solidarity and help those in need, he said.

Pope Benedict told some 20,000 pilgrims gathered in the square how St. John Chrysostom showed that God gave people four steps to get to know God, whom the saint called “a tender father, doctor of souls, mother, and affectionate friend.”

People can first find God in his creation of nature, he said. In contemplating the beauty of creation, “creation almost becomes like a ladder for climbing up toward God, for getting to know God,” the pope said.

The pope said that, according to St. John Chrysostom, “we are weak for climbing, our eyes are weak” and may not see God, so God then helps people get closer to him by “sending fallen man, the stranger, a letter,” which is his word written in the sacred Scripture.

Reflecting on how nature and Scripture complement each other, the pope said by reading Scripture “we can decipher creation, and creation shows us the reality of sacred Scripture.”

The third step, Pope Benedict said, is God becoming flesh and “really becoming God with us, our brother until his death on the cross.”

Finally, God acts through the Holy Spirit and transforms reality and individuals, the pope said.

The pope asked young people to look to St. Vincent de Paul, who founded many charitable organizations and whose feast day is celebrated Sept. 27.

The pope asked that St. Vincent’s example of charity encourage all young people to dedicate their future to offering “generous service” to others. He also asked newly married couples to foster “constant attention to the poor” in their new families.

At the end of the audience the pope greeted Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, whom he had named a member of the Vatican’s Congregation for Bishops earlier in the day.

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Scripture Readings

October 21, Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C. Readings:

1) Exodus 17:8-13
Psalm 121:1-8
2) 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

We too often tend to think and form opinions about people on the basis of stereotypes. If we were to think of any of our contemporaries acting or writing like the characters in this weekend’s readings, we’d picture religious fanatics. Who would not think so? Consider: the steadfastness of Moses, hands raised to God in supplication as Joshua fought in battle below him; and Paul’s admonition to Timothy, charging him to “preach the word, to stay with this task whether convenient or inconvenient — correcting, reproving, appealing — constantly teaching and never losing patience.”

And so some are. But the stereotypical fanatics these images bring to mind are not the types from Scripture. An adherence to Scripture that ignores the central role of love of God and neighbor produces distortions of the Gospel.

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QUESTIONS:

Do you have examples around you of such men and women, made alive by the word of God and love of God and his church? Where might you spend more time to come into contact with such folk?

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By Sharon K. Perkins

Years ago when I worked providing pastoral care in a psychiatric hospital, I learned about healthy and unhealthy behaviors which were observed by the hospital staff as markers of a patient’s progress or regression.

One of the more unfavorable signs was “attention-seeking” behavior. Usually it meant that the patient, insecure and fearful, would eschew desirable tools of self-reliance for more manipulative means to get his or her emotional needs met by the staff, often at the expense of other patients.

Outside the confines of the hospital, there’s a maxim that’s frequently used to describe complainers who persist until they eventually get their way: “The squeaky wheel gets the grease.” When employed by those who believe that silent suffering is preferable to whining, the saying implies that relentless complaint and protest are devices used by the selfish, the immature, and the egocentric.

It also implies that attention and service are in short supply — so one should compete for them in any way one can. But sometimes “the squeaky wheel” really needs greasing. There are people whose situations are dire and whose complaints are truly justified. And — as indicated in today’s readings — those complaints are heard, and answered, by a God who “knows no favorites” but nonetheless responds with justice to the cries of widows, orphans, and the poor.

In today’s Gospel Jesus offers a parable that illustrates two kinds of attention-seekers. The Pharisee, taking the more conspicuous position in the temple, trusts in his own devices by pointing out, at the expense of others, what he has done to deserve God’s notice. But the tax collector, admitting his sinfulness and trusting in God’s compassion, prays in a way that truly gets God’s attention.

In his plea for mercy he avoids both extremes — he neither boasts of his virtue nor suffers in silence — but he approaches God with an attitude of confident humility. When taken with Luke’s previous story of the complaining widow and the dishonest judge, this parable teaches the importance of meek but persistent prayer. To God’s ears, a cry for help from a contrite heart is heard — and in God’s world, the squeaky wheel really does get the grease.

**QUESTIONS:**

Who is a person in my life to whom I can demonstrate love more clearly? How? What are some concrete ways I can cultivate in my heart a deeper love for God?

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**Scripture Readings**

**October 28, Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

_Cycle C. Readings:

1) Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18

Psalm 34:2-3, 17-19, 23

2) 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Gospel Luke 18:9-14

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By Jeff Hedglen

**Jesus should be visible in ‘Our Space’**

Working with youth and young adults is sometimes a challenge, especially when it comes to keeping up with modern technologies. It is in these areas that my age really shows. For instance, I, for the life of me, do not understand the popularity of the cell phone text message. I have a phone — call me!

My work with these age groups has led me to the world of MySpace and Facebook.

Initially I did not understand the big deal. What could these personal networking sites offer a person except a way to waste time? But then about a week after I opened my MySpace account I heard from a friend I had not connected with in more than eight years. Now all of a sudden, I was searching through MySpace looking for other people from my past.

Additionally these services are a great way for me to contact and keep up with the people in my programs. I get feedback from teens from a Myspace message much quicker than e-mail, and I have the opportunity to gauge into their world by what they include on their personal Web sites.

In addition to the caution everyone should take when putting information about themselves up on the Web, it is important to remember that the information put on these personal networking sites is a statement to the world about who you are and what you believe. If it is really “your space,” it should reflect who you are.

Yet I am often surprised when I visit sites of people I know through church and see nothing church-related on their site. This causes me to wonder why their faith life is missing from their virtual expression of themselves. Maybe they are not as serious about their faith as I think they are, or maybe they, for some reason, do not want to show their faith to the world.

The epidemic of closet Christianity is not reserved to the World Wide Web. It is also in evidence in the unplugged parts of existence. In Colossians 1:27 Paul speaks of the mystery of “Christ in you, the hope for glory.” Yes, the reality of Jesus living inside of us is a mystery, but that doesn’t mean that the fact that Jesus lives inside you should remain a mystery.

Another way of saying that is this: How Jesus lives inside of us is a mystery; the fact that He lives inside us should not be one. All too often we shy away from revealing ourselves as followers of Christ. When we do this we are skipping fifty percent of the Church’s mission. As Catholics we are called to grow in our faith and to show our faith. Thus if we have faith, others should know that we do. In the words of St. James: “So also, faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17).

We prove our faith by showing it through various works. One of the most basic works is to let our faith be seen by the people we come into contact with, be that surfing the Web, the school hallway, or the grocery aisle at Wal-Mart.

When I was in college, I kept a small button on my backpack that read I $ Jesus. That little one-inch button sparked more conversations in the student union building than I could have imagined. The other thing that it did was keep me honest about my faith. If I was advertising that I loved Jesus, I knew I had to live up to it.

Showing your faith can be as simple as a phrase or two in the “about me” section of MySpace that says God and faith are important to you. A bumper sticker or Christian desk calendar are also simple ways to let people know you are a believer.

We all have “MySpace” whether it is on the computer, at work, school, home, or on the go. If it really is MySpace and you are his, shouldn’t your space be his space too?

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Obispo aboga en Washington por estudiantes indocumentados, refugiados

WASHINGTON (CNS) — En presentaciones separadas el 19 de septiembre, el obispo Thomas C. Wenski, de Orlando, Florida, abogó en Washington en favor de los estudiantes indocumentados que tienen la esperanza de asistir a la universidad, y de las personas que buscan el estado de refugiado.

En una declaración en el Club Nacional de Prensa, el obispo Wenski, presidente del Comité sobre Política Internacional, de los obispos estadounidenses, y consultor de su Comité sobre Emigración, pidió la aprobación rápida de la Ley de Desarrollo, Socorro y Educación de Menores Extranjeros, conocida como la Ley DREAM.

Hizo un llamado a los funcionarios elegidos a "resistir esta vez las voces de disensión y temor y votar a favor de la Ley DREAM", la cual permitiría que adultos jóvenes que están ilegalesmente en Estados Unidos sin ser culpa suya asistan a la universidad con matrículas para residentes del estado y se conviertan en residentes permanentes.

Más tarde ese día el obispo Wenski dijo ante un subcomité del Senado que el congreso debe corregir las consecuencias de los cambios en la ley que prohiben la entrada a Estados Unidos de cualquier persona que haya provisto "apoyo material" a "organizaciones terroristas".

Al criminalizar lo que se ha definido ampliamente como "apoyo material", las leyes prohíben la admisión de personas que hayan provisto, hasta bajo coacción, cualquier clase de ayuda financiera, física y material a miembros de una amplia gama de organizaciones involucradas en la resistencia armada contra cualquier gobierno nacional, incluyendo los grupos pro-democracia.

En su charla del Club Nacional de Prensa, el obispo Wenski dijo que "la Iglesia Católica como proveedora de educación para millares de niños y adultos jóvenes en toda la nación... ha sido testigo del sufrimiento de jóvenes que sin culpa suya viven en un estado de indocumentados y se les niega acceso al estado legal en este país y a una oportunidad de continuar su educación".

La Ley DREAM, dijo, "daría a estos jóvenes una oportunidad de lograr su potencial y de contribuir completamente a nuestra sociedad. Esto no es bueno sólo para ellos, sino que también es bueno para nuestro país".

Sacerdote indio dice que su curación fue milagroso mediante madre Teresa

GUWAHATI, India (CNS) — La causa de santidad de la beata madre Teresa de Calcuta podría pasar su último obstáculo si el Vaticano aprueba una alegada curación milagrosa que un sacerdote reclama haber experimentado en el 10mo aniversario de la muerte de ella.

El padre salesiano V.M. Thomas dice que la intercesión de madre Teresa fue responsable de la desaparición de una piedra del ríñón de la enferma que estaba pulgada que el día anterior a su cirugía, informó la agencia asiática de noticias UCA News.

La piedra desapareció de manera inexplicable después que padre Thomas celebró la Misa y oró a madre Teresa el 5 de septiembre, el día anterior a la cirugía que tenía programada.

UCA News informó que según las notas del sacerdote y los ex-pedientes médicos, el cirujano afirmó que “la desaparición del cálculo (piedra) estaba más allá de una explicación médica”. Padres Thomas, de 56 años de edad, estuvo asociado con madre Teresa desde 1979 hasta la muerte de ella en 1997.

Después de meses con dolores abdominales, padre Thomas fue admitido en un hospital en Guwahati el 4 de septiembre. Las pruebas confirmaron la presencia de la piedra en el riñón y los médicos programaron el 6 de septiembre para su remoción quirúrgica.

Padre Thomas dijo que durante la mañana del 5 de septiembre, antes de las preparaciones para su cirugía, su médico le permitió salir del hospital para celebrar la Misa en Shishu Bhavan, hogar para niños abandonados que madre Teresa comenzó en Guwahati. En la Misa pidió que los presentes oraran por él, especialmente mediante la intercesión de madre Teresa.

Durante el día del 6 de septiembre, cuando la radiografía prequirúrgica final fue tomada, los médicos no podían localizar la piedra. Una repetición de la radiografía también comprobó ser negativa. El cirujano principal entonces ordenó otra prueba con ultrasonidos pero ésta también confirmó la presencia de una piedra.

Según el procedimiento estándar del Vaticano, se requeriría que un milagro ocurriera después de la beatificación de madre Teresa el 19 de octubre de 2003 para que ella fuera canonizada, o declarada santa. En casos de alegados milagros médicos el Vaticano hace que una comisión de especialistas médicos revise el caso.

Piden al Congreso ‘defender niños’ derogando veto SCHIP

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Un alto funcionario de Caridades Católicas USA hizo un llamado al Congreso a “defender los niños” derogando el veto del presidente George W. Bush contra el proyecto de ley que expandió para el Programa Estatal de Seguro Médico de Niños, conocido como SCHIP.

Candy Hill, primera vicepresidenta para política social de la organización basada en Alexandria, Virginia, habló vía teléfono durante un informe noticioso el 2 de octubre, el día antes que Bush vetara la legislación que había recibido amplio apoyo de parte de grupos religiosos, de servicios médicos, laborales y de consumidores.

Este fue el cuarto veto de la presidencia de Bush; ha dicho que expandir el programa por $35,000 millones sería un paso hacia la medicina socializada y podría llevar a muchas familias a dejar su seguro médico privado a favor de cobertura por SCHIP. "Ya que el Congreso ha escogido enviarnos un proyecto de ley que mueve nuestro sistema de servicios médicos hacia la dirección incorrecta, yo debo vetarlo", dijo Bush en su mensaje del veto.

El senado aprobó la legislación que derogó un veto presidencial. La votación en la Cámara para alcanzar los dos tercios necesarios para derogar un veto presidencial. La votación original en la Cámara el 25 de septiembre fue de 265 a 159.

En una declaración después del veto, padre Larry Snyder, presidente de Caridades Católicas USA, dijo que la acción de Bush fue "la decisión incorrecta en el momento incorrecto". También añadió, "Las cifras del censo emitidas justo hace unas semanas demostraron que el número de niños que no tienen seguro médico en Estados Unidos está aumentando, llegando a 8.7 millones en el 2006, y esta legislación habría dado un paso importante para reducir ese número extendiendo la cobertura de seguro médico a millones de otros niños pobres".
¡Cuidado con los falsos maestros!

Parecen ovejitas pero son lobos feroces

Por Pedro A. Moreno, OPL
Director, Instituto Luz de Cristo

Falsos profetas y maestros han existido desde los tiempos del Antiguo Testamento y fueron anunciados por el mismo Cristo como un problema que perduraría. En el capítulo veinte, versos quince y dieciséis del evangelio según San Mateo, el Señor nos advierte, “Cuidense de los falsos profetas: se presentan ante ustedes con píleo de ovejas, pero por dentro son lobos feroces. Ustedes los reconocerán por sus frutos.”

Algunos piensan que los falsos profetas son solo aquellos de otras religiones, o sectas, fuera de la Iglesia Católica. Están equivocados. Aunque es verdad que existen más far- santos religiosos fuera de la Iglesia, hay también muchos dentro de la Iglesia, y no es fácil identificarlos.

La identificación de estos falsos profetas es a principio muy difícil. El mismo Cristo nos advirtió de que la única forma de conocerlos es por sus frutos. Esto significa que un falso profeta, maestro, catequista, servidor o servidora, líder, ministro, religioso o religiosa, no se dará a conocer como falso mensajero hasta que sea demasiado tarde y ya han hecho daño.

Solo después de que estos farsantes hayan regado su mala semilla, y esta mala semilla haya germinado y producido una matita, y esta matita haya crecido y después de crecer comience a florecer, y finalmente de sus flores se produzcan malos frutos, es que se sabrá que la semilla era mala y el, o la, persona que regó esa mala semilla era un falso profeta, maestro, catequista, servidor o servidora, líder, ministro, religioso o religiosa. Algunos ejemplos de lo que pueden ser los malos frutos son: divisiones, mentiras y continua presentación de falsas doctrinas, excesivo poder y control, manipulación, intimidación, crítica destructiva y falsas acusaciones.

Observen bien lo que les estoy diciendo. Es casi imposible saber quienes son los falsos profetas de manera inmediata. Lo que sí se puede saber de manera inmediata es que parecerán como unas ovejitas inútiles, pacíficas y hasta llenas de Dios. Los falsos profetas no andan por el mundo con enormes letreros avisándole a los demás: “Cuidado, Soy Un Falso Profeta”. Estos farsantes, en su mayor parte, ni saben que ellos mismos son falsos maestros y profetas haciéndole daño a la Iglesia. Ellos jurarán que están solo siguiendo las inspiraciones del Espíritu Santo y parecerán como personas buenas, honestas y hasta personas de mucha oración y sanidad. Pero detrás de esta fachada hay un lobo, o loba ferz, que no siempre se da cuenta de ser un farsante.


El Papa Benedicto XVI dice que el acatamiento de las leyes naturales éticas promovería la dignidad humana

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — El fundamento de los derechos humanos, la democracia, y la cooperación entre los pueblos y religiones se ve amenazado por la creciente suposición de que no hay absolutos éticos, dijo el Papa Benedicto XVI.

La falta de reconocimiento de que ciertos principios éticos y morales son naturalmente parte del ser humano tiene “consecuencias enormes y graves contra el orden civil y social”, dijo el Papa Benedicto, el 5 de octubre, en una reunión que sostuvo con los participantes de la Comisión Teológica Internacional.

Los participantes de la comisión, nombrados por el Vaticano, han estado elaborando un documento sobre el fundamento de la ley natural moral y, específicamente, en la manera en la que esos principios forman la base de “una ética universal” que puede ser reconocida y compartida por todos los pueblos de todas las religiones.

“No es un tema exclusivo o predominantemente confesional (de fe),” dijo el Papa; pero es importante para todos los pueblos y para su habilidad de convivir en paz y respeto mutuo.

El Papa Benedicto dijo que el informe de la comisión es una parte importante de un proyecto que ha venido siendo promovido por la Congregación de la Doctrina de la Fe a fin de estimular a las universidades, asociaciones y eruditos particulares “a que identifiquen conexiones y convergencias útiles para una profundización constructiva y efectiva de la doctrina del derecho natural”.

La Iglesia Católica enseña que la ley natural, cuyas normas básicas se reflejan en los Diez Mandamientos, no constituye un conjunto de principios morales y éticos que hayan sido impuestos sobre la gente por la religión; sino que representa lo correcto y lo incorrecto que en conjunto es parte de la naturaleza humana, y puede ser identificado por el uso de la razón humana.

Debido a que estos principios “son accesibles para cada una de las criaturas racionales”, dijo el Papa, son una base segura para el diálogo y la cooperación entre los pueblos y para la edificación de las sociedades en las que la dignidad humana y la libertad se ven protegidas.

Desafortunadamente, dijo el Papa Benedicto, en las sociedades modernas se ha perdido de vista la ley natural, y las personas están convencidas de que la sociedad o la mayoría de los ciudadanos de una sociedad son “la fuente definitiva de la ley civil”.

“Y de esta manera, como consecuencia, el problema se convierte no en la búsqueda de lo que es bueno, sino en poder; o mejor dicho, el equilibrio de poderes”, dijo.

“En las raíces de esta tendencia se encuentra el relativismo ético, que algunas personas, incluso, consideran como una de las condiciones principales de la democracia (erróneamente), pues el relativismo (según esas personas) garantizaría la tolerancia y el respeto mutuo”, dijo el Papa. A pesar de ello, dijo el Papa Benedicto, la historia ha demostrado repetidamente que la mayoría puede equivocarse y que solamente la razón y la apertura ante los principios morales, que son permanentes, pueden garantizar una sociedad justa.
Dignatarios de la iglesia le llaman inflamatorio al actual debate sobre inmigración

El obispo Gerald Barnes, en una declaración publicada el 27 de septiembre en Washington, dijo que los trabajadores inmigrantes, incluyendo los indocumentados, hacen contribuciones importantes para la economía de la nación por medio de su trabajo en labores agrícolas, obras de construcción y en la industria de servicio.

Vaticano pide a los Estados Unidos, Corea del Norte, China otros ratificar tratado nuclear

El Escalofrio del Vaticano (CNS) — El Vaticano hizo un llamado a los Estados Unidos, Corea del Norte, China, India, Paquistán y a otras naciones a ratificar el Tratado de Prohibición de Ensayos Nucleares.

El clima del terrorismo causado por las organizaciones criminales no es eliminado por el temor que está vinculado con la amenaza del uso de armas de destrucción masiva por parte de los estados, dijo monseñor Michael W. Banach, diplomático del Vaticano.

Vaticano: denunciar es un deber de la comunidad internacional

El funcionario del Vaticano también catalogó como poco convenciente el reclamo que “no convence”, dijo. “De hecho, eso lleva a la proliferación de las armas, las cuales, dado su capacidad destructiva, pueden eliminar a la misma gente que ellos reclaman proteger y defender”, dijo el Vaticano.

El Papa dice que enfatizar demasiado ‘lógica de la ganancia’ puede traer efectos ruinosos

El Papa hizo un llamado a las instituciones a fin de que promuevan derechos iguales para la mujer en la industria del turismo, garantizándoles igualdad en el lugar de empleo, “libertad religiosa, respeto por sus necesidades relacionadas con la maternidad y pago de salario con compensación igualitaria”.

El Papa señaló que el Papa Juan Pablo II, también catalogó como poco convincente el argumento que “no convence”, dijo. “De hecho, eso lleva a la proliferación de las armas, las cuales, dado su capacidad destructiva, pueden eliminar a la misma gente que ellos reclaman proteger y defender”, dijo el Vaticano.

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At Red Mass, Archbishop Dolan prays that jurists will respect all human life

By Mark Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The belief that God created humanity with a special dignity is a cornerstone of Judeo-Christian tradition and has shaped the United States since its founding, said Milwaukee Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan at the 54th annual Red Mass in Washington.

And he prayed that belief would inspire jurists and government officials to recognize “the innate dignity and inviolability of every human life.”

In his homily at the Sept. 30 Mass, Archbishop Dolan quoted the nation’s second president, John Adams, who spoke of the “true map of man” as consisting of “the dignity of his nature, and the noble rank he holds among the works of God.”

That is “a map whose paths can only be walked with a reverent sense of life, a respect for others, a grasp of virtue, and a responsible civility,” the archbishop said.

The chief justice and five U.S. Supreme Court justices were among the 1,200 people in the standing-room-only crowd at St. Matthew Cathedral for the Mass, which seeks God’s blessings and guidance on the administration of justice.

The five Catholics now on the Supreme Court — Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Associate Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel A. Alito Jr. — attended the Mass along with other high-ranking government officials, including Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien, who is Jewish. The Mass was installed as archbishop of Services from 1997 to 2007 and

The annual Mass is celebrated traditionally the Sunday before the new Supreme Court session begins. (CNS photo/Rafael Orisostomo, CATHOLIC STANDARD)

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DelCastillo’s efforts have been an effort to pay back into the lives of others

From Page 24
DelCastillo’s efforts have been an effort to pay back into the lives of others...

FROM PAGE 11
ent in every major American city. Future generations are sure to be scandalized by the numbers: in vitro fertilization making hundreds of thousands of embryonic humans, to be chilled in liquid nitrogen and turned into, in the words of one commentator, “kidsicles.” They are sure to deplore the many other human embryos treated as objects, discarded as medical waste, poured down the sink, or experimented upon and strip-mined for their embryonic stem cells.

There is a certain banality about evil. It doesn’t necessarily present itself in a monstrous or dramatic way. It can take the shape of simple conformity to what everyone else is doing, to what the leadership says is right, to what the neighbors are doing. The gradual encroachment of evil in our lives can be something we might not even notice because we are not paying attention; it can be something barely on the periphery of our consciousness.

The majority of those who collaborated with some of history’s most terrible crimes and falsehoods need not be cast as inhuman monsters; instead, they were often like us. They were capable of giving and receiving sympathy and love; they could have beautiful feelings and noble ideals; heroism, loyalty, family, and culture could all co-exist with almost unbelievable evil.

During the Nazi years, there often were no momentous decisions to be made for or against evil. People were concerned with their daily affairs, and on that level, Nazism seemed good: It seemed to bring prosperity, it made things work, it allowed people to feel good about themselves and their country. The moral issues — the ones that we now see as having been central — were carefully avoided.

When the full horror of Nazism was revealed at the end of the war, the German people responded, “We didn’t know.” When a local townsperson was asked whether he knew what was going on in the camp, he gave a more complete answer. “Yes, we knew something was up, but we didn’t talk about it, we didn’t want to know too much.”

Prime Levi, a writer and a survivor of Auschwitz, described the German ethical blind spot this way:

“In spite of the varied possibilities for information, most Germans didn’t know because they didn’t want to know. Because, indeed they wanted not to know…Those who knew did not talk; those who did not know did not ask questions; those who did ask questions received no answers. In this way the typical German citizen won and defended his ignorance, which seemed to him sufficient justification of his adherence to Nazism. Shutting his mouth, his eyes and his ears, he built for himself the illusion of not knowing, hence not being an accomplice to the things taking place in front of his door.”

Martin Luther King Jr. used to say that what pained him most was the silence of the good. Albert Einstein, who fled Germany when Hitler came to power, articulated the same sentiment in an interview for Time magazine on Dec. 23, 1940. He stressed that sometimes it was only the Church and religion that could challenge the status quo as evil made inroads into a society:

“Being a lover of freedom, when the revolution came in Germany I looked for the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but no, the universities immediately were silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers, whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom. But they, like the universities were silenced in a few short weeks. Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth. I had never any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom.”

The courageous, even daring question we must ask is, “What is our own response to the evil around us?”

Father Tadeusz Pachelczyk earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as the director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

For more information about the HEB Transit Project, visit online at www.nctcog.org, or call one of the following participating organizations: Catholic Charities, (817) 534-0814; Christian Connection, (817) 283-8746; Mission Central, (817) 595-0011; NEED Center East, (817) 280-0286; St. John the Apostle Church, (817) 296-4811; Travelers Aid (DFW Airport), (817) 571-4489; or Workforce Solutions Mid-Cities Center, (817) 399-7500.

Fr. Tad...

Tammie Dittmer, a 36-year-old Euless resident and the mother of a young son, says that the ability to utilize the service over the past year has been “life changing.” “I didn’t have a car, and I couldn’t save enough money to purchase one, because I was paying $28 a day in cab fare to get to my job” at a local discount store....
TO REGISTER CONFIDENTIALLY, OR TO DISCUSS A CASE OF sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the Church:

• Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator. (817) 560-2452 ext. 221 or by email at judyl@.Buffer.org.

• Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 788-7494.

• Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 107 and ask for the victim assistance coordinator, Faith Etzioni.

ST. GEORGE SCHOOL CARNIVAL
All are invited to enjoy the fun and festivities of this annual fall fundraiser. It will be held at 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, Oct. 13 from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Carnival games where everyone is a winner, are among the activities. Food will be available to enjoy including egg rolls, Mexican food, hamburgers, hot dogs, cotton candy, funnel cake, and more. A Drive for the Kids’ sponsored by Dodge, will help raise funds for the school. St. George School is located at 3320 Hemphill in Fort Worth. For more information, call the school office at (817) 222-1277.

OLV FALL FESTIVAL
All are invited to join the celebration of Our Lady of the Visitation (OLV) School located at 3020 Ray St. in Fort Worth. It will be held at 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 13 from 8 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the school grounds at 3320 Hemphill in Fort Worth. The festival includes food (including a live band, entertainment games, obstacle course, bounce house, and rides. Harris Methodist Fort Worth, (817) 877-1484. The proceeds from the event will be donated to TKO-07 and the Department of Health will provide information on safety and nutrition. For more information, contact the school office at (817) 924-5123.

HOLY ROSARY SORORITY
Holy Rosary School will host its fall festival at 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 13. All entry forms previously received will be valid for the new date. New registrations will be charged at $15 per person or $45 per family. Late registrations received Oct. 16 through race day will be charged at $20 per person. All entry forms must be completed and turned in to pick up their packets race day morning and walk with your entry number. Race packets will be available for pickup at Luke’s Outlet, 1543 S. University Dr., Fort Worth, (817) 911-1484. The annual event is a 5K/1-Mile Run/Walk. All proceeds will benefit the school, and benefits include entertainment activities, food, plus more. For more information, contact the school office at (817) 419-6800.

VIKING RUN
All are invited to the first annual Viking Run Nov. 3 at Gateway Park in East Fort Worth. The 1-mile timed run/walk will begin at 8 a.m. and the 5-kilometer timed run/walk will begin at 8:30 a.m. with a warm-up at 7:30 a.m. Participants may register at www.Vikingrun.org. The registration fee is $15 per person or $45 per family. All entries must be received Oct. 16 to be eligible. Packet race packets will be available for pickup at Luke’s Outlet, 1543 S. University Dr., Fort Worth, (817) 877-1484. For more information, contact the school office at (817) 924-5123.

ANNUAL TEA / AUCTION
St. Francis of Assisi’s Mothers with Young Children (SFMYC) will hold its 200th Annual Tea & Auction Charity event Nov. 4 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The event, to be held at St. Francis of Assisi Church in the Family Life Center, will feature a silent and live auction, tea sandwiches, refreshments, and desserts. All proceeds from the auction will benefit adopted Christmas families, Outreach, CDC, the Youth Scholarship Fund, and Catholic Charities’ CCL. Tickets for the auction are $35 and can be made by cash or check only. For more information, contact Vicky Garza, Kathy Teasley, or Maryanne Sunseri at 817-943-7769. Maryanne Sunseri at myc@stfranciscasacope.org. St. Francis Church is located at 817 S. Karnes between 121 Airport Freeway and Karnes between 121 Airport Freeway. For more information, call (817) 224-9701.

Services Available
Totebag, sand, gravel, washed materials, driveways, concrete, backhoe, and tractor services. Custom moves in and across. Call (817) 732-4083.
When Henry DelCastillo retired, it was a bright day for families without transportation in Northeast Tarrant County, as he got to work and

GOT THINGS ROLLING

By Nicki Prevou / Staff Writer

T hree years ago, after a 35-year career as a sales management executive at Mattel, Henry DelCastillo made the decision to retire.

“I made the choice to retire, even though my company wasn’t ready for me to go,” explained DelCastillo, who had also retired from the Army Reserve with the rank of colonel 10 years earlier after 36 years of continuous service. “I had decided that I wanted to move on.”

He found himself filled with the same restless energy that had driven him from his home at age 17 and propelled him into a life of consistent achievement and impressive professional success. He was ready to search for something to fill his time.

“…After I stopped working, I found myself wondering, ‘What am I going to do…I?’” he admitted. “I don’t play golf, I don’t really have hobbies, and my grandchildren are grown. I realized that I needed to be involved in service.”

The drive to be productive is a deeply ingrained personal characteristic, explained DelCastillo, a native of New York City. “I was a high school dropout. I joined the Army on a whim at 17. The Army got me on the right path, and I began working toward my education,” he recalled. “It took me 24 years to get my bachelor of science degree, but I did it. For years I was working, serving in the Army [Reserve], married, raising my children, and going to school, all at the same time.”

DelCastillo settled in the Metroplex in 1971 with his wife, Ruth, and their two daughters. Having attended other area Catholic churches in the past, DelCastillo found himself inspired by a meeting in 2004 with Father John Robert Skeldon, who was serving as an associate pastor at St. Michael Church in Bedford at the time.

“Talking with Fr. Skeldon was a turning point for me,” reflected DelCastillo. “He was very instrumental in leading me into this life of service. I consider it something of an awakening.”

After becoming a parishioner at St. Michael’s, DelCastillo soon became involved in weekly Scripture studies, stewardship efforts, and the work of the Northeast Emergency Distribution Committee (NEED), an interfaith outreach program supported by the parish. As he personally interviewed NEED clients as a volunteer counselor, he was struck by the problems faced by individuals who lacked dependable transportation and were thus unable to find and maintain employment.

“A research project, ‘Sites on Texas,’ found that in 2004, 1,300 families with children in the South Hurst-Euless-Bedford (HEB) area did not have a vehicle at all,” explained Nicole Foster, who serves as communications coordinator at St. Michael’s. “Henry began conceptualizing a transporta-

Above:
St. Michael Church parishioner Henry DelCastillo poses with one of the clients served by the HEB Transit Project.

DelCastillo helped bring the transportation service into being as he advocated to provide public transportation for people without cars in the South Hurst-Euless-Bedford area in Northeast Tarrant County. A talk with Father John Robert Skeldon, then associate pastor of St. Michael’s, opened his heart to entering a life of greater service as he moved into retirement.

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Left:
On a mission trip to Bolivia this past summer, Henry DelCastillo takes a turn cooking for the folks from the Diocese of Fort Worth who traveled there to offer support for the work of Father Bob Thames, a priest of Fort Worth who has worked in mission in Latin America for more than half of his 43 years of priesthood. DelCastillo is passionate about his work with “Educate the Children,” a Mission Council program of the diocese. (Photo by Chris Kastner)

Right:
DelCastillo, (Left) poses with Bishop Kevin Vann (Center) and Father Bob Thames in front of artwork of the Last Supper which decorates the altar of Fr. Thames’ church in Cabezas, Bolivia. (Photo by Chris Kastner)