Rising unemployment prompts more people to turn to Catholic Charities

By Eileen Casey
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Catholic Charities agencies across the country are finding that the nation’s growing unemployment rate is one more factor in their efforts to provide food, clothing, and shelter to those in need.

In Michigan — where automobile giants General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler are based — unemployment is a reality for thousands of people once employed in the car industry and for business owners hit hard by the collapsing economy.

“People are being laid off continually,” said Chris Root, who heads the Lansing, Michigan, Diocese’s Catholic Charities department. The agency’s offices around the diocese help people pay for rent and utilities, provide food, and help the unemployed with a job training program.

The demand for all these services is increasing significantly, Root said.

Counseling for domestic abuse, substance abuse, and for family and marriage problems all have been on the rise since the financial downturn, Root noted in a Nov. 12 interview with Catholic News Service. “The strong correlation between economics and marriage and the well-being of family life is evident here. There is an increased need to assist people in the family dynamics, and relationships.”

According to the U.S. Labor Department statistics released Nov. 7, the jobless rate rose to 6.5 percent in October when employers fired 240,000 workers. That figure put the total number of unemployed Americans past 10.8 million, the highest level in 25 years.

One year ago, the jobless rate was 4.8 percent. Many economists are saying the rate could climb to 8 percent or 8.5 percent by the end of 2009.

“The impact on the states has been tremendous,” said Paul Martodam, CEO of Catholic Charities in the Phoenix Diocese.

Currently, the Phoenix agency is only able to help up to 40 percent of those who seek assistance. It is providing more utility and emergency assistance than in previous years and finding it more difficult to help people find jobs with livable wages.

Cutbacks in service-related industries such as retail, restaurants, and construction — along with a 5 percent decrease in federal funds and a 20 percent decrease in donations — has made it tough to assist those in need. The Phoenix Catholic Charities agency also has had a decline in staff from 610 to 537 employees.

Dominick Caligi, CEO of Catholic Charities, said any or all of those who have lost jobs may well be going through job training and be looking for work.

Bishop’s Annual Pro-Life Banquet draws record crowd to hear Fr. Mitch Pacwa

Story and Photos
by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

More than a few people wiped tears from their eyes as a smiling 8-month-old Jeslliam was carried on stage by a relative. Moments earlier, her parents Jessica and William Lopez, told an audience attending the Bishop’s Annual Catholic Pro-Life Banquet, how the presence of a sidewalk counselor outside a Fort Worth abortion clinic, saved their baby’s life.

Reading from a letter written by his wife, the young father described how his spouse attempted a self-induced abortion with aspirin and other pills before making an appointment for a medical procedure. Arriving late for the scheduled abortion, the distraught mother of two thought the figure approaching her car in the parking
Cardinal George voices hope for Obama administration, points to possible obstacles to our desired unity

**STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

"If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor; if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil." (Psalm 127:1)

The Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historic transition and look forward to working with President-elect Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all. Because of the Church’s history and the scope of her ministries in this country, we want to continue our work for economic justice and opportunity for all; our efforts to reform laws around immigration and the situation of the undocumented; our provision of better education and adequate health care for all, especially for women and children; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad. The Church is intent on doing good and will continue to cooperate gladly with the government and all others working for these goods.

The fundamental good is life itself, a gift from God and our parents. A good state protects the lives of all. Legal protection for those members of the human family waiting to be born in this country was removed when the Supreme Court decided Roe v. Wade in 1973. This was bad law. The danger the Bishops see at this moment is that a bad court will, if the Administration but pointed to possible obstacles to our desired unity, is a Nov. 12 statement at the end of the annual fall assembly of the USCCB.

The bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historic transition and look forward to working with President-elect Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all, as the bishops believed they had no choice but to abort a baby. Abortion is a medical procedure that kills, and the psychological and spiritual consequences are written in the sorrow and depression of many women and men. The bishops are single-minded because they are, first of all, single-hearted.

The recent election was principally decided out of concern for the economy, for the loss of jobs and homes and financial security for families, here and around the world. If the election is misinterpreted ideologically as a referendum on abortion, the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve. Abortion kills not only unborn children; it destroys constitutional order and the common good, which is assured only when the life of every human being is legally protected. Aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation, and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion.

"Aggressive pro-abortion policies, legislation, and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion. We express again our great desire to work with all those who cherish the common good of our nation," he added. "The common good is not the sum total of individual interests; it is achieved in the working out of a common life based upon good reason and good will for all."

Our prayers accompany President-elect Obama and his family and those who are cooperating with him to assure a smooth transition in government. Many issues demand immediate attention on the part of our elected "watchman" (Psalm 127). May God bless him and our country.
Little Rock’s Bishop Taylor defends rights of immigrants in pastoral letter

By Malea Hargett

Catholic News Service
LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Five months after being ordained the bishop of Little Rock, Bishop Anthony B. Taylor has issued his first pastoral letter in hopes of teaching his flock about the human rights of undocumented immigrants.

“I was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: A Pastoral Letter on the Human Rights of Immigrants” was introduced to the priests of the state Nov. 5 during a study day. Diocesan employees gathered at St. John Center for a similar event Nov. 7.

Bishop Taylor said he believes Catholics are not properly informed about the human rights of immigrants.

“I hope that people will open their hearts to the call of Jesus in our time,” he said in an interview with the Arkansas Catholic, Little Rock diocesan newspaper. “More than that, I hope it goes down from their head to their heart and (they) see what the Lord is asking of us. ... It is the biggest area where the teaching of the church is not well-known.”

Bishop Taylor, who is fluent in Spanish and has worked in Hispanic ministry for 28 years, said he believes being able to migrate to another country is an “intrinsic human right.”

He said it is nearly impossible for immigrants, predominantly from Mexico, to come to the United States legally.

“They are here because there is no way to get documents, not because they don’t want documents,” he said. “You can’t be obliged to do what you can’t do. Immigration laws should correspond to the reality.”

The 30-page document includes five appendices with additional resources and information on what the U.S. bishops’ conference has said and supporting Scripture references. The bishop consulted with several priests and laypeople over the past three months when writing the letter.

Booklets of the letter will be made available in all parishes and missions in English and Spanish.

To get parishioners to read and discuss the letter, Bishop Taylor asked Cackie Upchurch, director of Little Rock Scripture Study, to write a three-week Advent study guide for small-group sharing.

“The purpose of the pastoral letter is not to just go on record but rather to teach,” he said. “People learn not just by reading a document but also by dialoguing and sharing with others, especially if the concepts are new and are hard to get your mind around.”

The pastoral letter will be distributed to parishioners on the feast of Christ the King Nov. 23, when a recorded homily by Bishop Taylor is to be played at all Masses. The study sessions are expected to be held in churches through Dec. 20.

The season before Christmas was chosen because “Advent is a time of longing and expectation, a time of hope,” Bishop Taylor wrote in his letter introducing the pastoral letter. “What changes do we need to make here in Arkansas in order to ensure that today’s Marys and Josés — ordinary mothers and fathers of today’s babies — are loved and protected as the Savior’s parents were protected by the angels when they were visited on Christmas?”

In the pastoral letter Bishop Taylor did not suggest specific changes in the law he would like to see.

“My role is that of teaching faith and morals,” he said. “It is for the laypeople to come up with ways to implement that.”

Copies of the pastoral letter will be sent to the state’s representatives and senators.

“Hopefully they’ll learn from the mistakes made in Oklahoma,” including the effect on the economy there, said the bishop, ordained as a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, where he was a pastor when he was named Little Rock’s bishop in April.

“If you think the U.S. economy is in trouble now, do we need more disruption in our economy now?” he asked.

Oklahoma legislators passed House Bill 1804, and it went into effect Nov. 1, 2007. The law makes it a felony to transport or shelter undocumented workers and requires employers to verify that all of their employees are here legally. Many employees moved to Texas and Arkansas after officials started enforcing the law, thus hurting the agriculture and service industries.

“It is breathtaking to see the way people’s spirits get crushed by oppressive things that happen to them, by mistreatment in the workplace, where people are powerless and they were doing everything right,” the bishop said.

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Can our travels this holiday season to friends and family be seen as a religious pilgrimage?

Some will of course say, “Sure, padre, if you knew my family, it’s a pure act of faith!” and others may say, “The holidays are the worst time of the year for me.”

However, I would like to offer you a true story that may help you enjoy the holidays as never before. But first you must journey with me on a pilgrimage. Put the car keys away for a moment. This journey will require a lot of walking instead.

Pilgrimages have been a staple of the Christian life since the time of Christ. Judaism had established annual pilgrimages a thousand years before our Lord’s birth which included pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the Passover feast, the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, along with many other feasts. In fact, Jesus grew up having traveled annually with his parents Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover feast (Luke 2:41).

There are three things that stand out here. First, the travel was by foot. Can you imagine traveling 200 miles round trip by foot through mountainous regions and dangerous passages, all on unpaved roads? So, secondly, it would have taken at least two weeks to travel to and from Jerusalem. Thirdly, they would have made another pilgrimage annually.

Imagine all the preparations needed for their travels. This small pilgrimage wasn’t so small an event after all! Preparation for this pilgrimage would have consumed much of their lives each year. Since Passover is in early spring, they would have begun to prepare during the prior harvest season to obtain dried fruits, various nuts, flour, and oil, along with more immediate preparations such as unleavened bread, dried meats, and fish.

Whatever food they brought with them for the journey would be carried by hand, not in the trunk of a car. Also, they would have needed to save money to stay at an inn, if one was available, and more money to purchase a lamb and supply their other needs during their stay. Yes, now I can see better the trouble they went through to participate in this annual pilgrimage, but what was the significance of the pilgrimage, and was it really worth all the trouble? To respond, let us look at the benefits of all their labor and sacrifices.

Because they traveled in caravan for up to two weeks, Mary and Joseph were able to meet and get to truly know their neighbors and friends, and make new acquaintances. They would have sung many songs together, mostly religious.

Around the campfires at night, Jesus would have heard the elders tell many stories of old about Judaism; Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, King David, and the prophets, but most especially about God the Father. They would have prayed together; lamented together about the times they had forsaken God, and they would have spoken about their hope for a prosperous future.

Once they arrived in Jerusalem they would have entered more deeply into the solemnity of the occasion. Feet and bodies sore, they would have been overjoyed to have made the journey and to have returned once again to the holy city of Jerusalem and to the temple.

Yet, their spirits would have been moved all the more by the preparation for the Passover and the Passover itself, that reminded them that God alone is faithful and that God alone delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, led them out of the desert, and brought them into the Promised Land.

Lastly, they would have returned home, recounting for many weeks all the events, people, and experiences which had strengthened their fidelity to God. And in the end, they would have offered God true thanksgiving for their lives and their loved ones.

We, too, should consider making an annual religious pilgrimage that can help draw us back to our faith and cause us to be more appreciative of our life and salvation in Christ. We, too, should consider the holiday season as a pilgrimage in which we choose to enter more deeply into family and parish events.

Thus, at the end of this holiday season, may you recount for many weeks all the events, people, and experiences which will have strengthened your fidelity to God, and may you offer to God a true thanksgiving for your life and your loved ones.

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

We, too, should consider the holiday season as a pilgrimage in which we choose to enter more deeply into family and parish events.

We are blessed to live in a time where we have the freedom to travel to see our families and friends, and take time to reconnect and recharge before the start of another busy season.

This small pilgrimage wasn’t just for the purpose of having a break from our regular schedule. It was a true spiritual pilgrimage, a trip to a holy city to visit a holy man, to seek absolution for our sins. And I hope that we can take those same lessons into our own lives this holiday season.

To start, we can take some time to reflect on the lessons learned from our pilgrimage. What did we do to make our pilgrimage successful? What could we have done better? And most importantly, what can we take away from this experience to apply to our everyday lives?

In the spirit of our pilgrimage, let us consider the holiday season as a pilgrimage in which we travel to reconnect with our loved ones and with God. Let us use this time to reflect on the lessons we have learned and to apply them to our daily lives.

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail at kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.
Rachel Ministries announces plans to expand services in Spanish

Rachel Ministries is excited to announce plans to expand its outreach to include programs and services in Spanish. Rachel Ministries, a compassionate, faith-based abortion recovery ministry offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion’s aftermath. The expanded outreach program is in the beginning stages, and is currently seeking volunteers who can read and speak Spanish to help build the Spanish program.

The ministry is also seeking Spanish-speaking licensed counselors to volunteer during the Rachel’s Vineyard weekend retreats. The retreat team, which includes a priest, a licensed counselor, and several helpers, provides the confidential support required to work through the spiritual, psychological, and emotional pain of abortion, and experience the healing love and mercy of our Lord.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to be included on the referral list. Training will be provided to all volunteers.

Anyone who is bilingual and has a compassionate heart to help those hurting after an abortion is asked to contact Betsy Koper at (817) 924-4575 or by e-mail to info@rachels.org.

Guadalupana Society to hold breakfast, dinner fundraiser

The Guadalupana Society of San Mateo Church in Fort Worth will have a breakfast on Sunday Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to noon in the church hall at 2390 Pulido St. Menus and breakfast burritos will be served for $10.

The Guadalupana Society will also hold a Virgen de Guadalupe enchilada dinner fundraiser from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5 in the church hall. The funds will be for the Dec. 12 celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe Masses.

For more information, contact Rachel Rodriguez of the Guadalupana Society at (817) 994-6228.

Calix supports group meets monthly at Holy Family

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the chapel of Holy Family Church, 4150 Pershing Ave. in West Fort Worth.

Calix meetings focus on enhancing spiritual growth through sharing Eucharist, discussion, and fellowship.

For more information, call Deacon Joe Willingham at (817) 737-6768 ext. 105.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Dec. 2

The regular fourth Thursday of the month meeting of the Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other Sexual Minorities and Friends will not be held in November and December due to the holidays.

All, including parents and friends, are invited to attend a 6 p.m. Mass on Thursday, Dec. 2 in the chapel of the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth next to Nolan Catholic High School, followed by a pot-luck dinner.

The regular next meeting of the ministry will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TGR, at (817) 927-5365 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

Courage group affirms Church teaching, meets twice monthly

Courage, an international apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church, ministers to those with same-sex attractions. Cardinal Lopez Trujillo affirms that the Pontifical Council for the Family “supports the organization called COURAGE which was founded by Father John Harvey, 0112, for helping homosexual persons to live in accordance with the laws of God and the teaching of His Church.”

Father John P. Healy told Fr. Harvey, “Courage is doing the work of God.”

Courage was created in 1980 in New York City at the request of the late Terence Cardinal Cooke. Fr. Harvey was chosen as its founder because of his years of experience directing Catholics struggling with same-sex attractions. It now has chapters throughout the United States and in eight other countries.

Courage is not a “change” ministry, that is, it does not focus on any attempt to change one’s “orientation.” The focus is helping members, whether single or married, to live lives of interior and exterior chastity, which mean living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding sexual love as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Courage D/FW was started in 1999 with the approval of Bishop Joseph Delaney of Fort Worth and Bishop Charles Grahmann of Dallas. Its spiritual advisor is Msgr. Mark Scott of St. Rita Church in Dallas. The group meets in the Metropolis every Friday evening meetings. Meetings include prayer, discussion of relevant topics, learning how to deepen spiritual lives, sharing successes and, occasional guest speakers and fellowship.

Courage also has had an annual retreat for the last two years and is currently trying to organize a local chapter of EnCourage, the sister organization which provides support for friends and family of people with same-sex attractions.

For more information, contact (972) 938-LIFE (5435) or e-mail couragedfw@catholic.org.

St. Catherine of Sienna celebrates Our Lady of Guadalupe

St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Community cordially invites everyone to participate in the parish’s celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Friday, Dec. 12.

A Rosary novena to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held beginning Wednesday, Dec. 3 through Thursday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. in the narthex of the church, except Monday, Dec. 8, when the Rosary will be prayed at 6 p.m. According to information provided by the parish, a bilingual Mass will be concelebrated Friday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. A Spanish choir, children, and youth of the parish, the Knights of Columbus, and the Matarachas de Maria Inmaculada will participate in the celebration of this special Mass in honor of Our Lady.

Following the Mass there will be a reception in Assisi Hall with hot chocolate, tamales, and pan dulce. The Matarachas de Maria Inmaculada will also dance during the reception.

St. Catherine of Sienna is located at 1705 E. Peters Colony Road, Carrollton.

Monthly vocational discernment program to be held Dec. 8

All men and women ages 18 to 35 are invited to attend a monthly discernment program at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth.

The next discernment program will be held Monday, Dec. 8, with a focus in honor of the Immaculate Conception at 7 p.m. followed by eating out at a local establishment.

The Men and Women’s Monthly Discernment Program includes a holy hour of eucharistic adoration, an hour discussion on vocational discernment, and an evening meal provided by the Sierra Club.

The group’s women is led by the religious sisters serving in St. Patrick, and the men’s group is led by the priests of the Vocation Office and various religious men who serve the Fort Worth Diocese. This program also welcomes anyone who is at least a sophomore in high school and at least 15 years of age.

For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at kwalterscheid@fdw.org or at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

St. Michael to hold business expo

St. Michael Church in Bedford will host a Home Business Expo on Sunday, Nov. 30 from after the 7:30 a.m. Mass to 5 p.m. Organizers say people should expect showcasing and selling services for religious craft items, jewelry, merchandise, realtors, herbal products, green companies, and much more.

Organizers added that the event offers a “great opportunity to shop for Christmas gifts and at the same time support local parishioners as they work to sustain their families.”

ST. MARY’S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, GAINESVILLE – St. Mary’s School recently identified four seventh grade students who are eligible to participate in the Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP). They are, from left to right, Newton Vu, Hannah Gefkin, Carolyn Thomas, Gage Clark. Currently, there are 19 students enrolled in seventh grade. These students earned eligibility by scoring at the 95th percentile or higher on a standardized test. The Duke TIP identifies academically talented students and provides model programs and services to support the development of their optimal educational potential. The students who elect to participate will take the same ACT or SAT that high school juniors and seniors preparing for college admission will take. This above-level testing experience will provide them with more information about their academic abilities so that they can effectively plan for their high school years.

Official Assignments

The following assignments have been made by Bishop Kevin Vann:

Monsignor Charles B. King, PA, has been assigned as the parochial administrator of St. Peter Parish, Lindsay, effective Nov. 1.

Father Victor Cruz, HGN, has been assigned as a sacramental minister for St. Peter Parish, Lindsay, effective Nov. 1.

Father Gary Swircynski, OFM, has been assigned as a sacramental minister for St. Peter Parish, Lindsay, effective Nov. 1.
Our Lady of Grace High School to host Development Dinner

Our Lady of Grace High School will hold its annual Development Dinner at 6 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Trophy Country Club at 500 Trophy Club Dr. in Roanoke.

The evening will feature guest speaker Patrick Reilly, founder of the Cardinal Newman Society, who will discuss the necessity of Catholic education from kindergarten to college. The presentation is geared toward parents considering sending their children to a Catholic university or college. Dave Palmer from Catholic Radio KATH-AM, 910, will serve as emcee.

The Scanlan Foundation has offered a matching grant of $75,000, and the school’s goal is to raise enough funds to match the gift and to build a school “worthy of our students’ abilities and bright futures.” The event will also honor the school’s benefactors and support.

Our Lady of Grace High School, located in Roanoke, is newly accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference.

Cathedral to hold Our Lady of Guadalupe Lecture Dec. 11

St. Patrick Cathedral will offer a lecture and slide presentation on Our Lady of Guadalupe at 7 p.m. Dec. 11. There will be a potluck dinner at 6 p.m.

Dr. Miguel Leatham, a renowned Catholic expert on Our Lady of Guadalupe, will speak on “The Image of Guadalupe in the Light of Science and History.” The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, believed to have been miraculously imprinted upon the cloak of Saint Juan Diego, has been the subject of various critical examinations over its 475-year history. The talk will take place on an historical tour of the major studies and students of the image from the Spanish colonial era to the infrared studies of 1979. Dr. Leatham will compare the findings of these investigations and will comment on their significance for understanding the image of Guadalupe.

Dr. Leatham is a sociocultural anthropologist on the faculty of Texas Christian University, specializing in the study of Latin American and Mexican-American cultures, with a teaching and research focus on religious, religious movements, and ethnic folklore.

He has continuously researched and taught on the devotion of Our Lady of Guadalupe since 1982 and was a member of the Centro de Estudios Guadalupanos in Mexico City from 1982-1986. He has delivered numerous illustrated public lectures on Mexican and Mexican-American religious traditions and cultural histories in cities throughout South Texas and in Fort Worth.

St. Ann to hold Advent Night of Reflection

Father Mel Bessellieu will present an Advent night of reflection at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11 at St. Ann Church in Burleson about “Angels: God’s Heavenly Messengers.”

The Adult Bible Study Groups will sponsor the event as a time to “slow down and direct our thoughts to Advent as a time of preparation for our Lord’s Birth,” according to promotional materials.

Cookies and Punch will be served in the hall after Fr. Bessellieu’s talk. For more information call the church office at (940) 295-5621.

SERRA CLUB, WICHITA FALLS – The Wichita Falls Area Serra Club prepared and hosted a Clergy and Religious Appreciation Dinner September 18, 2008 at Sacred Heart Church and Parish Hall. Honored guests included thirteen clergy and religious, two diaconate candidates, and one seminary candidate.

The evening began with a social hour, followed by dinner and recognition of guests. Certificates of appreciation were presented to 100-Club members and organizations. These are individuals and groups who annually provide financial support for the Club’s numerous religious vocations programs. Bill Archer, former Club treasurer, was also recognized for his seven years of service. Seated in the front row from left to right are Sr. Clara Vo, Sr. Ginny Voising, SSND, and Sr. Patricia Ste. Marie, SSND. Standing in the second row from left to right are Fr. Ivar Koch, Wichita Falls Serra Club Chaplain, Deacon Larry Bills, Fr. Raymond McDaniel, Fr. Severius Blank, Fr. Charles Goranta, Fr. John Steworich, Deacon Jim Novak, Fr. Hoa Nguyen, and Fr. Joseph Melonado.

Annual German Sausage Meal scheduled for Dec. 7 in Windthorst

The Windthorst Knights of Columbus Council #1824 wish to invite everybody to their Annual German Sausage Meal from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, in the St. Mary’s Parish Hall at 101 Church St.

To be served includes all you can eat homemade German sausage, spare ribs and sauerkraut, trimmings, ice cream, and tea. Take-out orders will be available.

Tickets are $10 for adults, and $5 for children 12 and younger. Raw sausage will be sold for $3 per pound, and home-baked goods will be available from the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Handicapped parking is available.

For more information, contact Jerry Horn at (940) 423-6144.

Fr. Cedric to lead Advent Mission at St. Joseph in Arlington Dec. 1-3

Father Cedric Pisegna, CP, will lead a three-night mission and Mass at St. Joseph Church at 1927 SW Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington.

Since ordination as a Passionist Priest in 1991, Fr. Cedric has dedicated his life to God and a desire to make a difference in people’s lives by bringing them closer to Christ and the Holy Spirit. His messages are about the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ and are practical, inspirational, and orthodox Catholicism. Fr. Cedric preaches, writes, and produces to help people come to know Jesus in a personal way. He was touched by the grace of God when he was a 19-year-old student and called to make known the inestimable riches of the Holy Spirit.

His personal surrender to Christ’s calling and experiences in Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the core of the real life stories he shares in his mission talks.

Fr. Cedric has produced numerous CDs and DVDs on Christian living. He has also authored 12 books including Living Passionately, Glorious Holy Spirit, Thy Kingdom Come and his newest book, You Can Be Happy: A Lifestyle of Well Being! Many of his books and CDs/DVDs will be available for purchase and signing at the parishes each evening.

Presently, Fr. Cedric appears on television in a number of major market areas including New York, Boston, Atlanta, San Antonio, Houston, Detroit, New Orleans, and Cincinnati and nationally on the Angel, EWTN, and National Catholic radio networks.

For more information about Fr. Cedric and to view some of his TV/ radio interviews, visit his Web site at www.FrCedric.org. For more information about his three-day visit to St. Joseph, call Anita Favalir at (817) 472-5198 or (817) 467-9409. All talks will begin at 7 p.m. in the church. Parking available on west sides of the church.

ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC SCHOOL, FORT WORTH – Henry Fenoglio, World War II veteran, and his wife Juanita, visited their son, St. Andrew School teacher Mike Fenoglio, and his fifth-grade students on Veterans Day. They are pictured here with several of the students (left to right): Patrick McCormick, Tatum Norris, Colin Burns, Marti King, Christian Zamora, Matt Luchetski and Allie Linstrom.

St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group meets at three locations

The St. Augustine Men’s Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly at three locations within the Diocese of Fort Worth. The group offers meetings at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, 2016 Willis Lane in Keller, Room 215, at the Padre Pio House, 130 Paxton Ave. in Arlington, and at Immaculate Conception Parish, 2355 North Bonnie Bras St. in Denton.

For more information, contact move@seasmens purity@yahoo.com or call the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish office at (817) 431-3857.

Defect Minis- try program seeking court reporter for CART services

The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a court reporter who can help with CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation) services.

The Deaf Community celebrates a special Mass this weekend on the First Sunday of each month at 1:45 p.m. at San Mateo Church on the near South Side of Fort Worth.

The ministry would like to provide CART services for deaf people who do not sign, so they can read the simultaneous transmissions and be a part of the special liturgy.

To help with this service, contact Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at (817) 284-8159 or mcinatl@fwdoc.org.

The Windthorst Knights of Columbus Council #1824 wish to invite everybody to their Annual German Sausage Meal, with tickets available. For more information call the church office at (940) 295-5621.

Grammy winner to perform for benefit

This year the proceeds from the HALOS Fort Worth fifth annual dance will go towards Catholic Chastity Diocese of Fort Worth children’s emergency shelter.

Grammy award winner Tejano star Little Joe and his band La Familia will perform. The event is from 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 29 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Hall at 4100 Blue Mound Rd.

The presale ticket price is $50 per person or $55 at the door. Tables may be reserved with the purchase of eight tickets. Ice, sodas, and food are not covered by the cost of the ticket. All donations are tax deductible.

To purchase tickets or make a donation for the cause, please call one of the numbers shown below Mary Hernandez at (817) 925-5210, Flores Insurance at (817) 724-7673, or Lopez Plumbing (817) 923-9869.
Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and St. Patrick parishioner Arthur Dickerson receives Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor

Special papal recognition, in the form of the Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor, was bestowed upon Fort Worth native Arthur Dickerson Sept. 11. Bishops Kevin Vann of Fort Worth and Kevin Farrell of Dallas were special guests at the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land Benefit Dinner, held at the Park City Club in Dallas. Father Peter Vasko, OFM, presented the Gold Cross of Honor to Dickerson and to Dallas resident Tony Piscitelli. Fr. Vasko is president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land.

Pope Leo XIII established this form of special recognition in 1900 in order to promote spiritual interest in the Holy Land and to recognize benefactors for their outstanding commitment to the Holy Land. Dickerson, who also holds the rank of knight Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, has been an active member of St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth for more than 40 years. He and his wife, Patricia, are the parents of 11 children.

Dickerson is the chairman and owner of Southwestern Petroleum Corporation, which has ties to businesses in countries around the world. A well-known philanthropist and supporter of Catholic causes, Dickerson chaired the cathedral’s capital campaign and earned an award from the Fort Worth chapter of the National Society of Fundraisers.

The papal honor is in the form of a cross. Represented on the cross are the mysteries of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Nativity of Christ, his baptism, and the Feast of the Eucharist. Also represented on the reverse side of the cross is the risen Christ and his agony at Gethsemane; the scourging and crowning with thorns; and Christ’s crucifixion. The cross is inscribed with the words, “A Holy Journey to Jerusalem.”

San Antonio’s Bishop Cantú joins in torch run honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio joined in a torch relay run making its way from Mexico to New York, and San Antonio Archbishop José H. Gómez celebrated a Mass of devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe to welcome the runners to San Fernando Cathedral Nov. 5.

The runners of the Guadalupe Torch Race (“Carrera Antorch Guadalupana”) were in the midst of the South Texas leg of a run that began in Mexico City and will ultimately be completed at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas.

The runners, members of the Tepeyac Association and more than 300 residents of the Alamo City, prayed for her intercession in the effort to “promote friendship and solidarity among Mexican-American community groups all along its path, provide a symbolic link for those families divided by the international border,” and raise awareness on immigration issues.

The run, reminiscent of the journey of the Olympic torch, began at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

According to the Tepeyac Association, the sponsor of the run, its purpose is to represent “the fervor and faith Hispanics have for Our Lady of Guadalupe, arguably the premier national symbol of Mexico and its culture.”

Bishop Cantú, who at age 41 is currently the youngest bishop in the United States, led the relay by carrying the torch for the final two miles of the run to San Fernando Cathedral in downtown San Antonio.

Archbishop Gómez received the torch at the cathedral prior to celebrating Mass. The runners also were greeted by a mariachi choir and “matachines,” or religious dancers, from Corpus Christi. The archbishop and his auxiliary are two of the 26 active Hispanic Catholic bishops in the U.S.

Bishop Cantú told report- ers the U.S. bishops have been advocating comprehensive immigration reform for some time, and that the runners would be meeting with groups that support immigration reform during their journey to New York.

Office of Catechesis continues education grant applications for 2009 are now available

The Diocese of Fort Worth has announced that persons actively involved in ministry within the diocese for two years or longer who are planning programs of study in service of those ministries are invited to apply to the diocese for educational grant assistance.

In a press release from the Department of Catechesis, it was announced that these grants “made available through the generosity of the people of the diocese,” have resulted in “a sum of $20,000 allotted for distribution again next year.”

Applications are now available and must be submitted to Lucas Pollice, M.T.S. Director of Catechesis at the Catholic Center, and be received by or be postmarked no later than Jan. 19, 2009.

According to information supplied by the Department of Catechesis, applicants will be asked to specify their intended course of study, its place and cost, and any other financial aid they expect to obtain. The pastor’s (or supervisor’s) signature is required, as is information that will help establish financial need.

The applications will be processed through the Department of Catechesis by the Committee on Continuing Education Grant Disbursement. Determinations of aid will be made by late Feb-ruary. At that time, successful applicants will receive a “Letter of Intent” indicating subsequent steps of the process. That letter must be returned by April 1, and checks will be sent out between May 1-15, 2009.

To receive an application, individuals are asked to contact Josie Castillo at (817) 560-3300 Ext. 255 or at jcassilt@fwdioc.org. Forms can also be downloaded from the diocesan Web site www.fwdioc.org: click on “Ministry Preparation” and choose “Continuing Education Grants.”
Our Lady of Victory students thank veterans, create wall of honor

"Honoring and thanking those who have served our great country in the armed forces has become a special annual event at Our Lady of Victory Catholic School," said Rachael Garnett, development director for OLV School in a press release describing the school’s second annual Veteran’s Day service. Garnett reported that many servicemen and women joined them for the observance, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and TCU.

Sponsored by the OLV Student Council guided by teacher Amy Wright, this celebration, Garnett said, demonstrates to the OLV students and local community the importance of patriotism and pride in our country.

"Under an overcast sky, Student Council members created a wall of names devoted to family and friends who have served in the military," Garnett reported. “Additionally they offered prayer, poetry, and respect to our servicemen and women. The Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth U.S. Navy Honor Guard and Nolan Catholic High School Concert Band Director Brian Standridge also participated in the proceedings. Garnett reported that those present commented on the profound feeling of patriotism and faith in the leadership of God they experienced at the ceremony. One veteran who had served for 37 years wept, she said, as he received the card created for him that hung on OLV’s wall of honor. Rachael Garnett of OLV School provided the information for this story.

OLV student council members pose before the wall of honor they created, honoring family and friends who have served in the military.

St. Mary’s Gainesville hosts Mass and reception, students honor veterans

St. Mary’s Church and School in Gainesville honored local veterans Friday, Nov. 7. The day began at 8:15 a.m. with a special Mass at the church attended by the school children and many veterans representing several branches of the military.

After Mass, there was a reception in the parish hall for the veterans, their families, and the staff members of St. Mary’s Church and School. The hall was decorated with posters thanking the veterans for their service to the country. Each class in the school made a poster and hung it in the parish hall. A centerpiece for the serving table displayed a green plant surrounded by military memorabilia.

Pat Benton, a teacher at St. Mary’s School and a veteran himself, organized the event. He welcomed the group and introduced Reagan Martin, president of the student council. Martin told the veterans that the students celebrate, appreciate, and honor them for what they have done for this country. She ended her comments by saying, “We remember those who continue their fight each day, as they have to live with their injuries, memories, and those who have not returned.”

She asked the audience to join her in a round of applause for the veterans in attendance. St. Mary’s eighth graders served those seated at the tables.

In addition to this special celebration, Benton and his students led a campaign to honor veterans by putting signs in their yards. Ronnie Brooks of Future Sign Service made all of the signs and donated his labor. St. Mary’s staff members supervised as the students placed the signs in yards throughout the area. These signs were designed to be displayed every year during the month of November.
Ministerium 2008 focuses on church and family in 21st century

For more than 300 priests, deacons, vowed religious, and ministry professionals within the Diocese of Fort Worth, the focus of the Oct. 23 Ministerium was an opportunity to focus on a topic that affects every parish community.

“Today, we are focusing upon and learning about family life and how we can most effectively support and care for families,” said Bishop Kevin Vann, in his welcoming remarks at the gathering at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington. “As a pastor, I have worked with many, many families in marriage preparation and then sacramental preparation for their children, and I have taught religious education classes to children who couldn’t attend Mass each Sunday because they alternate between their parents’ homes on weekends. We all face realities like these in our parishes today.”

The Ministerium, an annual learning opportunity for ministry leaders in parishes across the diocese, features experts and topics that impact Catholic ministries. “The Church and the Family in the 21st Century: Partners in Disciple-Making,” was led by Charles Balsam, a marriage and family consultant with extensive experience in family ministry in the Dioceses of Beaumont and Austin. Balsam currently serves as the manager of program development at the Leadership Institute of Jason’s Deli Inc., a company now franchised in 23 states. Jason’s Deli was founded 32 years ago in Beaumont by current company president Joe Tortorice, an active Catholic.

The company’s leadership institute offers courses to its employees in ethics, wellness, personal financial management, and emotional intelligence. The institute also offers “Marriage Matters: Strengthening the Bonds through Reconciliation,” an all-expense paid weekend course for couples.

“I teach several of these weekend retreats for Jason’s Deli each year, for the employees and their spouses, with a focus upon communication, intimacy, and conflict resolution,” said Balsam, in explaining his commitment to strengthening families. His company’s focus on personal growth is a valuable, and, unfortunately, rare witness to Catholic teaching about the primacy of the marriage relationship, noted Balsam.

“We’re in the middle of a culture war, here in this country, and, to be honest, I don’t have a lot of good news to report,” Balsam told Ministerium participants. He noted that contemporary trends — such as increased television viewing, mobility, and a consumer culture — have dramatically changed expectations of marriage and family life in the United States, and have led to higher divorce rates.

Shrinks in U.S. demographics over the past 100 years — from 60 percent rural population in 1900 to 79 percent urban in 2000 — have also impacted families, Balsam said. Cohabitation outside marriage has increased by 1,200 percent since 1965, significantly weakening commitment as couples approach marriage.

Quoting pivotal church documents, such as Vatican II’s Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Balsam explained the church’s definition of sacramental marriage. “The concept of intimacy, the concept that a couple’s covenant of mutual self-giving is a representation of the very relationship of Christ with the church, is a rich understanding of marriage,” said Balsam. “And the church’s teaching and understanding of sacramental marriage continues to grow in depth.”

Having discussed the many threats to marriage in contemporary culture, and the benefits of marriage for adults and children, Balsam pointed out that children in single-parent families, children born to unmarried mothers, and children in stepfamilies or cohabiting relationships face higher risks of poor outcomes, such as clinical depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, and incarceration.

“Stable families who attend church together are healthier, happier, and suffer from fewer addictions and social problems,” Balsam told Ministerium participants. “Our church has written and continues to speak eloquently about the tasks of the Christian family in passing on values, promoting full human development, participating in the development of society, and sharing in the life and mission of the church.”

The question for all who minister within the Catholic Church, said Balsam, is obvious. “Are we helping parents to teach their children to carry out these tasks?” he asked. “Are we doing our best in marriage and baptism preparation, in children’s and youth ministry, to reach out to families?”

Bishop Vann welcomed participants to this year’s Ministerium, urging them to focus upon a family perspective in their various ministries.

Major life transitions such as marriage, birth of children, the adolescence of children, and the death of elders in families coincide with the church sacraments, said Balsam. “We need to be taking every opportunity to be relevant to families in every stage of their family’s life cycle. We need to be offering more to families, and we need to be incorporating a family perspective into all that we do in ministry in the church.”

Ministry leaders gathered in the afternoon to discuss the ideas, resources, and suggestions offered by Balsam, to brainstorm new ways of incorporating a family perspective into their existing ministries, and to share their own forms of outreach to couples and families. Father Hector Medina, pastor of St. Matthew Church in Arlington, noted that an example of effec-
tive family ministry in his own parish is the quinceañera preparation that is offered for young Hispanic girls as they approach their 15th birthdays.

"Ed Lozano, the youth minister in our parish, offers an excellent, family-based approach to planning for the quinceañera," said Fr. Medina. "He involves the parents, the grandparents, and other family members, in a very comprehensive and spiritual process. It draws them more into the life of the church."

Other participants brought up ideas for incorporating Catholic teaching on dating, sacramental marriage, and sexuality in religious education classes; strengthening baptism and marriage preparation programs within parishes; offering child care to improve adult attendance at parish education opportunities; providing support to families in crisis; offering more family events; and increasing awareness among Catholics that faith education begins in the "domestic church" that is family life.

Bishop Vann, in his closing remarks, thanked participants for their commitment to improving partnerships between parishes and families and to strengthening households of faith.

"I hope that we can take the fruit of these reflections today and really use them, so that they can become part of our life and ministry, especially as we approach our 40th anniversary as a diocese," said the bishop, who serves as a member of the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. "Our families are depending upon us."

For more information about incorporating a family perspective into church ministry, see the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) publication, A Family Perspective in Church and Society, available at (1-800) 235-8722, or online at the USCCB Web site at www.usccb.org.

‘Marriage Matters’ offered at Ministerium

By Nicki Prevou

Editorial Assistant

Marriage Matters," an afternoon breakout session led by ethics expert Sister Renee Mirkes, OSF, was included in this year’s Ministerium as a way of focusing attention on a vitally important aspect of ministry to families.

Sr. Mirkes addressed the implications of the teachings of Humanae Vitae and also discussed the "domino theory" that a growing acceptance and use of artificial contraception and sterilization over the past 40 years has led to widespread social problems in contemporary American culture. Sr. Mirkes identified other falling "dominoes" as abortion, homosexual activity, incest, and euthanasia.

"Once we decided that it is okay to contracept, we, in effect, said that we no longer recognize the inherent moral goodness of procreation in marriage," Sr. Mirkes told approximately 70 Ministerium participants in her two-hour session. "In reduc-

ing sex to a purely biological function, we must know that we haven't got a leg to stand on when it comes to 'lifeless sex,'” she said, as shorthand for referring to other sexual behaviors in which sex is separated from procreation.

Sr. Mirkes, a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity, is director of the Center for NaProEthics, the ethics division of the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. She holds a graduate degree in theology from the University of St. Thomas in Houston as well as a doctorate in theological ethics from Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Weaving together the threads of science and theology, Sr. Mirkes offered an impassioned defense of Catholic teaching on human sexuality and the dignity of the human person. With that as her context, she explained the Pope Paul VI Institute’s role in training physicians, serving as a resource for ethical guidelines in healthcare issues, and promoting strong marriages and healthy families.

"At the Pope Paul VI Institute, we offer guidance in moral family planning through the ‘fertility care system,’” Sr. Mirkes explained. "The system is true, good, and beautiful, and 35 years of clinical research have gone into creating an ovulation method that is marriage-friendly, family-friendly, and woman-friendly. We have also developed an effective way of treating infertility within marriage.

"Become partners with us at the Pope Paul VI Institute, so that all of us, together, can be committed to evangelization of these truths,” urged Sr. Mirkes. "This is the way we can begin to address the moral earthquake we are dealing with in our society today."

Father Ray McDaniel, associate pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, and sacramental minister at Sacred Heart Church in Seymour and St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Megargel, appreciated the information offered in Sr. Mirkes’ presentation, he said. "I think she made a compelling case for how artificial birth control undermines the message we are trying to offer in preparing couples for sacramental marriage in the church," said Fr. McDaniel. "We need to be teaching and working with our young people, in the earliest stages of their lives, in preparing them to have the correct view of Catholic marriage. She gave excellent suggestions for all of us to follow."
Advent calls us to invite Christ into our lives and return to simple faith

By Lucas Pollice

The many liturgical seasons and feasts that we celebrate each year are among the most beautiful treasures of the Catholic faith. These allow us as the People of God to remember, contemplate, and bring into our own hearts and lives the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Through the liturgical seasons, we witness, live, and receive the graces of the Paschal Mystery and the Father’s plan of salvation accomplished in Christ so that in the celebration of the Eucharist, we are put into intimate communion with Christ and his saving power. These seasons allow us to live the life of Christ and to walk with Him so that we may be filled with his life and grace.

Advent is one of the most beautiful seasons in the liturgical calendar. Unfortunately, it can become easy to overlook this season with all of the business and distractions of our lives as we prepare for Christmas.

However, Advent is a true blessing that we need to be aware of and take advantage of, as the Church calls us back to a simple childlike faith as we prepare for the coming of Christ.

**ADVENT IS A TIME TO LOOK INTO OUR HEARTS**

The season of Advent has a dual focus. During the first two weeks of Advent, the readings at Mass focus on the reality and eventuality of the Second Coming of Christ. It is a time when we pause and look into our hearts and ask: “Am I ready for the Lord, when He comes again?”

This is a very important question we should constantly be asking ourselves, for we do not know the day nor the hour when the Lord will come to us, whether that be at the actual Second Coming or when the Lord calls us to Himself at the end of our own lives. Either way, we will have to give to Him an account of our lives and how we lived our lives loving God and others around us.

Thus, this first half of Advent calls us to an examination of conscience and to joyful conversion. We know that the Lord is victorious and will come again, but do we share in his victory? Do we live our lives in such a way that builds up, as we prepare for the freedom of God, or hinders it? Are we truly living as salt of the earth, bringing Christ to the ordinary places of everyday life?

Advent reminds us that just as Christ became incarnate in the womb of Mary, we must make Christ incarnate in our culture and in our world, so that it may become impregnated with the grace and mercy of Christ. That is our calling as Catholics. Evangelization and witness is not optional.

What is needed today, more than ever, is Catholics who are living lives of holiness that are radiant with the light of Christ, Catholics who are willing to bring about the civilization of love and the culture of life. What is needed today is a simple, yet powerful faith centered on the Person of Jesus Christ.

**THE CHURCH CALLS US BACK TO SIMPLE FAITH**

This is exactly what the last two weeks of Advent call us to do. On the Third Sunday of Advent, we are reminded of the words spoken prophetically in Isaiah: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths” (Isaiah 40:3).

A simple, yet powerful way to celebrate the first coming of Christ at Christmas, the Church calls us back to the simple faith of children and to make straight the paths in our own lives to Christ. How can we be an effective witness of Christ, if we do not know Him and embrace Him? What are the things in our lives that keep us from fully embracing Christ?

The season of Advent provides us a perfect example of this kind of faith in Mary. It was her simple, yet profound faith that brought about the Incarnation of Christ. Had it not been for her humble surrender to the will of the Father, our salvation in Christ would not have been possible.

**DO NOT BE AFRAID!**

This kind of faith and surrendering to Christ reminds me of one of the great themes of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II:

*Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ!*

We live in a world often overcome by fear, worry, and distress. But we are not to be afraid, for if we surrender ourselves to friendship with Christ, then nothing can take our life away, and nothing can separate us from his love.

Pope Benedict XVI recalls this powerful teaching of John Paul II at the beginning of his own pontificate and calls all of us to this faith of a child and to friendship with Christ:

“At this point, my thoughts return to 22 October 1978, when Pope John Paul II began his ministry here in Saint Peter’s Square. His words on that occasion constantly echo in my ears: ‘Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ!’

The Pope was addressing the mightly, the powerful of this world, who feared that Christ might take away something of their power if they were to let him in, if they were to allow the faith to be free... The Pope was also speaking to everyone, especially the young. Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that he might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom?

And once again the Pope said: No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation.

And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of my personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open wide the doors to Christ — and you will find true life. Amen.” (Homily at the Inaugural Mass of the Pontificate of Benedict XVI)

This is the message of Advent! Do not be afraid to open wide the doors of our hearts and minds to Christ, so that on Christmas Day we may once again gaze into the eyes of the Child Christ and receive in its fullness the wonder of God’s everlasting and unconditional love. May all of us embrace this season of joyful conversion so that we may ever more grow in friendship with Christ.

Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master’s degree in Theological Studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University. He is an adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth. Lucas and his wife, Mary, have five children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, Christian, and Julia.

---

**TO LOOK INTO OUR HEARTS**

Advent is a time when we are reminded that just as Christ became incarnate in the womb of Mary, we must make Christ incarnate in our culture and in our world, so that it may become impregnated with the grace and mercy of Christ. That is our calling as Catholics. Evangelization and witness is not optional.

**THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT CALLS US TO**

This year, the first Sunday of Advent falls on Nov. 30. The illustration displays the first four candles of the Advent wreath lit. (CNS illustrations/Emily Thompson)
Moving Forward holding ground
By Susan E. Wills

Abolitionists did not work simply to reduce the number of slaves, but to end completely that odious violation of human rights.

President generally did not do so because of his support for abortion. They largely voted on the basis of other issues they saw as pressing, and didn’t really see their core values on life being threatened. As pro-Obama law professor Doug Kmiec put it: He was “sounding more Catholic than most Catholics I know.” The President-elect spoke often of “reducing abortions” and finding “common ground” on the issue. The question is whether that was sound, not substance.

A BeliefNet survey of Evangelical voters found that 86 percent of those supporting the new President agreed with his view that the best way to reduce abortion is “by preventing unintended pregnancy (through education and birth control) or by providing financial assistance to pregnant mothers.” It sounds good, but it’s simply untrue that birth control programs reduce abortions, and most women seek abortions for reasons other than, or in addition to, financial need.

In any case, simply reducing abortions is not the point of the pro-life message. Our goal is a society that respects and defends every human life from conception onward. Abolitionists did not work simply to reduce the number of slaves, but to end completely that odious violation of human rights. And we must work tirelessly to overturn the evil and unjust law that effectively denies the humanity of unborn children and allows them to be torn limb from limb.

So how do we move forward? The Catholic Bishops of the United States pointed the way at their recent general meeting. They pledged the resources of the Church to mobilize the Catholic community to oppose FOCA and all other attempts to eliminate existing pro-life laws and policies. This will include a massive education and postcard campaign beginning in January, urging members of Congress to reject the abortion extremism of FOCA.

If we respond, as the bishops have called us to, we can defeat FOCA and retain our freedom to help build a culture of life.

Bishops approve blessing service for children in the womb

Baltimore (CNS) — To fill a gap in existing prayer books, the U.S. bishops Nov. 11 overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, praised the new blessing as “a tangible way to witness pastorally and sacramentally to the life of the unborn child” and said it could also serve as an opportunity for parishes to bring together expectant couples for mutual support.

Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo, said the document could present “a great catechetical moment for all of us.” He said he hoped it might lead the bishops to declare an annual day of prayer for the unborn in the future.

The document required the approval of two-thirds of the Latin-Rite members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and must be sent to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for recognition, or confirmation. The English-language version was approved 223-1 and the Spanish-language version 224-0.

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, New Jersey, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, introduced the document Nov. 10, the first day of the USCCB fall general assembly in Baltimore.

There is some recipes you can capture on index cards and some that can only be re-captured if you can still crank up the old VCR

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

It was a familiar scene, replicated in millions of homes yearly: families preparing for Thanksgiving. In our case the event was preserved on videotape.

The children sat around the kitchen table or stood at countertops. Some stirred simmering pots; some peeled apples. There were two young sons, one sassy 6-year-old, a pre-schooler, and a toddler, all working on the meal we would share the next day.

It had gotten noisy and slightly out-of-control, when on the tape, 6-year-old Julie, clearly a first-grader on the inside, said loudly, “Anyone who does not behave will sit in the corner.”

There was an instant of all-around quiet then, and because of the magic of videotape, I heard myself answer her, correctly: “Julie, I don’t think we have enough corners.”

Preparing a holiday feast is difficult even for a team of six, even though Butterball turkeys, they said, were “per- fect for cooks who know all about turkeys…but especially for those who don’t.” No one in my kitchen that year knew anything about turkeys, but a few might safely have been called turkeys. Some were affectionately known as “puk- kin,’” and in a previous life, I had been called “Cranberry.”

So even without food, we were a meal all by ourselves.

That night, 4-year-old Andrew stood on a chair mixing stuffing. He had a deep roasting pan, where I had placed bread and home-baked cornbread. His job was to break up the pieces and mix them. When asked what he was making, Andrew replied, “popcorn.”

Abby was on a chair in front of the sink, rinsing apples, and when I asked her, “What are they for?” She wrinkled her brow, puckered her chubby lips, and said, “Halloween?”

“Oh, I said, “what is tomorrow?”

Abby rolled her eyes and brought her tongue over her upper lip, thinking. Then she exploded in a triumphant smile and declared, “Thanksgiving!”

At the table behind me, Julie and John rolled dough, Abby rolled her eyes and brought her tongue over her upper lip, thinking. Then she exploded in a triumphant smile and declared, “Thanksgiving!”

The video I will edit is designed to fit neatly into the perfection couples dream of when they envision their wedding days. But ironically, the images on the tapes come

See HAMER, p. 22
Area bishops invite youth to Six Flags to celebrate a Texas World Youth Day.

Photos by Wendy Pandolfo

Texas theme park in Arlington. The two bishops learned as teens grew older, carrying
brations of teen and colorful bill envelopes, and letters representing
parishes in the Mass in Spanish.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the
local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags
theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela
Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, and Eric Cantu.

The exuberant participation of the youth of the
dioceeses of Fort Worth and Dallas.

The annual celebration, held in

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the
afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner
Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from St. Peter Church in Grapevine enjoy attractions in the Six Flags theme park prior to the afternoon Mass. Pictured (left to right) are Maggie Bryan, Taylor Butler, Nick Brandt, and Blair Decker.

St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Fort Worth, enjoy colorful bill envelopes as they process, and wave their signs at the Mass in Spanish.

Youth from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Fort Worth, enjoy colorful bill envelopes as they process, and wave their signs at the Mass in Spanish.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sung and send accompanying hand gestures while participating in a eucharistic prayer and worship.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.

Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton, joins in the afternoon WYD liturgy. St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the WYD liturgy.

Youth from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriela Barrios, and Eric Cano.

Barrios, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.
Bishops issue statements on economic crisis, authorize blessing ceremony for children in womb, adopt a new budget

**From Page 1**

Conference president on behalf of the bishops.

The final product was written under the supervision of Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, USCCB president, after the bishops weighed in with recommendations about its content, tone, and writing style. After an overnight writing session, the statement was read by Cardinal George to the body of bishops, who greeted it with applause. Among other meeting actions, the bishops approved a statement on the economy, a blessing for children in the womb, and said no document was ever published that was too long, the U.S. bishops said.

**The impact of the crisis is greater in some regions of the country, families across all the nation are losing their homes, workers are losing their jobs and health care coverage, retirement savings are threatened, and people are losing the sense of hope and security, it continued.**

But the church will continue to “reach out to those in need, stand with those who are hurt, and work for policies that bring greater compassion, accountability, and justice to economic life,” the statement said. The bishops concluded by offering prayers for anyone who is “hurting, anxious, or discouraged in these difficult times.”

Despite some continued criticism that the latest English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal is plagued by obscure wording and sentences that are too long, the U.S. bishops approved another lengthy section of the translation Nov. 11.

Needing affirmation by two-thirds of the 264 Latin-rite U.S. bishops, or 176 bishops, the heavily amended translation of the Proper of the Seasons — made up of the proper prayers for Sundays and feast days during the liturgical year — received 189 votes in favor and 30 against. During the bishops’ meeting in Orlando, Florida, in June, the document failed to get the required two-thirds majority.

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, New Jersey, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, called the translation “a steppingstone in the continual renewal of the liturgy” and said no document was ever likely to receive the unanimous support of the bishops.

The translation now goes to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for recognition, or confirmation. The first section of the missal came before the bishops in 2006 and was confirmed by the Vatican earlier this year.

To fill a gap in existing prayer books, the U.S. bishops overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, praised the new blessing as “a tangible way to witness pastorally and sacramentally to the life of the unborn child” and said it could also serve as an opportunity for parishes to bring together expectant couples for mutual support.

The document also must be sent to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for recognition, or confirmation. The English-language version was approved 223-1 and the Spanish-language version 224-0.

The U.S. bishops later chose the Revised Grail Psalter produced by the monks of Conception Abbey in Missouri for liturgical use in the U.S.

The Nov. 12 vote was 203-5 in favor of accepting a recommendation of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship to adopt the Grail Psalter for use in all liturgical settings. The decision also must be confirmed by the Vatican.

There was little debate before the vote and no amendments could be made to the translated psalms.

In a report to the bishops Nov. 11, Auxiliary Bishop Roger P. Morin of New Orleans explained that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development cut off funding earlier this year to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, known as ACORN, for reasons beyond the church’s current troubles over voter registration and partisan politics.

Bishop Morin, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ subcommittee on the CCHD, said the U.S. bishops’ anti-poverty program, which supports community groups suspended $1.13 million in previously authorized grants to ACORN affiliates in June. No new applications from ACORN for the coming year were approved, he added.

Bishop Morin explained that the CCHD action followed the revelation June 2 that Dale Rathke, the brother of ACORN founder Wade Rathke, had embezzled nearly $1 million from the organization and its affiliates in 1999 and 2000. Dale Rathke stepped down from his position with the national organization in June when the matter became public; no charges were filed against him.

That revelation “raised questions about transparency and governance of ACORN,” Bishop Morin told the bishops. CCHD commissioned a forensic audit to determine whether any of the church’s funds had been stolen or used inappropriately. A final report is pending, but he said the work so far has concluded that “our funds were not involved with those embezzled at the national office.”

In an action related to key priorities established earlier by the bishops, the prelates agreed to grant five task forces the authority to tackle issues ranging from strengthening marriage to addressing cultural diversity in the church through 2011 and approved a host of goals for each task force for the next year.

The task forces are on faith formation and sacramental practice; strengthening marriage; the life and dignity of the human person; cultural diversity in the church; and the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. The task forces are expected to call back to the 2009 fall general assembly with detailed reports about meeting the American church’s agenda on these issues, said Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, conference vice president.

“The tremendous investment for the conference,” Bishop Kicanas said. “These are more than goals and objectives. These are lifelong challenges.”

Several U.S. bishops who attended the Oct. 5-26 world Synod of Bishops on the Bible in Rome discussed the moving experience they had and their rediscovery of the beauty of the word of God. They also said Pope Benedict XVI was present during much of the synod and was attentive to what was being said.

Almost lost in the busy Nov. 11 afternoon session was the 2009 USCCB budget. The bishops approved a budget of $144 million, a 2.25 percent increase from 2008.

In one of the few votes on the meeting’s first day, Nov. 10, the bishops agreed to a revised process for submitting varia — new issues that an individual bishop or group of bishops would like to see considered by the full body. The new process was designed to allow for flexibility but conform to criteria established under the USCCB reorganization last year.

The bishops also decided by voice vote to review the USCCB regulations on statements and publications in light of the reorganization. Revised regulations were expected to be submitted to the full body in June.

Contributing to this roundup were Chaz Muth, Nancy Frazier O’Brien and Patricia Zapor.
Charities respond to increased need

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — U.S. President-elect Barack Obama telephoned Pope Benedict XVI to thank him for his congratulatory message on winning the 2008 presidential election.

Pope Benedict sent his congratulations Nov. 5, referring to the “historic occasion” of the election, marking the first time a black man has been elected president of the United States.

Father Lombardi said Nov. 5 the pope prayed that “the blessing of God would sustain him (Obama) and the American people, so that all of people of good will could build a world of peace, solidarity, and justice.”

The press office for Obama’s presidential transition team said all conversations with world leaders are private, and no details would be released on this conversation or any conversation with world leaders.

Charities respond to increased need

The stresses of unemployment, falling wages, higher food prices and the housing crisis pushed more people to seek assistance from local Catholic Charities agencies in the fall of 2008.

PERCENT OF CATHOLIC AGENCIES SEEING AN INCREASE IN...

- the working poor seeking services 91%
- requests for financial assistance 86%
- requests for utility assistance 82%
- the need for food 77%
- the need for rent or mortgage assistance 70%
- requests for temporary housing 41%

Source: Catholic Charities USA

U.S. President-elect Barack Obama arrives in Chicago to speak to supporters with his wife, Michelle, and their children, Sasha and Malia, after being declared the winner of the 2008 presidential election Nov. 4. (CNS photo/Gary Hershorn, Reuters)
Pope: Pray for renewal of world in Christ, ridding it of violence, greed

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Christians must pray that Jesus comes into the lives of those who are suffering from selfishness and violence, including those in Congo and Sudan, said Pope Benedict XVI.

At his Nov. 12 weekly general audience, the pope focused on St. Paul’s teaching about Jesus’ second coming and how Christians are to live while waiting for the end of time.

In St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, the apostle used the words “Marana, Ba!” or “Come, Lord Jesus” to indicate how this ancient Christian prayer shows the joyful expectation of Jesus’ return and the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation, said the pope.

The pope said it was probably “clearly a prayer of people who had many plans in mind when they watched and waited for the end of time.”

To keep the boredom at bay, we would play tricks on each other. If I caught my brother not looking down the street, I would excitedly say, “There they — aren’t!” He would do the same to me when I tired of gazing down the empty street.

Every now and then we would hear a car coming. We would crane our necks to see who it was, but be deflated when we realized it was not our uncle. After the momentary disappointment faded, we would go back to watching and waiting.

I can clearly remember sitting on the front porch with my brother and watching down the street for my uncle’s car. We knew he was coming some time that day, and with him would be our cousins. We were not a patient duo. We had many plans of forts to build in the basement and, if it was winter, snowball fights to be staged. These plans burned in our minds, and every minute that passed meant one less minute to play.

To keep the boredom at bay, we would play tricks on each other. If I caught my brother not looking down the street, I would excitedly say, “There they — aren’t!” He would do the same to me when I tired of gazing down the empty street.

Every now and then we would hear a car coming. We would crane our necks to see who it was, but be deflated when we realized it was not our uncle. After the momentary disappointment faded, we would go back to watching and waiting. I think the Gospel writer had this kind of watchfulness in mind when he exhorted the faithful to stay on the lookout for the coming of the Lord. He said, “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.”

It is impossible to have this high a level of watching and waiting every day of our lives. For this reason the church brings us the season of Advent. It is, in effect, a time when the church sits on the front porch, eagerly longing for the coming of the Lord.

Through signs and symbols we are put on alert. In the Scriptures we wait with the Israelites as they continue their watch for a Messiah. We also hold vigil with the early Christians as they anticipate (and we still await) the return of Jesus. Advent is a time to switch gears, and, like my brother and me waiting for my uncle’s car, we must stay alert and watch, for Jesus is coming. We don’t want to miss it!

QUESTIONS:
Share a story of how it felt when you watched and waited for something or someone. How can we stay alert and watch for the Lord amid the busyness of the holidays?

Copyright © 2008, Diocese of Fort Worth

Pope Benedict XVI waves as he arrives to lead his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Nov. 12. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)
Paul was 70 years old before he heard the voice crying out in the wilderness. He had been a good Catholic his entire life, attending Mass regularly. He was a loving, dedicated husband and father and a successful business executive. Then, one night shortly into his retirement, Paul heard the voice crying out, first in a dream.

It was so real to him that he listened. But the idea of such a dream was so irrational and unfamiliar that he was embarrassed to recount it to anyone. However, the dream recurred—several times—and he felt compelled to tell his wife, Chris.

“I dreamed I was building a school. In Guatemala!” he said incredulously. (He’d never been to Guatemala.) It seemed a little strange to her, too, to be talking about this dream. But it struck her as significant.

Then the two of them together heard the voice crying out, this time at church in the person of a visiting Haitian pastor. He wanted to build a school in a remote village in his country.

Recognizing the voice, the couple committed themselves to helping their parish fund construction of the school. A few months later Chris became terminally ill, and her final, urgent wish was to ensure that the school would be built. They donated the amount needed.

After Chris’s death, Paul, fluent in French, and the Haitian pastor became close personal friends, and Paul became deeply involved in the life and development of his Haitian community.

Peter’s words in this weekend’s readings tell us that God doesn’t mind that it took Paul 70 years to get to this place: “With the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day,” he says.

What happened was Paul and Chris made straight the paths of the Lord to enter the life of a Haitian village. Unexpectedly, but just as powerfully, the paths also led to the transformation of their own life with Jesus.

This story was foretold in Isaiah. “A voice cries out … the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all people shall see it together … here is his reward with him.” Paul and Chris listened to the voice, opened the path and the Savior came.

QUESTIONS:
What obstacles in your life might keep you from hearing God’s voice in an unexpected place? How can you clear the way for Christ to be present in your day-to-day living?

Advent can help us welcome the Light of the World

Family traditions are so important: everything from mealtimes to birthdays to Christmas trees. These customs add significance and depth to our experience of life. Sadly, some of the richest traditions of the holiday season get overshadowed by the commercialization of this time of year. Add to this the squeeze on family budget that holiday events and gifts create, and it is no wonder that we can be blinded by the glow of Christmas lights instead of illuminated by the Light of the World.

With a little effort and even less money, we can enter into the spirit of Advent and Christmas. Here are a few ideas and a personal story I hope will inspire you to look past the surface and find the profound presence of Jesus in the coming weeks.

Most parishes offer some type of bulletin insert or flyer with daily reflections for Advent. Four candles and some greenery can give you an Advent wreath. This couple

Christmas is not the only Holy Day in December. The liturgical calendar is full of special feast days. Here are a few of the highlights:

• Dec. 6 is the feast day of St. Nicholas. Some cultures have the children set one of their shoes outside the doors of their rooms for St. Nicholas to fill with goodies overnight.

• Dec. 8 is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. This is the day we celebrate Mary being conceived without the stain of original sin. This is the beginning of the final preparations for the coming of the Savior. Attend Mass and celebrate this great day.

• Dec. 12 is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This apparition of Mary has a powerful story. Check out this Web site to learn more: www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Dec1999/feature2.asp. Also, this issue of the North Texas Catholic has information about local parishes that will be offering celebrations for this feast.

Another great tradition that leads up to the birth of Christ is the Posadas. This event begins nine days before Christmas, and it follows the Holy Family as they search for a suitable place for the birth of Jesus. Each night there is a reenactment of Joseph and Mary going door to door seeking a room. There are songs and prayers for each stop. This is a big tradition in the Hispanic community, and it is becoming popular in many parishes. St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth has a bi-lingual Posadas. Check the next issue of the North Texas Catholic for other parishes that may be offering this celebration.

Finally I offer this suggestion as a way to heighten the expectancy of Christmas. My brother’s family doesn’t light their Christmas tree until Christmas Eve. In the days leading up to Christmas, they get the tree ready with lights, ornaments, ribbons, bows, and presents. Then on Christmas Eve they go to Mass as a family. When they return home, they gather around the tree and read the Christmas story from Luke’s Gospel. Then they turn out all the lights and plug the tree in for the first time.

When my brother told me about this family tradition I thought about how hard this must be for him to go against the flow every year. His kids must nag him every night to turn the tree on, “just for a few minutes — just for tonight.” But the fortitude he displays provides his children a memorable and magical Christmas Eve, and it teaches them that Advent is a time to expectantly await Christmas.

With a little planning, we can all have a blessed Advent season, full of rich tradition, deep theology, and even a bit of whimsy. It doesn’t matter if you join in with an established one, or start a new one for yourself, traditions are doorways to the divine. Open one (or two) this year.

By Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal organizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at Jeff@stbartsfw.org.
Lo más destacado de la asamblea general de otoño de 2008 de la USCCB

Baltimore(CNS) — Durante la asamblea general de otoño de la Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Católicos, realizada en Baltimore del 10 al 12 noviembre, los obispos:

— Escucharon a su presidente, el cardenal Francis E. George, de Chicago, reconocer la importancia histórica de la elección del presidente Barack Obama y orar para que el presidente entrante pueda tener éxito en su tarea para el bien de todos.

— Advierten a la nueva administración y al nuevo congreso que eliminar las existentes restricciones federales sobre el aborto enajenaría permanentemente decenas de millones de estadounidenses y podría ser visto como un ataque contra la libertad religiosa.

— Dijeron que en tiempos de crisis económica la iglesia continuará extendiéndose hacia aquellos que están en necesidad, estará con aquellos que sufren y trabajará por políticas más justas y más compasivas.

— Aprobaron otra larga sección de la traducción al inglés de la tercera edición del Misal Romano, que ahora debe ser confirmada por el Vaticano.

— Escogieron el Rev. Grail Palter, producido por los monjes de la abadía Concepción en Missouri, por encima de la traducción del Libro de los salmos que aparece en la Revised New American Bible para uso litiúrgico en Estados Unidos.

— Aprobaron abrumadoramente un servicio litúrgico en inglés y español para bendecir los niños en útero.

— Eligieron al obispo George V. Murray, de Youngstown, Ohio, como secretario de la USCCB y eligieron directores para cinco comités de la USCCB.

— Aprobaron un presupuesto de $144 millones y una lista larga de planes y programas para la USCCB en el 2009.

— Establecieron una multitud de metas para cinco grupos de trabajo sobre asuntos, desde fortalecer el matrimonio hasta atender la diversidad cultural en la iglesia, como iniciativas prioritarias hasta el 2011.

— Escucharon un informe de la Campaña católica para el desarrollo humano, que a principios de este año retiró los fondos provistos a la Asociación de organizaciones comunitarias para la reforma ahora, conocida como ACORN, por razones no relacionadas con los problemas actuales por la inscripción de votantes y la política partidista.

— Votaron a favor de un proceso revisado para presentar tarifas sobre nuevos asuntos que un obispo individual o un grupo de obispos quisieran ver considerados por el cuerpo completo.

— Exploraron cómo las organizaciones caritativas nacionales e internacionales han encontrado estímulo y dirección provechosa en la primera encíclica del Papa Benedicto XVI, Deus Caritas Est (Dios es amor).

— Se enteraron que la Universidad Católica de América en Washington ha tenido un año que estableció nuevos récords de matrículas de estudiantes del primer año y de recaudación nacional de fondos, pero perdió millones en inversiones durante el derretimiento económico del 2008.

— Otorgaron permiso a un obispo para que publique su primer libro de cuentos de otoño de 2008 de la USCCB.

— Otorgaron permiso para que publique su primer libro de cuentos de otoño de 2008 de la USCCB.

Obispo de Little Rock defiende los derechos de inmigrantes en carta pastoral

Por Malea Hargett
Catholic News Service

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas — A cinco meses de distancia de su ordenación, el obispo de Little Rock, Anthony J. Taylor, ha publicado su primera carta pastoral con la esperanza de enseñarle a su rebaño lo que son los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes.

“Yo era extranjero y ustedes me acogieron. Carta pastoral sobre los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes” se les presentó a los sacerdotes del estado, el 5 de noviembre, durante un día de estudio. Los empleados eclesiásticos se reunieron en el Centro San Juan para una reunión similar, el 7 de noviembre.

El obispo Taylor dijo que cree que los católicos no tienen la información propia acerca de los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes.

“Espero que la gente abra su corazón al llamado de Jesús en nuestros tiempos”, dijo en una entrevista con Arkansas Catholic, periódico diocesano de Little Rock. “Y más que eso, esta carta es un paso de su cabeza a su corazón y que vea (la gente) lo que el Señor nos pide. Esto es el aspecto más amplio en donde las enseñanzas de la iglesia no son bien conocidas”.

El obispo Taylor, que habla el español con fluidez y que ha trabajado en el ministerio hispano durante 28 años, dijo que cree que la posibilidad de emigrar a otro país es “un derecho humano intrínseco”.

Dijo que es casi imposible que los inmigrantes, predominantemente provenientes de México, vengan a los Estados Unidos legalmente.

“Están aquí debido a que no hay forma en la que consigan documentos, y no porque no quieran los documentos”, dijo. “Un obispo no puede ser obligado a hacer lo que uno no puede. Las leyes de inmigración deberían corresponder a la realidad”.

–El Obispo Anthony Taylor

El obispo Plácido Rodriguez, de Lubbock, centro, y otros obispos estadounidenses el 11 de noviembre revisan una declaración propuesta sobre la situación política de Estados Unidos durante la reunión de la Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Católicos en Baltimore. (Foto CNS/Nancy Wiechec)

Obispo de San Antonio se une a carrera de antorchita en honor de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Por Catholic News Service

SAN ANTONIO — El obispo auxiliar Oscar Cantú, de San Anto- nio, se unió a una carrera de relevos con antorchas que se desarrolla desde México para terminar en Nueva York. Y el arzobispo de San Antonio, José H. Gómez, celebró una Misa en devoción a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, el 5 de noviembre.

Los participantes en la Carrera antorchita guadalupana se encontraban en el sur de Texas a la mitad de la etapa de una carrera que se inició en la Ciudad de México y que finalizará en la catedral de San Patricio en la ciudad de Nueva York el 12 de diciembre, fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, emperatriz de las Américas.

Los corredores, miembros de la Asociación Tepeyac, y más de 300 residentes de la Ciudad del Alamo, rezaron por la intercesión de la Virgen de un esfuerzo “para promover amistad y solidaridad entre los grupos de la comunidad mexicana-americanos a lo largo del recorrido y presentar un estilizado símbolo para las familias que se ven divididas por fronteras internacionales”, además de despertar conciencia sobre asuntos de inmigración.

La carrera, semejante a la de Lanzas, se inició en la catedral de San Patricio el 10 de noviembre y se llevará a cabo en las iglesias donde las enseñanzas de la iglesia son inmigrantes, y no porque no quieran los documentos, y no porque no quieran los documentos, dijo. “Un obispo no puede ser obligado a hacer lo que uno no puede. Las leyes de inmigración deberían corresponder a la realidad”.

–El Obispo Anthony Taylor

El obispo Plácido Rodríguez, de Lubbock, centro, y otros obispos estadounidenses el 11 de noviembre revisan una declaración propuesta sobre la situación política de Estados Unidos durante la reunión de la Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Católicos en Baltimore. (Foto CNS/Nancy Wiechec)
‘Somos guardianes de nuestros hermanos’, recuerdan obispos en declaración económica

BALTIMORE (CNS) — En tiempos de crisis económica, los obispos católicos estadounidenses emitieron una declaración el 11 de noviembre recordando al público que “somos guardianes de nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Estamos todos juntos en esto”.

La breve declaración emitida por el cardenal Francis E. George, de Chicago, presidente de los obispos, señaló que “los tiempos difíciles pueden aislarnos o pueden juntarnos”.

Esta fue redactada durante la reunión anual de otoño de la Conferencia estatounidense de obispos católicos en Baltimore y aprobada por el cuerpo de obispos mediante votación verbal, el 11 de noviembre, como declaración del cardenal George a nombre de ellos.

Como pastores y obispos vemos las muchas consecuencias humanas y morales de esta crisis”, dice la declaración. Aunque el impacto de la crisis es mayor en algunas regiones del país, las preocupaciones son el tipo de ayuda que necesitan las familias de toda la nación están en algunas regiones del país, las necesidades de sus vecinos.

“Nuestra gente está sufriendo y los obispos quieren estar con ellos mientras están sufriendo”, dijo el obispo Blair.

El arzobispo George H. Niederauer, de San Francisco, quien preside el comité de comisiones de los obispos, dijo que los obispos creyeron importante aumentar la conciencia de la gente sobre las necesidades de sus vecinos.

Aunantes del reciente descenso económico, muchas diócesis fueron fuertemente azotadas financieramente por pagos en acuerdos por reclamaciones de abuso sexual, señaló el arzobispo Niederauer.

Pero la iglesia continuará “extendiéndose” hacia aquellos que están en necesidad, estará con aquellos que estén sufriendo y trabajará por políticas que traigan mayor compasión, responsabilidad y justicia a la vida económica”, dice la declaración.

Al obispo Leonard P. Blair, de Toledo, Ohio, quien sugirió la declaración, dijo conferencia de prensa, después de su aprobación, que el impulso para ésta salió “de la preocupación muy básica que tenemos como pastores” que la situación económica sea enfrentada con entendimiento, compasión y un sentido de solidaridad con nuestros vecinos.

El día anterior en su estado, señaló, otro patroño importante anunció drásticos recortes de empleo. DHL, compañía internacional de envíos, anunció que estaba eliminando 9,500 empleos, unos 7,000 de estos localizados en Cincinnati, Ohio.

“Nuestra gente está sufriendo y los obispos quieren estar con ellos mientras están sufriendo”, dijo el obispo Blair.

Los obispos aprueban la ceremonia de bendición para bebes que están en el claustro paterno

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Para llenar un vacío en los libros de oraciones existentes hasta ahora, los obispos de Estados Unidos aprobaron el 11 de noviembre por mayoría abrumadora una ceremonia litúrgica, tanto en inglés como en español, para la bendición de bebés que todavía se encuentran en el claustro paterno.

El documento deberá ser enviado a la Congregación de culto divino y sacramentos del Vaticano para “su reconocimiento” o confirmación. La versión escrita en inglés fue aprobada por 223 votos en contra de 1, y la versión escrita en español fue aprobada por 224 votos con 0 en contra.

El obispo Arthur Serratelli de Paterson, New Jersey, presidente del Comité de culto divino de los obispos de EE.UU, dijo que la bendición “fue preparada para darles apoyo a la mamá y al papá que esperan el nacimiento de un hijo, para estímulo en las parroquias a favor de la oración y del reconocimiento del precioso don que un hijo, que todos va a estar el claustrumpaterno, representa; y para promover el respeto de la vida humana en la sociedad”.

La bendición se puede usar dentro del contexto de la misa o fuera de ella, y para una mamá en forma individual, para una pareja o para un grupo de padres y madres que esperan un hijo.

El obispo Serratelli dijo que el comité favorecedor de la vida del comité favorecedor de la vida, “No se le ama, a los que están abandonados o son víctimas de abuso, que el Señor inspiró a su pueblo a fin de que los protejan y cuiden de ellos”.

Si la bendición se usa fuera de la Misa, en la ceremonia se incluyen oraciones introductorias, lecturas de La sagrada escritura, intercesiones, la bendición en a la madre y al bebé, y un rito de conclusión.

También se incluyen oraciones opcionales para los papás, la familia y la comunidad de la parroquia.

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Stephanie Garza, de 25 años de edad, es la ganadora del 2008 del Premio nuncio Cardenal Bernardini, dado por la Campaña católica para el desarrollo nacional. Dirige a la Misa, en la ceremonia se incluyen oraciones introductorias, lecturas de La sagrada escritura, intercesiones, la bendición en a la madre y al bebé, y un rito de conclusión.

La bendición se puede usar dentro del contexto de la misa o fuera de ella, y para una mamá en forma individual, para una pareja o para un grupo de padres y madres que esperan un hijo.

El obispo Serratelli dijo que el comité favorecedor de la vida, “No se le ama, a los que están abandonados o son víctimas de abuso, que el Señor inspiró a su pueblo a fin de que los protejan y cuiden de ellos”.

Si la bendición se usa fuera de la Misa, en la ceremonia se incluyen oraciones introductorias, lecturas de La sagrada escritura, intercesiones, la bendición en a la madre y al bebé, y un rito de conclusión.

También se incluyen oraciones opcionales para los papás, la familia y la comunidad de la parroquia.

‘Dios te llama ¿Estas escuchando? El Obispo Kevin Vann te invita a un fin de semana Vocacional’

FORMA DE INSCRIPCION Fin de Semana Vocacional

Nombre: __________________________
Domicilio: __________________________
Ciudad: __________________________
Edad: ____ Mujer: ___ Hombre: ___
Teléfono: __________________________
Parroquia: __________________________
Info de contacto: ____________________
Correo electrónico: __________________

Dios te llama
¿Estas escuchando? El Obispo Kevin Vann te invita a un fin de semana Vocacional

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres
Defensores hacen un llamado para hacer que la erradicación del hambre esté en la cabeza de las prioridades del país

Por Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Casi la mitad de los votantes de EE.UU. dicen que viven de día a día en pobreza, debido a que el precio de alimentos ha subido y la adversidad económica del país se ha profundizado, informa la Alianza para erradicación del hambre.

En una encuesta el día de las elecciones llevada a cabo con 1,000 votantes en varias partes del país, la alianza encontró graves preocupaciones que se desarrollan alrededor de lo que se llama "inseguridad de alimentos". Tres de cinco votantes, o sea, el 59 por ciento, dijeron que han sentido los efectos de los altos precios de alimentos. Poco menos de la mitad, el 49 por ciento, dijeron que observan que la condición del hambre se empeora. Cerca de un votante en cinco, el 20 por ciento, dijo que observaba que ellos mismos o alguien que conozca padecerá de hambre.

En adición, casi todos los que respondieron, el 94 por ciento, dijeron que creen que el hambre es un problema similar en otros países.

Tales respuestas demuestran una falta subyacente de confianza en las actuales condiciones económicas, causada en parte por el aumento del 7,5 por ciento en el precio de alimentos durante el año pasado. También no predicen una recuperación financiera rápida, a menos que se dirija un nuevo plan de estímulo económico hacia el nivel inferior de la escala económica, dijo el reverendo David Beckmann, presidente de la alianza.

"Cuando hablamos de la crisis económica, no le prestamos bastante atención al hecho de que la gente que ha sufrido más por la crisis son personas que no pueden alimentar más a sus hijos", dijo el reverendo Beckmann.

El reverendo Beckmann, ministro luterano, crece el hambre que se sufre en el mundo entero merece la misma atención, especialmente en algunas partes del mundo donde experimentan carestía de alimentos. Han ocurrido desordenes debido a la carestía de alimentos en varios lugares de África, el sur de Asia y Haití en este año de 2008.

"Esto no se trata de la Bolsa de valores. Esto se trata de la muerte de infantes", dijo.

Los resultados de la encuesta se comparan a la realidad experimentada por las agencias de Caridades católicas en todo el país. En una encuesta llevada a cabo en octubre en 44 entidades de Caridades católicas en EE.UU., se encontró que un "nuevo ciento" de las agencias informó que la cifra de personas que busca asistencia de comida ha subido en tres cuartas partes de las agencias.

A la cabeza de solicitantes se encuentran ciudadanos de mayor edad y gente joven en trabajos temporales, que son de la clase media, que acudieron a las agencias de Caridades católicas para pedir comida y ayuda en el pago de servicios domésticos, renta y pago de hipoteca.

Casi Hernandez, especialista de alto rango de recursos familiares en Caridades católicas de Fresno, Calif., dijo que la base de clientes de la agencia se ha casi triplicado durante el año presente, de 40 a 50 familias por día a un promedio de 143 por día.

En los Servicios católicos de Utah se ha visto un aumento del 13 por ciento en pedidos de cajas de comida. En Omaha, Nebraska, la gente ha acudido buscando asistencia habitual con un aumento de cincuenta veces más, debido a la lucha contra el desempleo y los altos precios de alimentos.

La alianza, en la que se incluye la Conferencia de obispos católicos de Estados Unidos, fijó el año 2015 como meta para que se elimine el hambre que sufren los menores de edad en los Estados Unidos, y hizo un llamado para el cambio de las políticas internacionales para que se reduzca el hambre mundial y la pobreza.

El senador Dick Lugar, R-Indiana, y el representante Jim McGov ern, D-Massachusetts, presentaron en la reunión, le hicieron un llamado al recién presidente electo Obama para que nombre a una "autoridad de alimentos" que supervise las acciones políticas nacionales e internacionales.

Opinión eclesiástica sobre matrimonio homosexual prevalece; fracasan otros esfuerzos de votación

Por Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — En votaciones sobre preguntas puestas en las papeletas del 2008 en todo el país prevaleció la opinión de la Iglesia Católica contra el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo, pero la mayoría de los esfuerzos católicos para influir la votación relacionada con el aborto, el suicidio ayudado, la investigación embrionaria usada células madre y los juegos de azar fracasaron.

Los votantes aprobaron la Proposition 8 de California, que emendaría la constitución estatal para definir el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer, por un margen de 52 por ciento a 48 por ciento, aunque los opositores dijeron que el contenido de las papeletas de ausentes podría cambiar el resultado. Propuestas similares fueron aprobadas en Arizona (57 por ciento a 43 por ciento) y Florida (62 por ciento a 38 por ciento).

El cardenal Roger M. Mahony, de Los Ángeles, en una declaración del 5 de noviembre, agradeció a la comunidad católica por la aprobación de la Proposition 8. Dijo que el éxito también fue resultado “de una coalición sin precedentes de muchas comunidades de fe y de otros ciudadanos que entienden la importancia de mantener la institución fundamental del matrimonio como ha sido vivida desde que comenzó la historia escrita”.

En una gama de otros asuntos, sin embargo, los votantes rechazaron la posición apoyada por la iglesia sobre asuntos en las papeletas.

En Connecticut, donde el Tribunal supremo de octubre que la prohibición estatal del matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo era inconstitucional, el 59 por ciento de los votantes rechazó un esfuerzo de convencer una convención constitucional, donde la cuestión habría podido ser reconsiderada. Los obispos católicos del estado habían pedido votos a favor de la convención.

Por un margen de 47 por ciento a 52 por ciento, los votantes de California rechazaron una propuesta apoyada por la iglesia de requerir notificación a los padres, o una declaración judicial, 48 horas antes que una menor de edad recibiera un aborto. Una medida en South Dakota que habría prohibido los abortos en el estado, a excepción de víctimas de violación sexual e incesto, también fracasó, 55 por ciento a 45 por ciento.

En Colorado los líderes católicos habían apoyado un enfoque neutral ante la Enmienda de personalidad de Colorado, que habría definido a " todoterminado humano desde el momento de la fertilización" como persona bajo la constitución estatal. Los votantes rechazaron la enmienda propuesta, con solamente el 27 por ciento a favor y el 73 por ciento en contra.

Washington se convirtió en el segundo estado de la nación en permitir el suicidio ayudado por un médico, con una votación de 59 por ciento a 41 por ciento a favor de la Iniciativa 1000. Los obispos católicos del estado habían dicho que la propuesta no tenía salvaguardias adecuadas y que su aprobación amenazaría "la dignidad de toda la vida humana sin importar debilidad o definiciones sociales de utilidad".

En Michigan los votantes acordaron, por margen de 52 por ciento a 48 por ciento, ampliar la investigación embrionaria usando células madre y "prohibir las leyes estatales y locales que prevengan, restrinjan o desalentan la investigación usando células madre, terapias futuras y curaciones".

Cardenal tiene esperanza que foro abra nuevo capítulo en relaciones católico-musulmanas

Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — En la misa de la primera reunión del Foro católico-musulmán, el cardenal responsable del diálogo dijo tener la esperanza de que haya "un nuevo capítulo" en una larga historia de relaciones católico-musulmanas.

El cardenal francés Jean-Louis Tauran, presidente del Pontificio consejo para el diálogo interreligioso, ofreció entrevistas a principios del foro, que comenzó la historia escrita".

Lo que es importante es conocer a Dios y comprender el significado de la vida. Cuando se entiende la vida, se entiende a Dios. En la reunión, le hicieron un llamado al recién presidente electo Obama para que nombre a una "autoridad de alimentos" que supervise las acciones políticas nacionales e internacionales.

Se espera que el segundo día de la reunión se enfoque en la dignidad humana y en el respeto mutuo. El cardenal Tauran tiene la esperanza que eso sea una oportunidad para que el Vaticano exprese sus preocupaciones por los límites de la libertad de conciencia y de la práctica religiosa que los católicos enfrentan en algunos países musulmanes.

El cardenal Tauran dijo que es natural querer reciprocidad y creer que la libertad que es buena para los musulmanes en Europa, por ejemplo, sea buena para los cristianos en el Oriente Medio.
Father Pacwa offered encouragement to those in attendance to keep on defending life

Once people stop discussing what’s true and from God, society loses its ability to judge. "When that happens, we’re simply reduced to those who can impose their will more successfully than those others who have the truth."

— Fr. Mitch Pacwa
Costs have risen, but service remains job one

FROM PAGE 24
done in my lifetime.

I am so proud that Catholic Charities has been serving this community for nearly 100 years,” he said, “and in all those years we have remained true to our mission: to provide service to those in need; to advocate compassion and justice in the structures of society; and to call all people of good will to do the same.”

Gibbs commended two groups of people, the Catholic Charities board of directors and the Building Hope board of directors, for their efforts over the past few years. He also thanked donors who had given to the project on any level, and especially the Catholic Charities staff who together raised some $20,000.

Moncrief reminisced with the audience, telling them he and his wife Rosie “were here when this campaign kicked off last March, and I remember asking many of you, and others, to dig deep and make this dream a reality: Well — you did!”

“You learned about the important work of Catholic Charities in our community — and you committed yourself to the work of this organization. And your efforts have taken us where we are today — breaking ground on a brand new future for Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth.

“We’ve still got a little bit more to do,” the mayorsaid, “and you’re going to be getting a few more phone calls. Be prepared for those phone calls.

One surprise in the building effort, Reynolds said later in an interview with the North Texas Catholic, was an estimated cost jump from $13.6 to $15.7 million. “But there was no turning back,” she said, “and if Charities would not do the agency justice, our board of directors has been very consistent in saying, ‘What does the agency need?’ not ‘What can we raise?’

“The board has been phenomenal in making this happen.”

At the new location, Reynolds said, “We will continue our work of providing hope through caring for children, strengthening families, and welcoming the stranger. We will continue to provide safe and secure shelter for children removed from their homes because of the abuse and neglect they’ve experienced.

“We will continue to provide both financial resources for families in crisis as well as the tools and education to help preserve our families become and remain strong, stable, and self-sufficient. We will continue to work with immigrants and political refugees to make their transition into productive, successful, and prosperous new citizens of our community as smooth and efficient as possible.

“Right now,” Reynolds said to the gathered supporters of Catholic Charities, you are sitting in the future lobby of Catholic Charities of Fort Worth — and as you sit here, I want you to imagine the people that will walk through the doors of this new building. In many cases, we will be their last hope, the one ‘yes’ that can bring hope back into their lives.

“You may not be sitting in this room when they come to us,” she said, “but you are the reason we can answer their cries for help.

“There is no greater calling than to help those less fortunate than us, those most in need,” said

Hamers...

FROM PAGE 11
from the un-neat and imperfect life that weddings eventually produce. It’s called “family,” and that’s just the way it is.

Transcribing videotapes is enlightening, because you travel through people’s ages and stages, receiving a microscopic view of all that happened. What amazes me about that process is the din of multiple, overlapping conversations. I missed many interactions then, but reliving them through video, I can hear them all now.

The youngest children frequently repeated the word “Mom” so many times, I wondered why I didn’t answer! Did I have bananas in my ears? Or had repetition of “Mom” created a tunnel my ears? Or had bananas in my ears? Or had the family life that preceded or surrounded each scene. Whenever the camera shut down unexpectedly, that was when someone likely got “a talking to.” Or, as Father Oscar Vasquez, former principal of Nolan Catholic High School would say, it was “a teachable moment.”

Watching that happen makes me sad.

What makes me happy is watching shared experiences I knew would last all our lives, like using Gammy’s recipes, even when she wasn’t there to taste them. The way it all begins, I now know, is with repetition: repeated meals around splendid dining tables, repeated hours in the kitchen, creating fragrant and succulent delicacies — and memories.

About the middle of November this year, my grandchildren Sam and Natalie asked their mother if they could if they could to Christmas music in the car. Meredith was not fully aware that at ages 7 and 5 they already had developed memories we define as tradition. She started to tell me this — that Sam knew the lyrics to his favorite Christmas song — but she choked up and couldn’t finish her story.

Meredith’s lips quivered. “I remember when I was little and we would play my favorite Christmas records while we were fixing Thanksgiving dinner,” she said.

“It’s like going to Kansas,” Meredith said. “Last summer when we drove to Grandma’s for a weekend, I realized the kids remembered where they were — the neighborhood, the streets. It was like when we were little, driving to Gammy’s house. We’d recognize the landmarks, and then we were finally there!”

“Now, when we go to Kansas for Thanksgiving, my kids know and understand that too.” She sniffed as she told her story, understanding the implications of it.

Both the events and the repetition of them are life’s true teachable moments. They reinforce love, repeated for generations.

Sometimes we are lucky enough to see it in the Super 8 movies our parents took, or in the VHS tapes we ourselves saved. All of us, though, can see and remember it in our hearts, where the tradition of love lives.

Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. In May, her column received the second place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto. In 2005, Kathy’s column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.

By Jean Denton
Copyright © 2008, Jean Denton
CHRISTMAS BOOK AND GIFT SALE
The Catholic Renewal Center Bookshop at 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth will hold a Christmas “Book and Gift Sale” Nov. 22-23. The book store, next door to Nolan Catholic High School, carries items such as first communion gifts, confirmation gifts, children and adult books, Bibles, cards, Christmas cards, music, jewelry, religious articles, and other miscellaneous Christian gifts. A wide variety of regular stock, with the exception of items already reduced, and without sales tax. The store will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and 12 to 5 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, call the Catholic Renewal Center at (817) 429-5920.

LAY CARMELITES
The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of a deeper relationship with Christ to join them for a 30-minute meeting for the month of November, on the first Wednesday of each month, at 7 p.m. at The Dominican House of Studies, 1620 Main St., suite 200, Fort Worth. The meeting will begin with a brief prayer service, followed by a short talk about the Carmelite Order, and conclude with a time of prayer. For more information, call (817) 295-5621.

DEAF MINISTRY
The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a volunteer for CART services, a part of the special liturgy. To help with this ministry would like to provide CART services of each month at 1:45 p.m. at San Mateo Catholic Church. Parking is available on the west side of the church. Those interested in participating are welcome to call Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at (817) 295-5621 or e-mail to mcinatl@fwdioc.org. For more information, call the Catholic Renewal Center at (817) 429-5920.

Thanksgiving Memorial Mass
The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus will hold a Thanksgiving Memorial Mass at 10 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27 at the Carmelite Renewal Center where the Mass will honor the Knights who passed away during the past year. The ofﬁce, on display at the Mass, will be engraved with the names of the following Knights: James W. Milton, William Ray Taylor, Sr., John Jr. Zajak. This ciborium will be presented to Holy Trinity School for their use with this Mass. Those who would like to celebrate the Mass and the Carmelite Nuns will provide the choir music. All Knights, Sr. Vincent de Paul, and public are welcome to this Memorial Mass.

Calendar

Thanksgiving Memorial Mass
The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus will held a Thanksgiving Memorial Mass at 10 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27 at the Carmelite Renewal Center where the Mass will honor the Knights who passed away during the past year. The ofﬁce, on display at the Mass, will be engraved with the names of the following Knights: James W. Milton, William Ray Taylor, Sr., John Jr. Zajak. This ciborium will be presented to Holy Trinity School for their use with this Mass. Those who would like to celebrate the Mass and the Carmelite Nuns will provide the choir music. All Knights, Sr. Vincent de Paul, and public are welcome to this Memorial Mass.

To Report Misconduct
If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, contact: • Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, 245-4001 (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@catholicodic.org. • Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 894-4000 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart.
Diocesan and city officials break ground for Catholic Charities to continue its Dedication to Service

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

It was a big day Nov. 3 when Catholic Charities broke ground for a new 83,000-square-foot facility in South Fort Worth. For the community, it had been a huge goal that would have enormous impact in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Donors had come through — in a big way — with pledged funds to finance the build.

But in addition to all of that, the groundbreaking day gave Bishop Kevin Vann and Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief the opportunity to drive heavy equipment. After welcoming speeches had been given, with applause all around, the men donned construction hats, climbed into the drivers’ seats of an orange excavator and a yellow front loader, and turned the first dirt in the construction.

“The groundbreaking of this facility,” said Jill Fischer, who, with her husband Charles, of the Harbison-Fischer Manufacturing Company, gave the initial contribution of $3 million to the $14.7 million project, “marks the beginning of the realization of all our collective dreams.”

Heather Reynolds, executive director of the agency, expressed uncharacteristic wordlessness at the excitement of the day, noting that after the three years of planning, Catholic Charities knew it would be able to continue serving the one in 16 Tarrant County people it now serves.

“When we started on this journey,” she said emotionally, “we knew our needs had grown beyond the capacity of our current facilities, and that for every person we were able to help, there was still another that we had to turn away because of lack of resources.

“Most importantly,” she said, “we knew that we were called to bring hope to our community and that could only happen if we took a bold step of faith. And what a step of faith it was! And how faithful God has been!”

The capital campaign, Building Hope, began publicly last March, after having had an earlier, private fund-raising effort in October 2007. The original goal of $13.6 million was earmarked for a building that would combine the resources of three other facilities, putting all Catholic Charities services under one roof, and saving the agency an estimated $260,000 yearly. The Diocese donated four acres of land near I-35 and Seminary Drive, and gave $1 million to be used to endow the building to ensure long-term sustainability.

Dave Gibbs, director of the Catholic Charities board, called the groundbreaking a historic day for Fort Worth, “because we embark on a new future. Many of you have heard me say this before, but I truly believe, with the exception of raising my children, this is the most significant thing I have...”

See COSTS, p.22

MAILING LABEL: Please enclose label with address change or inquiries concerning mail delivery of your paper. Thank you.