

# The Catholic Lighthouse

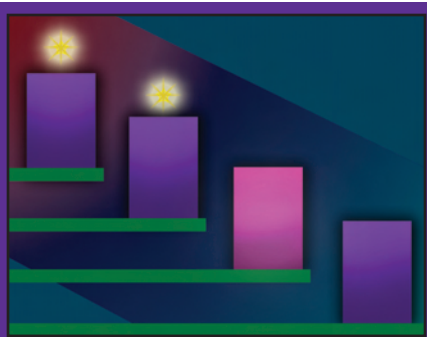
The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 24, NO. 9

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

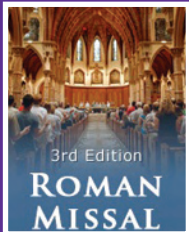
December 2010



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## Fr. Molina to speak for HL Christians at OLV Masses Dec. 4, 5

By Cynthia Brewer

Msgr. Michael Harrold, pastor of Our Lady of Victory Cathedral in Victoria, has once again allowed the Knights of Columbus #1329 to hold a Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation olive wood gifts sale and sponsorship of Christian schools through a child sponsorship drive at his parish during Advent. The sale and drive will be held in the OLV cafeteria following each Mass Dec. 4 and 5.

To assist the Holy Land Days sale, HCEF has enlisted the help of Father Juan Molina, a Trinitarian priest who once served as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Victoria and now serves as Foreign Policy Advisor for the Office of International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC.

Father Juan will speak on behalf of HCEF and about the plight of Holy Land

See Fr. Molina, p. 6



“VIRGIN OF THE LILIES” BY WILLIAM-ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU—

Mary holds the Child Jesus in “Virgin of the Lilies” by French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 9. (CNS photo/Jerry L. Thompson, Art Resource)

## The Catholic Lighthouse to use “new media”

CatholicTV now available on diocesan Web site

~ Lighthouse soon to be on Twitter ~

By Cynthia Brewer

Readers of *The Catholic Lighthouse* may now watch CatholicTV’s most popular programs on the diocesan Web site and soon begin “following” *The Catholic Lighthouse* on Twitter.

With the assistance of Ryan Sprinkle, the Diocese of Victoria’s new IT person, *The Catholic Lighthouse* will be able to, as Pope Benedict says, “bring the message of Christ and the teaching of his Church to the attention of the wider public.”

Anyone with access to the Internet may watch CatholicTV’s programming at anytime by going to the “Lighthouse Newspaper” page of the Diocese of Victoria’s Web site and clicking the CatholicTV video player widget. And beginning January 2011, *The Catholic Lighthouse* will also be using “new media” to keep readers updated on current Catholic events through “tweets” on Twitter.

According to CatholicTV, it is a nationally broadcasted television network that has been broadcasting for the past 56 years from the Archdiocese of Boston and now streams a live feed 24-hours a day at [CatholicTV.com](http://CatholicTV.com). Heeding Pope Benedict XVI’s call to greater utilize the power of television and new media, the CatholicTV Network features its cable TV station, Catholic Web site, mobile apps and widget.

When one goes to *The Catholic Lighthouse* page of the diocesan Web site at: [www.victoriadiocese.org/lighthouse/lighthouse.htm](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/lighthouse/lighthouse.htm), one will see the CatholicTV

widget right under the digital version of the most recent edition of *The Catholic Lighthouse*. By clicking on the widget, one has access to all of CatholicTV’s most popular programming. Celebrate Mass online, pray The Rosary, enjoy programs on prayer, the saints, the Scriptures and the Catholic Church on America’s Catholic Television

Network.

Under the leadership of Cardinal Sean O’Malley, archbishop of the Archdiocese of Boston, CatholicTV received the prestigious Gabriel Award for “Religious Television Station of the Year” by the

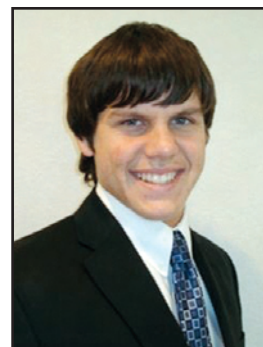
See *The Catholic Lighthouse*, p. 3

## Shiner student selected one of H. S. Heisman male national finalists

Watch ESPN Dec. 12 for finale

SHINER—Many of you are familiar with Dave Thomas, the man who founded Wendy’s. You probably know quite a bit about his restaurants, but you may not know about the many programs he started to improve the community around him. One of those programs is the Wendy’s High School Heisman Award, which he founded 16 years ago to recognize and motivate high school students to achieve excellence in all facets of life.

This award is designed to recognize high school seniors who excel in academics, athletics and in their communities. In his own



Blue Hybner

words, Dave believed that “the students of today are important for our tomorrow,” and that “each student can be a positive role model for their peers, classmates and society.” This year, these guidelines motivated more than 55,000 students across the country to apply for this prestigious high school award.

The field has narrowed to 1,020 State Finalists, two of which are from Shiner Catholic School. Blue Hybner and Emily Wagner are the two students who moved on the state round of competition.

Out of the 1,012 State Finalists, 102 State Winners were named; one male and one female from each state.

Blue Hybner was announced as Texas’ top male for the Wendy’s High School Heisman award. From among our 102 State Winners, the national judging panel has selected six males and six females

See *Shiner student selected*, p. 4





## Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

### December

- 5 8:00 a.m., Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Hostyn  
9:00 a.m., Mass, Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Plum  
6:00 p.m., Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Christmas gathering, Holy Family Church, Victoria
- 8 8:15 a.m., Mass, Nazareth Academy School Gym, Victoria
- 9 6:30 p.m., Holy Sepulchre Christmas gathering, Victoria Country Club, Victoria
- 10 6:00 p.m., Celebration of Archbishop Drossaerts Assembly #1131 Knights of Columbus 60th anniversary, Knights of Columbus Hall, El Campo
- 11 5:00 p.m., Mass, Incarnate Word Chapel, Spiritual Renewal Center, followed by 6:00 p.m. social and Bishop's Christmas Dinner, Spiritual Renewal Center
- 12 10:00 a.m., Mass, dedication of new Family Life Building, Holy Family Church, Wharton
- 13 2:00 p.m., Altar Society Christmas gathering, St. Mary Church, Victoria  
5:00 p.m., Retirement Reception for Sharon Jones, Chancery Office
- 15 3:00 p.m., Diocesan Finance Board meeting, Chancery Office  
4:30 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
- 23 11:30 a.m., Chancery Office closes for the holidays
- 24 4:00 p.m., Mass, Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Infirmary, Victoria  
Midnight Mass, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 28 6:00 p.m., Mass, Serra Club seminarians and religious in formation Christmas gathering, Holy Family Church, Victoria
- ### January - 2011
- 3-7 Texas Bishops' Retreat, Oblate Renewal Center, San Antonio
- 9 10:00 a.m., Mass, Blessing of restoration of St. Mary Church and remodeled rectory, High Hill
- 9-13 First Week of Diocesan Priests' Retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center
- 15 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Workshop and meeting, Permanent Deacons, Family Center, Sacred Heart Church, Hallettsville
- 16-20 Second Week of Diocesan Priests' Retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center

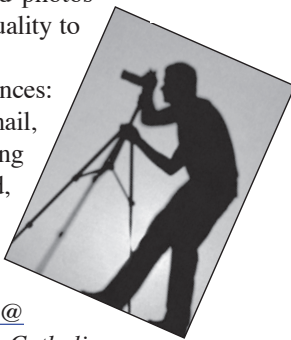
Official Appointments By  
Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

Effective November 22, 2010, the **Rev. Tommy Chen** is appointed Director of Pro-Life Concerns for the Diocese of Victoria.

## Photo Submissions

The *Catholic Lighthouse* has been receiving submitted photos from parishes and organizations that are not high enough quality to be printed on newsprint.

Please submit only photos that fall under these preferences: crisp and clear (not fuzzy or blurry) digital photos sent via e-mail, preferably at 300 dpi or above (picture size can be large, meaning 40"x?", with a 72 dpi), and taken with plenty of light. E-mailed, digital jpgs are preferred over computer printed photos; photos printed from a photo lab are acceptable. Please have all parish and school Christmas photos and captions in by January 3 at 10:00 a.m. Photos may be e-mailed to [cbrewer@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:cbrewer@victoriadiocese.org), with parish and event in subject line. The *Catholic Lighthouse* will do its best to print submitted parish news, but is not able to guarantee it. Thank you for helping us keep diocesan parishioners informed.



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

Published monthly (1st Wednesday) at 1505 E. Mesquite Lane — Victoria, TX 77901  
(361) 573-0828 — FAX (361) 573-5725 — [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org)

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Subscription Price Per Year Is \$7/\$10 outside the diocese

Periodical postage paid at Victoria, Texas, USPS-001015 (ISSN 0894-7740)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

The Catholic Lighthouse - P.O. Box 4070 - Victoria, Texas 77903

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DEADLINE IS THE THIRD TUESDAY OF THE PRECEDING MONTH.



**DIOCESAN DEACONS HONORED**—The Serra Club of Victoria held the Diocesan Deacon Appreciation Dinner Oct. 26 at Holy Family Church in Victoria following a Mass concelebrated by Bishop David Fellhauer and Msgr. Eustace Hermes and assisted by Deacon Steve Borowicz. The Serra Club of Victoria Northwest and the wives of the deacons also attended. Pictured are, back row from l. to r., Deacons Larry Rossow, OLV, Victoria; Dennis Kutach, St. Joseph, Yoakum; Joe Machacek, Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Shiner; Milburn Kram, St. Joseph, Moulton; Bishop David E. Fellhauer; Deacons Pat Kubala, St. John Nepomucene, New Taiton; Jim Koenig, St. Mary, Victoria; Anthony Warzecha, St. Michael, Cuero; and Linard Harper, St. Joseph, Yoakum; front row, Deacons Paul Patek Sr., Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Shiner; Jerome Grahmann, St. Philip, El Campo; Leo Sharron, St. Michael, Cuero; John McCourt, Sts. Peter and Paul, Plum, and Queen of the Holy Rosary, Hostyn; Charlie Novosad, St. Anthony, Columbus; Steve Borowicz, Holy Family, Victoria; Sonny Rogers, Sacred Heart, Hallettsville; Fred Soto, St. Patrick, Bloomington; and Jarrel Nohavitza, St. Philip, El Campo.

### KC #1329 AWARDS KNIGHT AND FAMILY OF THE YEAR

—The Knights of Columbus #1329 of Victoria awarded the Knight and Family of the Year awards at the 2010 KC/CDA Awards Banquet held on Oct. 19 at the KC Hall in Victoria. Grand Knight Pete Moya presents Family of the 2nd Quarter, Franklin and Leona Sedlar, the Family of the Year award, with Deputy Grand Knight B. J. Berger (r). Also that evening Grand Knight Pete Moya awarded Knight of the 4th Quarter, James "Jimmy" Hatch, the Knight of the Year award.



## Annual Collection for Retired Sisters, Brothers, and Religious Order Priests – Dec. 12

WASHINGTON—Catholics across the United States will join together to "Share in the Care" of senior religious as part of the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR), to be taken up in most parishes December 11-12. The collection, coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, provides financial support for the day-to-day care of thousands of elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

Despite the overwhelming generosity to this fund, many religious communities continue to lack resources sufficient to support retirement and elder care. Of 573 communities submitting data to the NRRO in 2009, fewer than seven percent were fully funded for retirement. Like many other Americans, religious communities struggle with the ever-rising cost of health care. In 2009 alone, the total cost of care

for nearly 35,000 women and men religious past age 70 exceeded \$1 billion.

As a result of the 2009 collection, which garnered over \$28.1 million, the National Religious Retirement Office was able to distribute more than \$23 million in financial assistance to 477 communities, representing more than 45,000 women and men religious. By underwriting necessities, such as prescription medication and nursing support, these funds help religious communities provide for the ongoing care of elder members. Additional funding was allocated to initiatives targeted for religious institutes with the greatest needs.

"Despite the troubling statistics, many religious communities have made great strides in addressing their funding deficits," notes Sister Bader. "Religious are humbled by the generous donations to this fund and determined to make the most out of every dollar."

## DSA & Reflection of Faith Capital Campaign Updates

### 2010 DSA

Diocesan Goal:	\$1,349,808.00
Parish Pledge Totals:	\$655,550.84
Parish Contribution Totals:	\$631,930.98
Number of Parish Families Participating:	3,554

### Reflection of Faith Capital Campaign

Diocesan Goal:	\$ 9,000,000.00
Parish Pledge Totals:	\$12,969,859.12
Parish Contribution Totals:	\$8,356,692.56
Number of Parish Families Participating:	6,757





**KJZT DONATES TO ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE PARISH**—A check of \$1,000 was presented to Father Gary Janak, pastor of St. Philip the Apostle Church in El Campo, at the annual meeting and social of KJZT #72, which was held Oct. 12, 2010. The funds came from the Country Store (a parish fundraiser) and matching funds from the state KJZT office. KJZT El Campo coordinated the Country Store at St. Philip's picnic, with ladies of the parish also helping and donating. Twenty-three members and three guests attended the meeting and social. A meal was served and games of bingo were played. Pictured from left are State Director Arlene Cloyd of district #111, Rose Marie Janak, KJZT #72 secretary; Father Gary Janak, pastor; Father Albert Yankey, parochial vicar; and KJZT #72 officers: President Josephine Kucka, Vice President Betty Parma, and Treasurer Jeraldine Socha.

## SHUTTIN' THE GATE

Editorial by Cynthia Brewer, editor



### Money lenders and drug dealers

In this month's issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse* there are a couple of articles to which I'd like to call attention.

The first is Capitol Comments' "Modern Day Money Changers and Closing the Loophole," by Jennifer Carr Allmon, associate director, Texas Catholic Conference. Mrs. Allmon writes about becoming frustrated by the number of payday (cash advance) and auto title loan advertisements she hears on her car radio. She states that these "businesses have tripled in number in Texas since 2006, when they discovered a loophole in Texas law allowing them to charge excessive fees for loans that trap people in debt."

Just in downtown Victoria, I myself have gotten disturbed by the number of new, small-loan companies that have sprouted up on just one street alone, Constitution St. As I drive through downtown, I sometimes feel as though my "It's a Wonderful Life" "Bedford Falls" Victoria is turning into a "Pottersville" Victoria. The old-town charm that the city is investing millions into is being cheapened by these quick-loan storefronts.

Now I don't blame those who are working at these establishments, as during hard times people are just happy to find a job; they can't be choosy. Rather, I blame the companies. Just as the scamming repairmen come into a ravaged town following a hurricane, these cash-advance and auto-title loan businesses descend upon those who are most vulnerable and in need of economical help during the hardest of financial times.

Please read the story on page 18, and then write to your state representative and senator to demand that the loophole that allows these companies' lending practices to exist be closed.

The other subject I want to comment on is mentioned in George Weigel's column, *The Catholic Difference*. The title is, "Thoughts at the Alamo" and one of the subjects he mentions is the failure of Mexico's public authority in relation to the drug wars.

He makes a bold statement when he asks, "Can an increasingly Hispanic Church in the United States challenge its brethren south of the Rio Grande to stop blaming their problems on 'El Norte' and to become the protagonists of their own history — and

aid in that transformation?"

He asks a valid question; however, I wish to remind all who have an interest in this subject (and I believe everyone should have an interest in it) that the United States needs to do more to curb its illegal drug appetite and decrease its demand on the supply of illegal drugs. It seems hard to imagine that today's drug user is not aware that his or her drug use is responsible for the bloodshed that takes place on our shared border. This thought alone should prevent anyone from trying a drug for the first time. Please read the Weigel column on page 16 and newsbrief on p. 17.

In relation to this subject, a fellow parishioner asked me to please write about entrusting the Mexican people to the prayers of Our Lady of Guadalupe, to assist and protect them in this war on drugs. I was surprised that I had not heard of such a request prior to this, nor had I thought of it myself. Yes, Our Lady of Guadalupe's prayers could be the answer to the War on Drugs throughout all the Americas. It would not be the first time she assisted nations in their various battles.

In the 16th century, Pope Pius V instituted the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary to commemorate Our Lady of Victory's assistance in the Battle of Lepanto, 1571, which prevented the Ottoman Empire from advancing further into Europe.

Besides calling on Our Lady of Guadalupe to protect all the Americas in the War on Drugs, we should also call on Our Lady under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary for her intercession in the War on Terror and the protection of Christians from Muslim Extremists.

Let's see if we can "Shut the Gate" on unethical lending to the vulnerable; drug abuse, addiction and violence; and terrorism of all kinds. Thank you to the readers of *The Catholic Lighthouse*.

### Chancery Office Holiday Schedule

The Chancery Office will be closed Dec. 23 at 11:30 a.m. through Jan. 2, 2011, for the Christmas and New Year Holidays. It will re-open on Jan. 3 at 8:30 a.m.

## The Roman Missal: The Challenges of Change

By Beth Dotson Brown

Change is often accompanied by fear that challenges priests in the United States when preparing to use the new translation of the Roman Missal. Yet, amidst the newness of the prayers there are also opportunities that Church leaders say can guide congregations to a richer liturgical and spiritual life.

"I think we've always had an opportunity for a deeper prayer, but I do think the translation is getting more nuance out of the text than we've had before," says Father Paul Turner, an author, lecturer and a pastor in Missouri. "So we've got some deeper possibilities for catechesis and for spirituality with this translation."

That deeper appreciation of the liturgy begins with the priest who will lead the people in using the missal. Msgr. Anthony Sherman, executive director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), sees this as an opportunity for priests to further develop their own spiritual life so they can ignite the faith of the congregation.

"The basic context of the Eucharistic prayers is the same, therefore it's an opportunity for priests ... to take a look at some of the background material," he says, noting the USCCB Web site has numerous resource materials posted.

He notes that in order for the missal to be successfully implemented, "The priest needs to be able to pray each prayer. And the only way one can approach this in a more prayerful manner is to educate oneself on the background of the prayers, theological concepts contained in the prayer, because then you can more intelligently and convincingly proclaim them for the people."

Father Turner agrees. "Our greatest challenge is to get inside those and make them sound like our prayer and not just the missal's prayer," he says. "We need to spend time with the prayer ourselves, meditating on them and figuring out more deeply what they mean, imagining some context in our own lives that can make this prayer more authentic for us."

Although priests have always tried to do this, the new language in the translation presents them with possible stumbling

blocks they will need to work through.

Because the new translation is truer to the Latin syntax, the sentences are sometimes long and grammatically complex. There are also vocabulary changes. Msgr. Sherman suggests priests read over the text to learn the best way to proclaim them. The more comfortable the priest is with these changes, the easier it will be for the congregation to learn them.

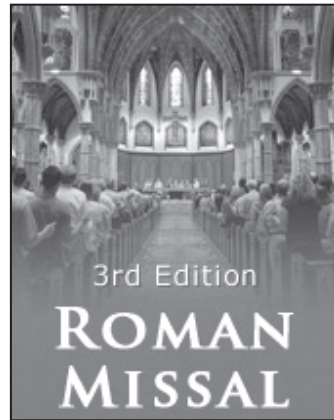
Although new missals will not be available until a year after the final translation is approved, it's not too early for priests to begin preparing their congregations as well. Msgr. Sherman suggests printing some of the new text in the church bulletin so people will begin to understand it. He also encourages parishes to explain why the new translation was needed and how it was created.

"The books we use to celebrate are at the center of our liturgical life," Msgr. Sherman says. "That's what binds us all together. Every single country in the world has that text as the basis for the translation." Therefore, every country will be using a new translation.

The process of translation has been long and difficult and included the participation of a number of people, something Father Turner feels is important for those in the U.S. church to know. Living in a democracy, he says, "I think there's some natural resistance when something comes to us from the top down."

If priests can peacefully introduce the new texts to their congregations, it can have great benefits. The new edition of the Roman Missal also has special items that Catholics can look forward to. For instance, one reason the new missal was needed was that Pope John Paul II canonized a great number of saints. The new missal will include texts to celebrate these saints.

"These prayers will have to work on us in our psyche and our prayer life for a number of years before we capture the whole meaning," says Msgr. Sherman. "I think we're also going to be on the verge of everyone in the Church being able to appreciate these prayers in a way that we never did in the past."



### Thank You Note

Your Excellency:

I gratefully acknowledge the check in the amount of \$30,131.91, which you sent to the Apostolic Nunciature as the Peter's Pence contribution from the Diocese of Victoria for 2010.

"[Such a] gesture has not only a practical value, but also a strong symbolic one, as a sign of communion with the Pope and attention to the needs of one's brothers; and therefore your service [and that of your faithful] possesses a refined ecclesial character." ~ Address of Pope Benedict XVI to the members of the St. Peter Circle, 25 February 2006

I assure you that this sum will be transmitted to the Secretariat of State on your behalf.

May God, who is infinitely generous, reward you and continue to bless you and the faithful under your pastoral care.

With prayerful regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Archbishop Pietro Sambi  
Apostolic Nuncio  
(Papal Ambassador  
to the United States)

### The Catholic Lighthouse to use "new media"

Continued from p. 1

Catholic Academy For Communications Arts Professionals (CACAP) at the Catholic Media Convention in New Orleans in June 2010.

Catholic News Agency reported that Pope Benedict XVI, "speaking in English to pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square for the general audience, told convention goers that to 'touch hearts,' communications media must present witnesses of Christ's grace to the people."

The Holy Father also said that the theme of the Catholic Media Convention (Spreading the Good News - Byte by Byte) "highlights the extraordinary potential of new media to bring the message of Christ and the teaching of his Church to the attention of a wider public."

So begin watching CatholicTV today, and watch for Twitter updates in the new year at the "new media" version of *The Catholic Lighthouse* Web page.





## Seminary Burses

Seminary burses are a permanent fund used for the education of future priests for the Diocese of Victoria. The goal of each burse is \$15,000. The interest from this amount is applied yearly to the education of seminarians. The burses are in memory of or in honor of an individual priest or lay persons, living or deceased. Publication of the burses will appear periodically when new contributions are received.

As of November 29, 2010

<b>TOTALS</b>	
<b>— General Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$97,314.00
In honor of 50th Wedding Anniversary of Dennis and Gertrude Vrazel by Edmund and Lucille Zissa	50.00
Gift to burse by CDA Court St. Michael #559	50.00
<b>Total</b>	\$97,414.00

<b>— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #4</b>	
Previously reported	\$14,191.00
Donations from friends and family on Father John's birthday	200.00
<b>Total</b>	\$14,391.00

<b>— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$13,499.50
In memory of Rebecca Stryk by:	
Lad and Helen Muras	20.00
Andy and Pauline Stryk	100.00
Stephen and Judy Lev	20.00
Mary Spacek	25.00
Stanley Stryk	100.00
Barbara Kettler	20.00
Louis Stryk	20.00
Michael Muras	20.00
David Stryk	50.00
Al and Marie Stryk	10.00
Pete and Laurie Goedecker	10.00
David and Elaine Olasz	25.00
Bobby and Dorothy Fajkus	10.00
Dan Stryk	100.00
M/M Michael Kassey	20.00
In memory of M/M Frank Stryk and Family by Daniel Stryk	100.00
In memory of Della Greive by:	
Joan and Bob Riley	15.00
Lad and Helen Muras	15.00
In memory of Frank and Stazie Stryk by Stanley Stryk	50.00
In memory of Becky Stryk by:	
Joan and Bob Riley	15.00
Lawrence Stryk	100.00
<b>Total</b>	\$13,794.50

<b>— Rev. Michael Rother Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$3,995.00
To honor Father Michael Rother by Evelyn Bujnoch	25.00
<b>Total</b>	\$4,020.00

<b>— Rev. Jerome "Jerry" Caponi Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$700.00
In memory of Lillian Marek by Her Family and Friends	500.00
In memory of Lillian Kubeka Marek by John Marek	5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	\$6,200.00

**— Catholic Daughters Court of St. Ann**

<b>#369 Seminary Burse No. 2</b>	
Previously reported	\$7,793.99
In memory of Arthur Hall by CDA #369	25.00
<b>Total</b>	\$7,818.99

<b>— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$6,498.00
Gift to burse by CDA Our Lady of Rosary #1595	150.00
<b>Total</b>	\$6,648.00

<b>— Knights of Columbus Council #2971, Weimar, Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously Reported	\$75.00
In memory of Gregory Todd Reindl by Tamary Reindl and Family	25.00
<b>Total</b>	\$100.00

<b>— Rev. John C. Bily Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$8,579.00
In memory of Dennis Cernosek by James Janak Family	25.00
In memory of Joe Fred Melnar by Stazy Hajek and Georgia Cerny	10.00
<b>Total</b>	\$8,614.00

<b>— Rev. Msgr. Stanley Petru Seminary Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$715.00
Gift to burse by CDA Court #2282	100.00
<b>Total</b>	\$815.00

<b>— Mr. &amp; Mrs. Nicholas A. Grahmann Seminary Burse No. 2</b>	
Previously reported	\$10,145.00
Gift to complete burse by +Most Rev. Charles Grahmann	4,855.00
<b>Total</b>	\$15,000.00

### Additional Burses for donations:

- Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse #2
- Rev. Joe Levya
- Rev. Marcus Valenta
- Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
- Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
- Sophie Schmidt
- Rev. Sean Donohue Burse #2
- Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Vaclavic Bily
- Rev. John C. Bily

Those wishing to begin a burse or to contribute to an existing seminary burse may do so by sending their contributions with the appropriate burse designation to:

**SEMINARY BURSES**  
DIOCESE OF VICTORIA  
P. O. BOX 4070  
VICTORIA, TX 77903



## Teaching in lands near and far

By Melony Overton  
PORT LAVACA WAVE

*"Africans were the first human beings to dance and reflect on their humanity in terms of a world beyond the physical, the spiritual order of the gods and ancestors. Religion and culture are therefore inseparable from the beginning."* — Father Robert Fisher, West African Religious Traditions

Father Robert Fisher, 73, a Divine Word Missionary, has been a priest for 45 years. In that time, he has written a book, traveled to distant lands, taught seminarians and college students and learned how to cook real good Italian food.

In all his travels, whether in the U.S. or abroad, Rev. Fisher has made it a priority to delve into the culture of the host country wherever his vocation takes him.

Father Fisher serves the parish communities of St. Ann in Point Comfort, St. Joseph in Port O'Connor and St. Patrick in Seadrift.

He is originally from Southeast Missouri and went to high school seminary in Wisconsin. He also attended college near Rochester, New York. The seminary and the college were both run by the Divine Word Missionaries.

Father Fisher was ordained in January 1965, in Techny, Ill., at the age of 28. He received his doctorate in liturgical studies at the Pontifical Ateneo of Saint Anselmo in Rome in 1968. While there, he learned the art of authentic Italian cooking. He learned Italian and worked with locals in the vineyards and olive groves.

He taught liturgy and sacraments in seminaries in the Philippines for three years and in Ghana for 13 years.

"I enjoy teaching. I like theology and liturgy. I help young men prepare for the ministry. I help them to preach the Gospel and perform the sacraments so they can help other people," he said.

In October, Fisher visited former students in the Philippines.

He said vocations to the priesthood are strong in the Philippines, Ghana, India and Indonesia. Ghana has 18 dioceses alone.

Many of his former Ghanaian students have been assigned to parishes within the Diocese of Victoria.

In Ghana, Fisher worked in parishes in the rural areas known as "the bush." He learned the native Akan language. For example, "Onyame" is the Akan word for God. He grew fond of the native dishes - a soup made from groundnuts or peanuts, and "foo foo" or a dough ball made from casaba root and plantains or with African yams and water.

*"The African is a person of dance."* — West African Religious Traditions

"Africa is a continent of many languages and cultures. You have to know the language and the culture when you travel to a country," Father Fisher said. "You learn the language. You get to know the way they speak. Then you are connected with their outlook on life, like a true anthropologist would work."

Father Fisher returned to the U.S. in 1986, and he took his love of teaching and his unique experiences among the Akan with him.

Back in the U.S., he taught theology

and philosophy at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans for six years and at Prairie View A&M for four years. In 1998, he wrote of his experiences in Ghana in his 197-page book, "West African Religious Traditions: Focus on the Akan of Ghana," published by Orbis Books for its Faith Meets Faith Series. The book is now out of print and retails on Amazon.com for \$147. In his book, Father Fisher wrote, "Religious dances thus have a social function, in the sense that their purpose is to generate systemic control over all force of good or evil for the harmony between the spirit and material worlds, and as social control over the behavior of the people by means of oracles, shrines and customs." Fisher learned that the Akan are a very ritual-minded people and in the book he explains the dynamics and structures of traditional African religion and how they resonate in African-American religious life today. In order to report authentically to the readers, Father Fisher took on the role of amateur anthropologist, delving deeply into the Akan proverbs, dances, drumming, their religious beliefs about God, the lower deities, life and death, family, chiefs, clans and tribes. "The cultural language is as important as the spoken tongue. It creates community; it enhances life; it establishes a religious sense of the presence of the spiritual order and moral values. It creates the environment for connecting the past with the future and change." — West African Religious Traditions

Keeping his resume diverse, Father Fisher was the director of St. Augustine's Retreat Center at Bay St. Louis, Miss., until Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. What would happen on the morning of Aug. 29, 2005, would earn Father Fisher the nickname "the swimmer." That morning, the storm surge hit Bay St. Louis. A stream near the retreat center began to swell with water. "Water came in under the doors, up through the toilets and the sinks," he said. "I thought of going into the attic of the retreat center, but I couldn't reach it." By that time, the water was about three feet deep. "I used a chair to break a window. By the time I got out, my car was floating. The water was waist deep. I thought, 'It's either sink or swim.' The surge made the stream back up and then stand still," he said. The priest said a prayer. "I said, 'Lord, you helped St. Peter. Help me,'" Father Fisher said recalling the Gospel story of when Christ walked on water, and St. Peter tried, but became frightened and began to sink. "At that moment, I felt something nudge my back. It was a small log. It helped me to float above water."

The wind was blowing fiercely and objects were swirling all around him. Eventually, he floated to the other side of the stream to safety to a two-story building that housed retired priests. While the retreat center was being repaired, Father Fisher served as parochial vicar at St. Philip's in El Campo. After El

See *Teaching in lands, p. 7*

## Shiner student selected one of six male national finalists

Continued from p. 1

as National Finalists. Blue Hybner was selected as a one of those 12 students!

Blue and his family will be traveling to New York City to participate in the collegiate Heisman weekend festivities with the

other 11 National Finalists! There, Blue will receive his awards in person from Archie Griffin, the only athlete to ever win two collegiate Heisman Trophies. While in New York, Blue will receive a gold medal, \$100 Wendy's gift card and a \$2,000 donation to St. Paul High School.

During Heisman weekend in New York, one male and one female will be selected from among the 12 national finalists as the 2010 Wendy's High School Heisman National Winners. Viewers can support Blue by checking out his profile online at [WendysHeisman.com](http://WendysHeisman.com) and watching the Wendy's High School Heisman television special on ESPNU, Sunday, Dec. 12, to see who will be named the 2010 National Winners.

We want to congratulate Emily Wagner and Blue Hybner and wish Blue the best of luck at the national level.

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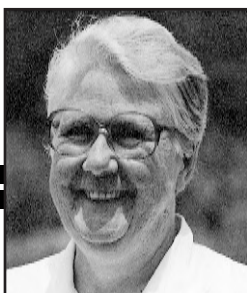
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## SISTERLY THOUGHTS



By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS

### Advent: Getting Prepared and Waiting

As I travel about in the diocese, I enjoy seeing the neatly plowed fields and the rows of hay bales. The farmers have prepared their fields and now are waiting for winter rains to replenish the depleted soil moisture. The ranchers have been able to make the hay that will nourish their life stock during the coming winter.

“What a fitting metaphor for Advent,” I think, since Advent, too, is a time for getting prepared and waiting. To prepare the field for the next growing season, the farmer has had to plow under the stubble from the previous crop, fertilize the field, and prevent unwanted weeds. Then he or she has to wait for the rain and the time for spring planting.

Similarly, the rancher has worked hard to accumulate hay for the winter season; now he or she waits, hopes, and prays that the supply will last throughout the winter.

Moreover, in our own back yards and in our neighborhoods, we have another visual metaphor for this season. The trees are being stripped of their leaves and we

see little or no evidence of life. However scientists tell us that there is a lot of unseen development and strengthening in the roots of trees during the winter.

Now, the question is “Am I as prepared spiritually for the coming celebration of the birthday of Jesus as the farmer and rancher are practically prepared for the coming winter?” Am I growing interiorly during this season, while stripping myself of what is not necessary or might even hinder my relationship with God and those about me? As we ponder these questions, we might review some ways that we can prepare during Advent. We know that prayer and the sacraments are at the top of the list of preparation activities. Seeking and finding Jesus, who may be waiting for us to recognize him in others, helps us to prepare for the celebration of his becoming one of us. So let us continue to use the prepared field, the accumulated hay and the stripped trees as reminders for us to prepare and wait during this season of anticipation and longing! May we all have a blessed Christmas!

### Shiner Catholic School Honor Roll

SHINER—High honors-All grades 94 and above; Honors-All grades 85 and above

#### St. Paul High School Honor Roll

##### • Seniors

High Honors: Tyler Blanton, Lan Nguyen, Devin Pesek, Emily Wagner

Honors: Dustin Adamek, Dylan Easterling, Josie Egan, Blue Hybner, Brandon Sciba, Stephanie Squyres, Kyle Wallace, Paige Werner

##### • Juniors

High Honors: Kali Kocian

Honors: Jacob Coull, Brett Hodges

##### • Sophomores

High Honors: Katie Denson, Abby Hull, Dakota Kresta, Madison Kurtz, Mason Matias

Honors: Dylan Barton, Rose Egan, Rachel Fikac, Adam Hollenbach, Cole Hybner, Kourtney Knesek, Katelynn Leist, David Linares, William Marcak, Mitchell McElroy, Bethany Pokluda, Justin Siegel, Ted Wenske, Kyle Wilgus

##### • Freshmen

Honors: Ben Janecek, Hannah Novosad, Travis Raabe, Nicolette Siegel, Samantha Siegel, Melanie Wagner

#### St. Ludmila Elementary Honor Roll

##### • Eighth Grade

High Honors: Kurt Chunda, Kyle Chunda, Emily Malinovsky

Honors: Brett Barta, Abby Irvin, Kolten Knesek, McKenzie Kresta, Sean Kresta, Victoria Kusak, Daniel Linares, Samantha Natal, Emily Pokluda, Loni Soefje,

##### • Seventh Grade

High Honors: Alexis Cantu, Jed Janeczek, Ashlyn Patek, Juliette Siegel

Honors: Thomas Bell, Ryan Geiger, Natalie Jackson, Derek Kapavik, Kelsey Longoria, Shaelynn Malatek, Claire Pavliska, Nathan Pilat

##### • Sixth Grade

High Honors: Trinity Kusak, Sydney Mikes

Honors: Austin Barton, Ryan Bell, Alexis Cappleman, Gus Egan, Mallory Grabarkievtz, Kameron Knesek, Kristofer Knesek, Alyssa Kutac, Katarina Leist, Noah Leist, Ryan Malinovsky, Jessica Pesek

##### • Fifth Grade

High Honors: Jack Janecek, Ashley Wachsmuth, Andrew Wagner, Elyssa Wagner

Honors: Anna Adamek, Lillie Bell, Branden Barta, Parker Clay, Jacob Darilek, Daniela Hinojosa, Conor Kresta, Kayla Kubenka, Kayla Malatek, MacKenzie Parker, Michael Wagner, Nathan Wagner, Jenna Wenske

##### • Fourth Grade

High Honors: Walker Jackson, Delynn Pesek, Christine Wagner

Honors: Catherine Brown, Zachary Davis, Grace Irvin, Lane Jackson, Riley Johnson, Hope Kapavik, Jakeb Maldonado, Angelette Siegel, Katie Wilgus

##### • Third Grade

High Honors: Macy Grabarkievtz, Andrew Jaeger

Honors: Frank Benes, Madison Culpepper, Luke Darilek, Megan Easterling, Weston Geiger, Sydney Hermann, Kathleen Knesek, Lauryn Kubenka, Matthew Malinovsky, Tyler Opiela, Dawson Roy, Reid Yackel

## ~ Suicide ~

There is someone who can heal our pain—Jesus.

Continued from the November 2010 issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI  
Diocese of San Angelo

### CULPABILITY

The question of eternal damnation is another source of pain for family members, especially for parents of children who have killed themselves. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (no. 2282) states that grave psychological disorders may diminish the responsibility of the one who has committed suicide. People, especially the young, plagued with serious psychological diagnoses make impulsive decisions, clouded by feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and despair. They lack the ability to clearly and objectively appraise their life crisis. Their intellects are clouded, their emotions are in chaos, and their wills are weakened. For all those who are wondering whether their loved one is happy or suffering punishment, Jesus’ prayer of mercy and forgiveness from the cross is an invitation to trust in the Lord. He knows the deepest recesses of each of us, and his love and mercy are greater than anyone can ever know or understand.

Today, suicide is not seen exclusively as a moral problem but also as a mental social, health problem. Many experts in the field of mental health and pastoral care believe that most suicides are irrational. Those who take their lives are so emotionally disturbed that they act compulsively, or their perception of reality is so distorted by their anguish that their freedom of choice

is greatly restricted. Therefore, although the act of suicide is objectively wrong, the individual circumstances may make it subjectively guiltless.

### COMPASSION AND DECIDE TO LIVE

The Church teaches compassion and mercy towards those who take their own lives and calls us to reach out with love, comfort and service to their family members and friends. No matter the tragic mistakes, no one has the right to condemn these individuals who take their own lives. More importantly, judgment should be left to God. As our faith teaches us, one of God’s attributes is his mercy, so strongly reflected in Jesus’ ministry.

Eventually, our faith helps us to let go of the why and to look for the who. There is Someone who can heal us from the wrenching pain of having lost a loved one, especially a child: Jesus. Every family who has lost a family member is free to make the choice to trust in God’s merciful love and to allow his grace to heal their deep wound. May each, supported by the Church and wider community, have the faith to trust in our Heavenly Father!

For the survivors of suicide victims, memories intensify rather than lessen the pain. Somehow suicide robs them of pleasant memories of the deceased: There were no good-byes and no chance to say, “I am sorry.” Perhaps the most common response to death through suicide is a feeling of guilt. The survivors are obsessed with thoughts about their personal role in precipitating the event. They blame themselves and search for evidence of their failures and omissions.

One of the most agonizing effects of suicide is the sense of disgrace or social embarrassment the survivors experience. Remember mental illness can affect anyone. Suicide can happen to anyone, even in the “best of families” and to the “best of people.”

Survivors, especially parents, must learn to let go of the past, putting it all in the hands of our merciful Savior Jesus Christ, and entrusting their lives and their lost ones to the care of Mary our Mother. They must decide to live. Survivors with the help of trusted friends and professionals must work to come to the awareness that they cannot blame their loved one for their own sadness and unhappiness forever. They need to make a decision to live. They need to discuss their feelings of sorrow and confusion with priests, religious, professionals and other caring people. Survivors, go frequently to Mass to receive in Communion the most merciful person, Jesus Christ, and place your sorrow and pain on the altar united to the sufferings of Christ who died for us and will lead us to the new life in His Resurrection. Survivors, join prayer groups and grief groups made up of people suffering similar tragedies.

Once the survivors begin to take care of themselves, to reaffirm their own goodness, they find their way back to hope. Their faith provides the strength to go on living, and friends provide the comfort to go on loving. They do not forget their sorrow or their loved ones, but slowly new experiences and more happy memories emerge to heal the hurt. Survivors especially need to receive often the sacrament of God’s mercy, reconciliation, and at each Mass hand over all to Jesus.

~Some of the material was taken from St. Anthony Messenger Press and was reprinted with permission. [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org), 800-488-0488 ©1984. All rights reserved. ~Some information taken also from USCCB folder “Losing a Child to Suicide.”

**The Chancery will  
be closed Dec. 8  
for the Holy Day of  
Obligation ~  
Immaculate  
Conception**



New logo for Shiner Catholic Schools.

### Shiner Catholic Schools get New Logo

SHINER—The new Shiner Catholic School logo contains all the school’s pertinent information, the three names and the acronym, in an aesthetically pleasing design. The logo also includes each patron’s attribute. Saint Paul was sentenced to death on the same day as Saint Peter by the Roman Emperor Nero.

Peter was crucified upside down, but Paul was beheaded, a right he claimed as a Roman citizen. Hence, the sword represents Saint Paul.

The Bohemian queen, Saint Ludmila, was strangled by her own veil at the behest of her daughter-in-law in 921. Thus, the veil represents Saint Ludmila.

The new logo also contains the year that Saint Ludmila’s Academy was initially established, 1897.

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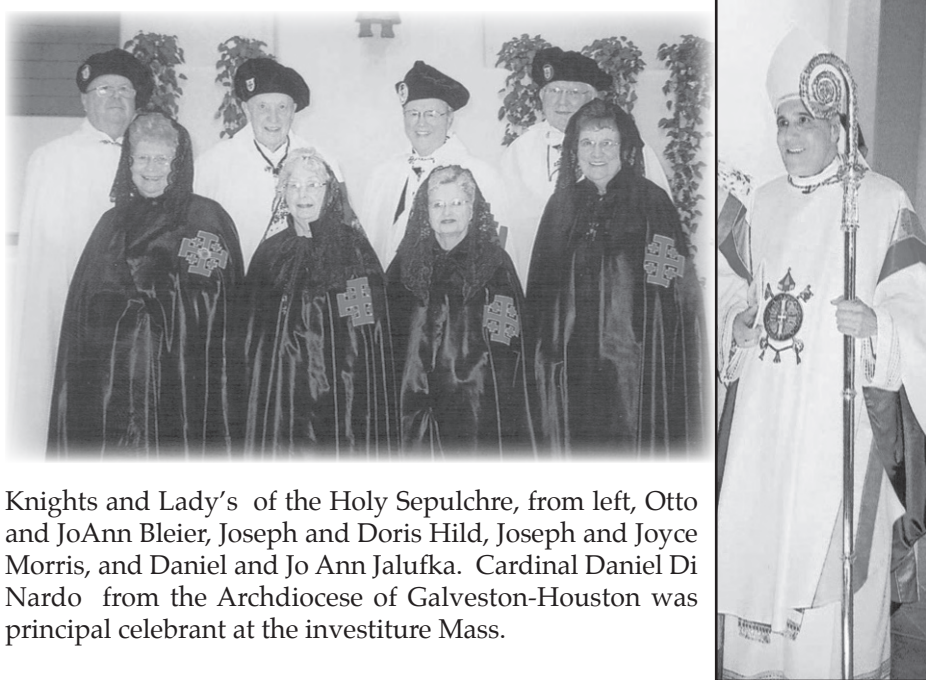
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Knights and Lady's of the Holy Sepulchre, from left, Otto and JoAnn Bleier, Joseph and Doris Hild, Joseph and Joyce Morris, and Daniel and Jo Ann Jalufka. Cardinal Daniel Di Nardo from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston was principal celebrant at the investiture Mass.

## Fifth successive year SWL of the Equestrian Order donates \$1 million to Holy Land Christians

ALBUQUERQUE—The annual meeting and investiture of the Southwestern Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem was held at the Hyatt Regency in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Oct. 22 – 25. There were two new members from the Diocese of Victoria invested and three members promoted.

A Traveler's Mass was said at the historic San Felipe de Neri Church in Old Town, Friday evening, Oct. 22. The celebrant was Most Rev. James S. Wall, KCHS, bishop of Gallup N. M. There was also a Traveler's Mass held in the hotel, due to the large group attending and the small size of the church; the celebrant was Father Bennett J. Voorhies, KCHS, and other visiting priests of the order.

An orientation meeting for investees, members and guests was held in the Hyatt Enchanted Ballroom Saturday morning. Some members went to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center.

Before noon, members, promotees and investees were taken by bus to the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis in Santa Fe (the city of Holy Faith), N. M. Saturday afternoon recitation of the most holy rosary was said followed by the Memorial and Promotion Mass and Vigil, all held in the newly restored basilica.

Promotees from the Diocese of Victoria are Lady JoAnn Jalufka to Lady Commander with Star Holy Sepulchre (LC\*HS), Lady JoAnn McCullough and Lady Joann C. Bleier to Lady Commander Holy Sepulchre (LCHS) and Sir Otto N. Bleier to Knight Commander Holy Sepulchre (KCHS).

The principal celebrant and homilist for the Saturday Mass was His Excellency, the Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan, KC\*HS, archbishop of Santa Fe; concelebrants were all bishops, abbots and priests of the order. Rev. Mr. Donald Bruckner, KCHS, was Deacon of the Word and Rev. Mr. Steve Rangel was Deacon of the Eucharist. Rev. James G. Stembler, KCHS, was ecclesiastical master of ceremonies. Grand Prior His Eminence Daniel Cardinal Di Nardo, KGCHS, was present. His Excellency Dennis M. Malloy, KGCHS, Lieutenant, Southwestern Lieutenancy,

U. S., presided. Chancellor Sir Steven R. Pinion, KCHS, was also present.

In the evening, a black-tie reception and seated dinner was held in the Grand Pavilion Ballroom. Following the dinner, benediction and all night adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was held in the Fiesta Ballroom.

The SW Lieutenancy annual meeting took place Sunday morning and was called to order by His Excellency Dennis Malloy, KGCHS. It was noted that our lieutenancy has sent or will send to Rome \$1,000,000 for the fifth successive year. This contribution is to support schools, churches, hospitals, seminaries, a university and the preservation of Christianity in the Holy Land. Only two to three percent of the population is Christian.

The Investiture Mass and ceremony was held Sunday afternoon at St. Joseph on the Rio Grande Parish, Albuquerque. There were two newly invested members from the Diocese of Victoria, Sir Joseph C. Hild, KHS, and Lady Doris C. Hild, LHS, who live in La Grange. The principal celebrant and homilist was His Eminence Daniel Cardinal Di Nardo, KGCHS. Concelebrants were archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons of the order.

A white tie reception and seated dinner was held Sunday night for members and spouses only in the Grand Pavilion landing and ballroom. Brother David Carrol, FSC, Ph. D, KGCHS, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, spoke at the dinner and at the Saturday morning orientation meeting.

Attending from the Diocese of Victoria were Sir Joseph J. Morris Sr., KGCHS, Lady Joyce B. Morris, LGCHS, Sir Daniel Jalufka, KCHS, Lady JoAnn Jalufka, LC\*HS, Sir Otto N. Bleier, KCHS, Lady Joann C. Bleier, LCHS, Sir Joseph C. Hild, KHS, and Lady Doris C. Hild, LHS.

The annual meeting and investiture next year will be held in San Antonio at the Grand Hyatt Regency Oct. 21 – 24, 2011.



**PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY CELEBRATED**—St. Agnes Church Parish Family in Edna celebrated Priesthood Sunday on Oct. 31. Parishioners had joined in a novena prayer for vocations, in thanksgiving for their pastor, Father Michael Petering, and for all priests from Oct. 23 – 31. The event was held in the CCD center after the 10:30 morning celebration of Mass. All enjoyed the covered dish luncheon, with desserts and ice cream. A drawing for door prizes was held after the luncheon. Pictured is Father Michael Petering with parishioners and youth from the religious education program.



**55 YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**—The Sacred Heart Hallettsville class of 1955 held its 55th reunion on November 6, 2010, in Hallettsville with a memorial service, followed by a meal at Jalisco's Restaurant. The seven classmates who have died were remembered: James Bludau, Dorothy (Rainosek) Schindler, Leon Schindler, Gladys (Henneke) Schindler, Annie Mae (Dornak) Smolik, Bernice (Morkovsky) Morganroth and Celestine Menchaca. Pictured are 16 of the original 34 graduates, front row, l-r: Milton Shimek, Helen Ann (Pesek) Schindler, Katherine (Janak) Kahane and John David Henneke; second row l-r: Frances (Matula) Holly, Rita (Grahmann) Zaruba, Mary Jo (Eilers) Dry, Patricia (Haas) Hessler, Mary Rose (Strauss) Grafe and Jo Ann (Pavlu) Jalufka; third row l-r: Daniel Kuhn, Frederick Leopold, Rose Lee (Sliva) Janik, Ervin Grafe and Gilbert Gerlich. Not Pictured was Dorothy (Kanak) Zaruba.

## Fr. Molina to speak for HL Christians at OLV Masses Dec. 4, 5

*Continued from p. 1*

Christians at each of the weekend Masses at the cathedral.

Many in the diocese are familiar with the olive wood sales, but few may know much about HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program.

HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program links a sponsor in the West with a student in the Holy Land. Sponsorships foster unity in Christ among Arab and Western Christians and help Holy Land Christian schools continue to provide quality Christian education in difficult economic times.

The sponsor's contribution of \$300 annually, or \$25 a month, goes to the child's school rather than to the child's family. Sponsorship is intended to help the schools continue to provide a solid Christian education and thereby benefits the entire student body. But sponsors will be able to form a relationship with their sponsored child, as the child will write to their sponsor three times each school year as part of their English language studies.

Because schools are so much a part of the family and community life of people in the Holy Land, they are the main presence of the faith in the lives of most families. Public schools in Palestine and Jordan are 98 percent Muslim; therefore, Christian children have a hard time maintaining their

Christian faith in that environment.

While private schools typically turn away students who cannot pay tuition, the Holy Lands' Christian schools recognize the importance of their role in preserving the Christian presence, which is currently less than two percent of the population. Thus they subsidize the tuition of Christian students whose families cannot pay, which are the great majority of students.

Interestingly though, one third of the 18,000 children in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Jerusalem are actually Muslim. However, because they are learning in a Christian environment, the children learn to become friends, not enemies, and all children learn the message of Jesus.

One can see why Christian parents prefer to send their children to Christian schools and why Christian schools are so important in the Holy Land.

To learn more about HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program, please go to: <http://www.hcef.org/images/reports/FAQ2006.pdf>

Mass schedules at OLV are Saturday at 5:30 p.m., and Sunday at 7:30, 9:00, and 11:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Olive wood sales will also be held at Holy Family in Victoria on Dec. 11 and 12; Our Lady of Sorrows, Dec. 12, and Trinity Chapel Dec. 19.

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## Pastoral Institute Extended Classes Morality — Our Life in Christ



Brother Patrick Wildgen, O.S.S.T., will be the instructor for the "Morality" course being offered through the Pastoral Institute Extended Program. Classes will again be offered at the chancery in Victoria and at Holy Rosary in Hostyn via distance learning. There is a \$15 fee for this course.

This six week class begins Monday, January 10, 2011, and continues through Monday, February 14, 2011. There are two opportunities to take the classes, either from 9:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. or 7:00 p.m. - 9:15 p.m.

Brother Patrick is a brother from the Order of the Most Holy Trinity. He resides in Victoria where he works as a pastoral associate at Our Lady of Sorrows parish. His ministry in the parish

focuses on adult education including RCIA and the training of liturgical ministers.

The Pastoral Institute Extended Classes are for adults who want to learn more about the Catholic Church and its traditions. All are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, e-mail [calvarez@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:calvarez@victoriadiocese.org), visit [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org), call (361) 573-0828, or register on the first day of class.

## eCatechist.com for catechists

eCatechist.com is a blogzine (an online magazine in blog format) providing ideas, inspiration, resources and teaching strategies for catechists and parish catechetical leaders recommended by the Diocese of Victoria catechetical staff.

### Who & Why

With more than 500,000 (80% women) volunteers who serve as catechists of children, youth, adults and families in the 18,000 parishes in the United States, the need is great for practical and easy-to-access catechetical resources for teaching, education and formation.

### First Things for the catechetical leader

First Things is a special category focusing on the personal and professional development of catechetical leaders, directors and coordinators of religious education.

### Join the Community

Through eCatechist.com, catechists can connect with one another, comment on all topics, ask questions, receive support and share ideas with catechists throughout the world.

### Visit

Visit [www.eCatechist.com](http://www.eCatechist.com) today, sign up for their newsletter, and link to over 100 links: to publishers, Web sites and blogs.

### Founder

Dan Pierson is founder of eCate-

chist.com and its companion Web site, [faithAlivebooks.com](http://faithAlivebooks.com). Dan has served as a catechist, Catholic schoolteacher, parish director of religious education, diocesan director of religious education, and consultant in religious publishing. Dan and his wife, Margaret, are fourth-grade catechists at St. Robert of Newminister Parish in Ada, Mich.

"Dan Pierson has done it again; he has stepped out of the box and delivered a fabulous tool for all catechists! eCatechist is the place to go for the most current catechetical information as well as direction to other solid and trustworthy Catholic Web sites and blogs. So, now is the time for all catechists to go to [www.ecatechist.com](http://www.ecatechist.com) and bookmark it as a favorite!"

~Christella Alvarez, Associate Director of Office of Catechetical Ministry, Diocese of Victoria in Texas

## A Celebration of Life — Jan. 19

EDNA—The Catholic Daughters of the Americas Council #1350 from St. Agnes Parish in Edna will be sponsoring "A Celebration of Life" Wednesday, Jan. 19, from 7 – 8 p.m., at the Jackson County Services Building.

The ecumenical event will focus on the importance of life from conception to natural death; on the need for respect, dignity and justice for the unborn, the aged and for all of human life; and that religious education encourages a moral and religious belief about life. All church ministers, youth, parents and laity from all denominations are invited to attend. No admission will be charged and refreshments will be served.

The Jackson County Services Building is located at 411 N. Wells St. in Edna.

## Coach Tibiletti gets big surprise at St. Joe game

It's a mystery that begins in one of the prettiest places in all of Texas, along the Blanco River in Wimberley.

That's where Brad Bieler of Forney was last August, killing time with his kids and his metal detector.

"This gives me something to do while I'm watching them," he explained.

This time, though, the detector's "beep" made a different sound. Something big... something golden.

"I knew it was a ring," Bieler said. "It had the signature of a ring, but completely encapsulated in that coating."

When he dug it out, it was just a big gray lump. So he took it to a local jeweler. "She cleaned it up for me," Bieler said. "It surprised me when I picked it up." It was a ring all right, but not just any ring.

"It was a coach's state championship ring," Bieler said. "And the name of the coach was on the ring, and the name of the school was on the inside of the ring."

The date on the ring: 1976. The idea of selling it never crossed Bieler's mind. "Something this special, I would get more enjoyment than money seeing the person's reaction to it," he said with a twinkle in his eye.

With so many clues, it didn't take long to find the school on the Internet, but it's a tiny one.

St. Joseph High School in Victoria has just over 300 students. That's where Steve Tibiletti, a mountain of a man, retired as a coaching legend.

He won two state championships in baseball, two more in football, but only one team went undefeated: The 1976 squad with Steve Williams at quarterback and Travis Schaar as middle linebacker.

"He pushed you, and if you did what you were supposed to do, you got rewarded," said Schaar, who is now a veterinarian. "If you didn't, he pushed you more until you got to where you were supposed to be."

Steve Williams, who is now a judge, credits "Coach Tib" with helping make him the man he is today.

"Other than my parents and my wife, I don't think I can attribute whatever success I've had to anybody other than Tib," Williams said.

And Schaar knows why. "He just taught us respect and good work ethics." These days, Coach Tib is 70 years old and retired, but he still attends every St. Joseph's home game.

Last week (Nov. 5), they invited him on the field for a special honor.

Wrapped in a large box, Coach Tib was presented with a carving of the Holy Family. After all, Tib is the kind of Catholic who goes to Mass every morning.

But he had no idea that gift was all

part of an elaborate scheme, until he heard these words booming from the press box:

"This summer, Brad Bieler of Dallas was on the Blanco River in Wimberley with his sons. He was going around with a metal detector..."

At that moment, Tib's look of confusion melted into a smile.

"They found my ring!" he yelled. "That's it! Where is it?"

Brad Beiler of Forney then walked on the field. He waited three months for this moment, but Coach Tib had been waiting three decades.

The men embraced like long lost friends.

"That's it, brother! Thank you very much," the coach said.

Tibiletti recalled the moment he lost the ring. "I went down that chute there and I looked up and it was just shining in the air."

Up in the stands, his wife, Delores, remembered telling him not to wear the ring in the river that day in 1977.

"We never thought we'd see that ring again," she said "There was lots of crying over that."

Asked who was doing the crying, she smiled and pointed: "The big man."

On this night, the big man did not cry. He was just too happy.

"I heard about these things happening, but didn't think it would happen to me," Coach Tib said.

Turning to his new-found friend from Forney, he added: "You made my life." Bieler returned the smile. "That's what I wanted to hear," he said.

*Reprinted from a KHOU story.*

*Editor's note: In a story broadcast from KAVU 25, Coach Tibiletti stated that he has four boys, but only had three rings. Finding the missing ring will allow him to give one to each son. What a happy ending to a wonderful story.*

## Come & See Event

The Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana invite single, Catholic women between the ages of 18 and 40 to their home January 7-9, 2011. Get to know the Benedictine Sisters, share in our community life and prayer, and meet other women who are considering religious life - no pressure, no commitment! For more information or to register online, visit [www.thedome.org](http://www.thedome.org), or call Sister Michelle Sinkhorn at 800-734-9999, or e-mail [vocation@thedome.org](mailto:vocation@thedome.org).

## Teaching in lands near and far

*Continued from p. 4*

Campo, he briefly took care of the Divine Word Missionaries' non-governmental office at the United Nations in Manhattan, New York.

Because of his age, he eventually requested to be an associate pastor for the Diocese of Victoria. Maybe it is the four decades of priesthood that make Father Fisher impervious to change, or maybe it is the memories of all of his travels that keep him grounded wherever he is called to serve.

One thing is for certain, Father Fisher learns and teaches life lessons wherever he goes.

"Traveling was like an adventure. It was interesting because I found out what was going on by talking and interacting with people. You must always look at people from the inside out and not the outside in," he said.

### Reporting Abuse

*If you or someone you know has been sexually or physically abused by a member of the clergy or other church personnel:*

- Contact the bishop or the chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at (361) 573-0828

or

- Call Father Gary Janak (979) 543-3770 or Sister Emilie Eilers (361) 575-7111, Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach;

or

- Write to: Bishop David E. Fellhauer, Diocese of Victoria, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903

Mark your letter "Personal and Confidential"

We will also help you bring your concerns to Church officials outside the diocese if the abuse occurred elsewhere and you now reside in the Diocese of Victoria.

If you are unsure about bringing a complaint or would like further information, please contact: Father Gary Janak at (979) 543-3770.

***If the abuse involves a minor, civil authorities should be contacted prior to reporting to the bishop, chancellor or coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.***

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Butterfly Project - 1,500,000 innocent children perished in the Holocaust. Youth from Region Ten make butterflies to be donated to the Butterfly Project for the Holocaust Museum in Houston. In an effort to remember the innocent lives lost, the museum is collecting 1.5 million handmade butterflies that will eventually comprise a breath-taking exhibit, currently scheduled for Spring 2013, for all to remember. See [www.hmh.org](http://www.hmh.org).

Heifer Village – A group of young people learn that the myth, “There’s not enough food for everyone,” is false. Here at Heifer Village, one of the four off-site interactive workshops, they learn what it takes to grow food, raise animals and share so that one day we can put an end to hunger and poverty.



Remembrance March - The 1,900+ young people march in remembrance of the historical events regarding desegregation at Central High School in 1957. They marched from Central High to the Arkansas State Capital building showing solidarity as one human family and showing that they will stand up against any injustices.



Our Lady of Sorrows Life Teen Band from the Diocese of Victoria was honored to be the featured band at the Region X youth conference in Little Rock, Ark.

## Region X youth experience Catholic Social Justice

By **Debbie Vanelli**  
Director of Youth Ministry

Nearly 2,000 Catholic youth, clergy and chaperones brought in the Region X Catholic Youth Conference with a bang on Nov. 12, filling the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock, Ark., with song, praise and energy for social justice. Young people from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas took in the event, the theme of which was “Ignite Your Heart, Work for Justice, Transform the World.”

In keeping with the theme, the weekend’s opening ceremony was equal parts praise and worship, as well as a call to activism, liturgy and celebration. The participants knew this was a different sort of conference in the first few minutes as Kenya Masala – performer, drummer and recording artist – took the stage and transformed the conference from traditional conference to a totally united and interactive experience. Masala’s high-energy performance and commanding stage presence drew everyone into the rhythm with drumsticks and plastic tubes, known as “boomwhackers,” distributed to the crowd.

“Are you ready to make a joyful noise?” he shouted. “This is you! This is what happens when we all connect! One heartbeat!”

The celebratory mood and pounding music was more than just a party for the delegates. The speakers and performers were priming the crowd for the work to be done over the weekend and back home

in their parishes.

“From the time we were baptized, we were commissioned to go out and serve the world,” said featured speaker Brian Johnson, director of youth ministry for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. “We must be the hands, the feet, the eyes and the heart of Christ in the world. You are not too young to do that. Be open to what God has in store for you.”

The night’s third featured speaker, recording artist Vallimar Jansen underscored the message. Relating her experiences on an annual mission trip to Caribbean nations, she urged the young people to look for opportunities to serve, even if it takes them outside their comfort zone.

“Solidarity doesn’t mean we just work for those close to us,” she said. “Every single being on earth is valuable to God. Every single person is rare and unique to God. We do what we do not so the world will give us praise. The reward is in the serving.”

The teens eagerly began a day of interactive experiences on Saturday by traveling to various sites throughout Little Rock and experienced social justice first hand. Interactive worksites included Heifer International, Little Rock’s Central High School, the Holocaust’s Butterfly Project, 4000 Crosses, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Village, the Pines Catholic Camp and Sal Solo.

Heifer International’s mission is to end hunger and poverty and care for the earth, by giving families a handup, not just

a handout. Heifer empowers families to turn lives of hunger and poverty into self-reliance and hope.

Minniejean Brown, one of the original Little Rock Nine from Central High School, the first school to be desegregated, spoke to the young people in attendance, who happened to be the same age as she was in 1957. She gave them a first hand perspective and a challenge to never forget and always stand in solidarity for what is right.

Marianne Linnane, Respect Life director in Little Rock, presented a womb to tomb teaching explaining how precious each life is by using “4000 Crosses” that were then erected at one of Little Rock’s busiest intersection to represent the holocaust that takes place in the United States as 4,000 babies are aborted each day.

Catholic Relief Village’s mission of solidarity was taught throughout their entire workshop by encompassing all aspects of Catholic Social teaching: Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person, Rights and Responsibilities, Social Nature of

### Conference for adults who work with youth

The Texas Mission Council would like to invite adults who minister to youth and who lead youth in mission at home or overseas to their annual conference February 25-27, 2011. This is an event for adults interested in and/or involved in participating with youth in the mission of Jesus, either overseas or locally. The theme for the conference is YOUTH IN MISSION. Come join others, from all over Texas who minister to youth, for a weekend full of fellowship, reflection and a sharing of experiences. There will be opportunities to hear from youth who have gone on mission trips and from youth ministers who have led them. The conference will be held in easily accessible Fort Worth this year, so don’t miss out on this great event. For more information, contact Al Mirabal of the Maryknoll Mission Education Center of North Texas, at (214) 821-4501 or check out the Web site: [www.texasmissioncouncil.org](http://www.texasmissioncouncil.org).

Humanity, The Common Good, Subsidiarity, Solidarity, Option for the Poor and Stewardship.

Butterfly Project – In an effort to remember the 1.5 million innocent children whose lives were lost in The Holocaust, handcrafted butterflies were made and donated to the Holocaust Museum in Houston to create a breath-taking exhibit scheduled for Spring 2013.

The Pines Catholic Camp in Tyler presented an interactive experience called Starting a Revolution – One Milk Jug at a Time. The workshop focused on care of God’s creation.

Sal Solo, a British recording artist presented “We Cry Justice,” an experience for both young and old but specifically influencing the young generation of Americans to recognize the Catholic Social Teaching in contemporary society.

A constant thread woven through this conference was the music that punctuated and enhanced the entire experience. The Life Teen Band from Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Victoria was chosen by the region to provide this integral piece of the conference. It was with much joy that we from our diocese had one of our own chosen to play such a key part in the Region 10 experience.

On Nov. 14, the three-day conference closed with Mass celebrated by Vicar General Msgr. Scott Friend and priests from Oklahoma and Texas. In his homily, Msgr. Friend encouraged teens to persevere in their lives and faith and to remember those in the world who are also struggling to persevere.

“This weekend every one of us has been taught by God. There have been moments each one of us has experienced,” he said. “The point of the Gospel is to persevere — persevere in what? What is it that he’s calling us to persevere in? He’s calling us to persevere in his mission ... He’s calling us, brothers and sisters, to a love that transforms the world.”

*Editor’s note: To read full-length article of Region X conference by Debbie Vanelli, please go to [www.victoriadiocese.org/lighthouse/lighthouse.htm](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/lighthouse/lighthouse.htm), and click on Local Diocesan News.*

### Bishops Launch Campus Web Site to Promote Catholic Social Teaching, Life and Dignity

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development has collaborated with eleven Catholic organizations to create a Web site to help college students and campus ministers promote Catholic social teaching on campus. The Web site, “Transforming Our World: Our Catholic Faith in Action,” can be found at [www.usccb.org/campus](http://www.usccb.org/campus). Site elements include principles of Catholic

social teaching, prayer materials, small group resources, tools for action and multimedia, such as videos and podcasts. The home page features quotes from Church leaders, ideas of the week and an invitation to site visitors to submit resources and ideas for possible features on the Web site. Collaborators hope the Web site will become an online clearinghouse featuring “best practices” to promote Catholic social teaching on campus.





Father Tommy Chen, who was recently appointed Diocesan Director of Pro-Life Concerns, brought together 40 senior rivals from Shiner and Hallettsville to pray against abortion for "40 days for Life" Monday, Oct. 25, at Planned Parenthood in Houston. An additional 73 parishioners joined them. To see more photos of this event, please go to [www.KathleenLeiningerPhotography.com](http://www.KathleenLeiningerPhotography.com) and type the password: ShinerCatholicChurch1.

## United for Life

HOUSTON—No matter the season, no matter the sport, if you want to see high school athletes with their "game on," you know you will never be disappointed when you come out to watch a St. Paul vs. Sacred Heart game. Each year athletes and spectators alike look forward to the "Lavaca County Super Bowl" (AKA the SPH -v- SHS football game).

Although the rivalry on the field is intense, these amazing young adults put aside competition for the greater cause of defending life. October 25, the Monday before their big football game, forty seniors from St. Paul and Sacred Heart (as well as an additional 73 parishioners) traveled to Houston to peacefully pray in front of the largest abortion clinic in North America. As a united army against the unjust war on the defenseless unborn, they used man's greatest weapon – prayer – to change the hearts and minds of mothers, fathers and abortion providers. Not only did they give their day to prayer, they also found ways to sacrifice and fast from food, texting, cell phones, etc., all to save even one tiny baby from the horror of abortion.

These young men and women have shown their Catholic faith alive through their works in putting aside their athletic rivalry to unite for the "least of God's people." When they meet on the football field, the volleyball or basketball court, united in their love of the sport and for their schools, they will remember their higher calling as members of the Body of Christ on Earth. This is the beauty of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Let the games begin!

Some quotes follow from these young Christians on the impact of their experience at the Houston abortion clinic. One young man stated, "There was with no doubt an uneasy feeling in the air at that clinic. There was a battle going on, not physical but spiritual. The experience was one of the most spiritual I have ever had. I did offer up suffering through the form of fasting and

it was extremely hard, but I did have a sense of accomplishment the next day."

A young lady wrote, "As I stood there in silent meditation, I reflected upon the rights that we were born with and that were not being granted to the defenseless children in the womb. The right to life is the most basic right of any human being."

Another young man shared, "Every time someone new walked in, another person would be leaving as if they felt relieved of a burden and it brought a sickening thought to my mind. Planned Parenthood had workers with bright yellow vests on, and they were standing next to each entrance, welcoming each car into the gates. This brought a little symbolism to mind; workers acting as evil spirits tempting and wanting people to enter the gates of hell. There is an evil presence outside of the place, I can't imagine what it's like to be inside."

One young man wrote, "Before we went all I heard was how well the Forty Days for Life was working and how great everything was going, but witnessing the number of people going into the clinic and the number of people who turned away made me realize that there is still a large amount of work to be done to achieve the end of abortion."

Another young lady shared, "The volunteer workers outside of the building made it very clear that they did not enjoy the presence of the silent protestors. However, we were resilient and held our ground. There was no faulty judgment passed from us to them, there were no hateful comments being yelled. We simply prayed for the workers, so they would see the evil in the actions they perform daily. We prayed for the women and families who were getting abortions, so they would hopefully change their minds."

Lastly one young lady said, "As we prayed, I felt a type of bubble form around us that felt like we were protected and no one or nothing could hurt us."



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What 2010 choristers are saying about NCYC.

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- Jamie 17, Lucas, Ohio - "Experience was definitely a 10. . . I gained appreciation for more than just singing the notes and words."
- Carolyn 15, Omaha, Neb. - "I feel much more confident and have a lot more self discipline and strength."
- Justin 16, Lutherville, Md. - "NCYC helped my faith as a Catholic by having prayer at the center of everything we do."

## Youth Calendar of Events

December 5 — Youth Leadership Training

December 9-12 — National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry in New Orleans

January 8-9, 2011— Youth Leadership Retreat at the SRC

January 22, 2011 — Prolife Rally in Austin

February 6, 2011 — Souper Bowl of Caring

February 20, 2011 — Youth Spectacular

February 24-March 6, 2011 — NET in our diocese

February 26, 2011 — Foundations Youth Ministry Class

March 6, 2011 — Catholic Knowledge Bowl

March 12, 2011 — Foundations Youth Ministry Class



Find us now on Facebook! At Diocese of Victoria – Youth Ministry

For more information on any of these events, please contact:  
Debbie Vanelli or José Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry  
at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at  
dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org or jortega@victoriadiocese.org  
Web site: [www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice)

## Two Are Better than One

By Camille Mica, a senior at East Bernard High School and parishioner of Holy Cross Church



With the stress of school and uncertainty of my future weighing heavily on me, I find myself falling deeper and deeper into a "do-it-yourself" mode. Lately, I've been relying on myself for almost everything, sometimes to the point of isolating myself from others.

As I was flipping through my Bible recently, something different caught my eye. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, "Two are better than one... for if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe is one who is alone and falls and does not have anyone to help." Instantly, I realized that whatever my reasons are for being a "loner," I am actually ignoring a huge gift from God – friends.

As I read this passage, one big question occurred to me: Why are two better than one? First of all, we are given friends so that we are not alone. We have a God who craves communion, or being close to others. Because we are made in God's image, we also have a deep need for friends. Even Jesus valued friendship; he actually had twelve disciples! The incredible love in friendship reflects Christ's unconditional love and desire to be close to us.

Friends have many purposes. They help us survive in those moments when we are too weak to continue on our own. On the other hand, friends also enable us to feel needed, to give of ourselves and serve a purpose. Another important aspect

of friendship is trust. It is so important that we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and open up to others, knowing that there is a bond of trust.

One of the hardest, but most vital, parts of friendship is accountability. This means that we should be honest with each other when we are falling short. I like to say that "true friends stab you in the front." Although it sounds extreme in the literal sense, it is just another way of saying that true love hurts sometimes. "Tough love" is crucial for meaningful relationships. But we also have to remember that we must accept our friends as they are. This is something we all struggle with because at times we find ourselves wanting more from our friends and being unsatisfied. However, Jesus accepts us the way we are and loves us through all of our imperfections. So, as Christians, we are called to do the same.

Last, but not least, friends remind us that we are not above others and that we all need one another. We are One Body, One Church. All people, even the closest of friends, have differences. But we can use our differences to build up others. Because the ultimate goal of friendship is to help each other gain eternal salvation, real friends work to strengthen each others' souls.

God knew when he created humans that we could not survive alone, that we truly have a need for companions and that we can help each other enter Heaven. So, no matter what, let's never forget our friends and all they truly mean in our lives.

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**ROSARIES FOR UNITY & PEACE PRAYED AT GROTTA**—Hostyn's Queen of the Holy Rosary Grotto was the location from which many prayers were offered to God by both children and adults on Sunday, Oct. 17. Groups from Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish in Hostyn and Sts. Peter & Paul Parish in Plum joined with one million children around the world to pray for unity and peace. Pictured on the left are parishioners from Hostyn. Msgr. Stanley Petru, pastor of The Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish, welcomed everyone. Lillian Kallus led the Scripture Rosary. Pictured on the right are parishioners who traveled on pilgrimage from Plum. Father Joseph Kariuki, parochial vicar in Plum, welcomed the group with a prayer. The recitation of the rosary was led by Elsie Vasek. Parish musicians, Ken Brothers and Mickey Supak, closed the gathering in song.



**KC 1131 EXEMPLIFIES 4TH DEGREE KNIGHT**—James Kocurek achieved the highest order of the Knights of Columbus, the Fourth Degree, Oct. 30 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Conroe, Texas. He was knighted in the ceremony known as an exemplification and is now a member of the Archbishop Drossaerts Assembly 1131 of El Campo. Assembly 1131 is part of the Knights of Columbus, Fourth Degree, Our Lady Of Guadalupe Province, First District of Texas. James is also an officer in the Knights of Columbus Council 2490 of El Campo. James was joined by his wife, Lori, and Gerry Mikeska, Faithful Navigator of Assembly 1131. James has the distinct honor of being the last knight to join Assembly 1131 before the assembly turns 60 years old this coming December. Assembly 1131 will celebrate this anniversary on December 10 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in El Campo. The special event will be open to the public and feature a dinner, dance and prizes. Tickets are available from Hector Gutierrez 979-332-8338 or 979-543-2709. Also attending the event from El Campo was Mr. and Mrs. John Hrcir, who's son, Curtis, also joined the 4th Degree. Curtis now lives in Conroe and is a member of Our Lady of the Pines Assembly 1759. Pictured from l. to r. are District Master Sir Knight Peter Tan, Sir Knight James Kocurek, Vice Supreme Master Our Lady Of Guadalupe Province Sir Knight Paul Weigl and State Secretary Sir Knight Jim Collins.



**COLUMBUS CARNIVAL POSTER CONTEST WINNERS**—St. Anthony Catholic School in Columbus announced the first place winners of the Halloween Carnival Poster Contest. Students who placed first thru third in each grade level from Kindergarten thru 8th grade received free tickets to use at the carnival. St. Anthony Halloween Carnival took place on the school grounds October 30 and closed with the Punk-N-Rock performance by the 7th and 8th graders. Pictured are poster winners, front row, l to r: Sydney Glueck, Alexis Medrano, Addicyn Kunkel, Caleb Miksch and Brianna Orange; back row: Taylor Dungen, Andy Theut, Isabel Theut and Kristin Walla.



**DUKE TALENT SEARCH**—Twenty-two seventh grade students of Our Lady of Victory School have qualified to take the SAT or ACT test in December or January under the Duke Talent Search Identification Program. For the past 30 years, Duke University has been identifying 7th grade with strong intellectual abilities and giving them the opportunity to take these tests designed for 11th and 12th grade students. Since 1980, more than 2 million gifted students have participated in the Duke TIP's Talent Search. Our Lady of Victory proudly announces that these students have joined this prestigious group. Those 7th grade students who qualified are pictured above: Front row (l-r) Travis Roell, Kathryn Janecek, Stephen Turek, James Heath, Grant McDaniel and Xavier Solis; middle row: Alexander Mahon, Lauren Omecinski, Leann Weaver, Hanna Novosad, Emily Weaver, Andrew Bernhard, Katie Timmins and Chloe Cisneros; back row: Christina Janak, Madison Foeh, Abigail Kovar, Elizabeth Haynes, Sam Ridley, Davis Brychta, Alexandra Marlow and Trevor Reyna.



**VICTORIA GIRL SCOUT TROOP WINS BRONZE AWARD**—Congratulations go to Girl Scout Troop 9579 sponsored by Our Lady of Victory Cathedral. They earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award, which is the highest award given to girls in the 4th and 5th grades. They sponsored Mid-Coast Family Services Crisis Unit by making blankets and sensory bottles for the children in the Crisis Unit. They also made Valentine Cards and Easter Baskets earlier in the year. The Girl Scout Bronze Award requires each girl to spend a minimum of 15 hours in service work for a sponsored organization. Pictured in front row are Kimberlee Hathaway and Emily Schoener; back row: Troop Leader LeeAnn Hathaway, Baylee Young, Mary Grace Konarik, Christa Schoener, Caitlin Walsh and Co-leader Veronica Walsh.



Advent, a season of joyful expectation before Christmas, began Nov. 28 this year. The Advent wreath, with a candle marking each week of the season, is a traditional symbol of the period. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)





Cardinals Cross Country teams celebrate the Lady Cards winning TAPPS 2A State Meet. Front row, from left: Coach Kaedy Hermes, Marrisa Ynclan, Ashton Kutac, Alexa Schaefer, Mason Matias (ran representing the Card's boys cross country team), Paige Werner, Mary Adamek and Samantha Siegel; back row: Davi Spaeth, Katelynn Leist, Emily Wagner, Kali Kocian and Coach Dana Beal.

## Lady Cards Win State Cross Country

*Kocian, Siegel - All-State*

For the third consecutive year, the St. Paul Lady Cardinals are the TAPPS 2A State Cross Country Champions. St. Paul defeated runner-up Muenster Sacred Heart by 17 points with a score of 40.

Leading the St. Paul team, Kali Kocian finished 9th with a time of 14:11.

Samantha Siegel (the lone Cardinal freshman) was right on her heels placing 10th at 14:14. Both runners earned places on the All-State Cross Country Team. Kali, as well as Emily Wagner, has run on all three state championship teams.

### Sportsmanship

## Behavior Expectations of Spectators

By TAPPS – Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools

- Remember that you are at the contest to support and yell for your team, and to enjoy the skill and competition – not to intimidate or ridicule the other team or its fans.

- Remember that school athletics are a learning experience for students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people, just as you would praise a student working in the classroom.

- A ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others or be generally obnoxious.

- Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.

- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups.

- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student athlete, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.

- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.

- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before, during, and after the game on or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating).

- Use only cheers that support and uplift the teams involved.

- Be a positive role model at events through your own actions and by censuring those around you whose behavior is unbecoming.

Information found at: <http://www.tapps.net/PDF/Athletics/General/Sportsmanship.pdf>

Other runners for St. Paul were: Katelynn Leist, Ashton Kutac, Emily Wagner and Mary Adamek and Davi Spaeth. Mason Matias ran in the boys' division.

Cross Country practice is held at 6 a.m. each morning, requiring dedication of each runner, as well as their family. The athletic department is grateful to the many moms who attended practice and assisted with supervision. With one exception, all of the female runners also played volleyball.

The junior-high cross country team also had a good season. The girls won the Weimar meet and came in 2nd at the Shiner and Moulton meets. The boys finished 7th in Shiner and in Moulton. They placed 5th in Weimar. With many young male runners, there is tremendous potential.



**OLV "A" VOLLEYBALL TEAM WINS DISTRICT**—The Our Lady of Victory Volleyball "A" team won the Victoria Diocese Athletic League (VDAL) South Zone Championship with a winning season of 23 wins out of 27 matches. "Both of our teams (A and B) had a great year. Our biggest problem throughout the year was our inconsistency in serving, and that kept us in trouble most of the year," said Coach Bob Leach. "Overall they played very well with lots of spirit. The parents were wonderful – we had a great deal of support from faculty, staff and parents." The "B" team, made up of all 7th graders, went undefeated, winning all 18 of their matches.



**EL CAMPO PARISH HOLDS FUN-RUN FUNDRAISER**—St. Philip Catholic School in El Campo hosted their annual 1 mile, 5K, and 10K Family Fun Run Saturday morning, November 13. Approximately 105 participants competed in the cool weather while supporting the St. Philip School Athletic Fund. Pictured is Shane Singleton, a 5th-grade student, crossing the finish line and placing first in the 5K. (Inset) Finishing the 1-mile Family Fun Run is Colleen Rasmussen and son, Bryce.

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## The Bottom Line

By Antoinette Bosco  
Catholic News Service



### How Advent accents the need for tradition

As Advent approaches I find myself thinking back to how my children and I used to meet with other families to make our Advent wreaths. It was another time and another place, but the memories of this joyful camaraderie have remained with me.

We did a lot of laughing as we wrestled with wire, evergreens and candles. Never for a minute did we ever question why we made Advent wreaths. We all knew that the circular wreath symbolizes eternity and that the candles represent the coming of the Christ child to be the light of the world.

But why we made them together was something else. We knew we were carrying on a tradition with a lot of meaning, and we felt that by getting together we were emphasizing the importance of this tradition.

I always remember the Broadway musical that put "Tradition" in lights, "Fiddler on the Roof." The father sang about the customs of his people with humor, but no one missed the message: These traditions are the force that hold a people together.

The same is true for Christians, especially at Christmas when we are drawn to revive traditions that link us to the miracle of the birth of Jesus.

A teacher told me once that a tradition begins with an experience or expression of a truth that deeply touches or reflects basic human values and the needs that people share. So important is this experience that it transcends the moment and continues to live — played out again and again by generations that follow.

We repeat the action so as to keep us linked to that original, valid experience, and thus, a tradition is born. In time, the action might assume some coloration different from that of the original, but in essence it does not differ.

It's not hard to see why tradition is needed. It gives us roots in the past and connects us to our ancestors; it provides a sense of not being alone but being part of a people.

A tradition makes us remember that there is a larger picture. Remembering that gives us a certain security.

The Advent season puts a focus on traditions that have made us all part of the family of the Lord.

These days I am in a new cycle. I still gather wire, evergreens and candles to make an Advent wreath, but for grandchildren. It is something both tangible and mystical that is being passed on to them.

When we complete the Advent journey and arrive at Christmas Eve, that's when our traditions really are underscored.

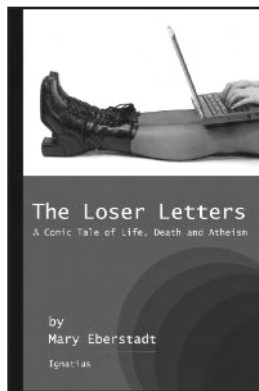
We'll be delighted by the Christmas tree and the Nativity scene we all look forward to seeing each year. We'll eat the traditional foods I make, handed down to me by my Italian grandmother. Then with my daughter, Mary, playing the piano and my son, Frank, on the guitar, we'll all sing traditional Christmas carols. We'll be conscious of our joy, our humanness and of the miracle of one birth that led to the rebirth of the world.

And we'll be grateful for our traditions, which remind us that we are never alone, that we belong to the One who came at Christmas.

### New Literary Tragicomedy Gives Advice to Atheist Icons Dawkins and Hitchens

*Clever, serial satire about theism and atheism is a rollicking good read!*

From the first letter she writes, A.F. Christian (which stands for "A Former Christian") has her reader spellbound. "Thanks for all your hard work, the rest of us know once and for all that the so-called 'God', that LOSER, is everything you say he is: the biggest fraud of all time, cosmic zero, ultimate no-show — and after all those centuries and promises too!...If this was Facebook, no one would be friending him now." And so the series of letters begins from a young adult, "former" Christian to the "spokesmen of the New Atheism" as a thank you for liberating the world from the superstition and prejudice of the "Biggest Loser", aka God.



A wickedly witty satire, *The Loser Letters* chronicles the conversion of a young adult Christian to atheism. With modern humor rivaling that of the media lampooning *Onion*, found on college campuses all over America, A.F. Christian's open letters to the likes of Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens explain her reasons for rejecting God and the logical consequences of that choice.

Says papal biographer George Weigel of the work, "Mary Eberstadt is one smart cookie. If you don't believe me, ask Satan."

Author Eberstadt, a popular social critic, focuses much of her writing on

issues about American society, culture and philosophy. *The Loser Letters* is a unique response to books on atheism using brilliant writing that combines biting wit, satire and inspiring insights on innate truths about God and man.

*The Loser Letters* is the first major satirical work of Christian apologetics since C.S. Lewis wrote *The Screwtape Letters*. Written in an appealing writing style coupled with the discussion of many modern, relevant topics, Eberstadt, writing as A.F. Christian, tackles the argument between theism and atheism that is simultaneously a rollicking good read.

Published by Ignatius Press, *The Loser Letters* is truly unique: a black comedy about life, death and what we dare to believe or not believe.

Mary Eberstadt is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a consulting editor to *Policy Review*. She is the author of "Home-Along America," and the editor of "Why I Turned Right: Leading Baby Boom Conservatives Chronicle Their Political Journeys." Eberstadt has written widely for various magazines and newspapers, including *The Weekly Standard*, *First Things*, *The American Spectator*, *Los Angeles Times*, *London Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

## CHRISTMAS

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BETHLEHEM	GIFTS	MATTHEW
CAROLS	HEROD	MIDNIGHT MASS
CRECHE	HOMAGE	SHEPHERDS
DREAM	LUKE	STABLE
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### Family Puzzle Contest Winners!

Fidel Garcia of Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria is the winner of the November Family Puzzle Contest and "Be a Man!" by Father Larry Richards, published by Ignatius Press. Congratulations. The winner of the youth contest is Samantha Holub (13) of St. Rose of Lima in Schulenburg. She has won the LIVE Teen Bible; Kate Letsinger (6) of OLV and Cameron Wied (8) of El Campo will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop. Thanks to all the teens who played.

The next Family Puzzle Contest winner will win "The Loser Letters" by Mary Eberstadt and published by Ignatius Press. See book review on this page.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle and contest form to *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P. O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903, by Dec. 30 for a chance to win "Loser Letters."

### Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi

**Panel 1:** SAY, YOU'RE NOT MY GUARDIAN ANGEL.

**Panel 2:** MY NAME IS HARK. I WORK MOSTLY AROUND CHRISTMAS TIME.

**Panel 3:** HARK? WHAT KIND OF NAME IS THAT?

**Panel 4:** WHAT? YOU NEVER HEARD OF HARK, THE HERALD ANGEL?

www.umberttheunborn.com





## ~ Catholic Christmas ~

By Father Michael Lyons

The Catholic Church is the most forward-thinking institution in the world. Even though our detractors often call us “backward” and “outdated,” the Church is always looking forward with joy to what God is doing in our lives and in the world.

Just check out the words of the Preface (the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer) for the second part of Advent: “In his love, Christ has filled us with joy as we prepare to celebrate his birth, so that when he comes (at the end of the world), he may find us watching in prayer, our hearts filled with wonder and praise.” As Catholic Christians, we recall the past to inform the present with an eye toward the future; it’s never looking back just for the sake of looking back.

Joseph Bottum wrote an excellent essay called “The End of Advent” that was published in the December 2007 edition of *First Things*. He writes, “From Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s I heard the bells on Christmas Day / Their old, familiar carols play to Irving Berlin’s I’m dreaming of a white Christmas / Just like the ones I used to know, there has been for a long time now something oddly backward-looking about Christmas music – some nostalgia that insists on substituting its melancholy for the somber contrition and sorrow of forward-looking Advent.”

That paragraph prompted me to survey some of the Christmas music that has been playing in the stores and on numerous radio stations throughout Advent. What I found was amazing: When the song focuses on God’s mercy in sending Jesus born of Mary to be our Savior, the song remembers the historical event of Christ’s birth for the purpose of bringing those listening to (and praying) the song into the present with an eye toward the future as God continues to make his redemption of mankind happen through Jesus Christ every day. When the song is secular, the nostalgia of olden days, happy golden

days of yore (“Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”) leads, at best, to a sincere wish of Merry Christmas to you (“The Christmas Song”), and, sometimes puts pressure on this year’s Christmas celebrants to measure up, as in “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”: Once again, as in olden days, happy golden days of yore / faithful friends who are dear to us gather near to us once more. And this from the same song: Next year all our troubles will be out of sight. There is no mention in “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” about the source of this hope that “next year all our troubles will be out of sight.” And, no matter who sings it, he or she never sounds very confident in delivering that line.

Contrast that with “Adeste Fidelis” (“O Come All Ye Faithful”): O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant / O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem / Come and behold him (now), O come let us adore him (today), O come let us adore him (and don’t delay), Christ the Lord! Yes, the choirs of angels sang 2000 years ago. “Adeste Fidelis” exhorts them to sing today, and “in exultation.”

An outstanding example of the Church’s present-tense forward-thinking is “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen.”

God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay (the economy, bankruptcies in big corporations, the spread of abortion and war and evil) / Remember (looking back) Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day / To save us all from Satan’s power when we had gone astray (the effects of which endure to this very moment). / O tidings of comfort and of joy, comfort and joy! O tidings of comfort and of joy!

The second and third verses tell the story of Christ’s birth. The fourth and final verse exhorts us to take advantage of Christ’s saving mission, today and beyond: Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place / And with true love

and brotherhood each other now embrace / This holy tide of Christmas doth bring redeeming grace. That is because Jesus brings redeeming grace today, which gives us a great hope, not only for a bright new year but for everlasting happiness with God in Heaven, where truly “our troubles will be out of sight.”

So while well-written greetings like “The Christmas Song,” “Caroling, Caroling,” “Silver Bells,” “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas,” “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree,” “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” “White Christmas,” “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” and others give us a nice Christmas-card-type glimpse at what the events of December can look like, in the end, all they can offer for the present is “Sure, it’s Christmas once more” (“It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas”).

The Catholic Church, meanwhile, reminds the world that the historic events of the birth of Jesus Christ inform the present and have eternal implications. Truly these are glad tidings of great joy: A SAVIOR IS BORN WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD!!

Relish the end of this Advent and enter into the glorious joy of this Christmas season! With the birth of His Son, God says much more than “Merry Christmas.” He says, “I love you enough to send My own Son that you can be with me forever.”

Father Michael Lyons is Pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Ganado. This essay first appeared in the December 21, 2008, Assumption Parish bulletin.



## Room for the Christ Child

By Deirdre A. McQuade, assistant director for Policy & Communications at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Every Christmas, people from Mexico and other parts of Central America celebrate Las Posadas, a nine-day novena of prayer, song, and hospitality built around Mary and Joseph’s struggle to find lodging in Bethlehem. Families walk from home to home, singing their request for shelter. But owners reject their uninvited would-be guests, turning them away with excuses like: “we’re not running an inn” or “you could be a thief.”

The “pilgrims” are finally received humbly by the last home each night, where they often sing: “Posada os brindo / Santos Peregrinos, / y disculpa os pido, / no os reconocía” (“I offer you hospitality / Holy Pilgrims, / and for not recognizing you / I

apologize”). They then host one of the nine nightly parties with more songs, a shared meal, and a piñata for the children.

Having received the hospitality of others, neighbors then offer it in turn. The nine-day vigil prepares the whole neighborhood to receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion on Christmas, celebrating God’s generosity to us.

The children – and by extension, all the family members – learn what it means to make room for the unborn Christ Child and his parents in their own lives: “Entren Santos Peregrinos, Peregrinos / Reciban este rincón, / que aunque es pobre la morada, la morada / os las doy de corazón” (“Enter, Holy Pilgrims / Take this little corner of our house, / even though it is a poor place to stay / we give it to you with all our heart”).

Like Mary, some pregnant women today face many challenges and may need our hos-

pitality. This is especially for mothers expecting an unexpected child. Whether rich or poor, they require welcome in an age when the unborn child is seen as an unwelcome burden – and, at times, even as a threat.

Tragically, abortion is often offered as a violent response to that perceived threat. But this “choice” is the ultimate failure to recognize a great gift wrapped in the living gift-wrap of a mother’s womb! The Posadas invite us to welcome the unborn child as a precious guest “with all our heart,” even when we may have little to offer.

Maternity homes for unwed or displaced mothers offer such hospitality in a tangible way every day. The Gabriel Project, a parish-based program, brings pregnant moms together with “angels” who befriend them, get to know their needs on a personal level, and offer ongoing support and care both before

## Sunday Readings from Dec. 5 to Jan. 16

December 5 — Second Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 Romans 15:4-9 Matthew 3:1-12
December 12 — Third Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 Psalms 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11
December 19 — Fourth Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalms 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-24
December 25 — The Nativity of the Lord Christmas Mass at Midnight	Isaiah 9:1-6 Psalms 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14
December 26 — The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 Colossians 3:12-21 Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23
January 1, 2011 — The Octave Day of Christmas - Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God	Numbers 6:22-27 Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:16-21
January 2, 2011 — Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord	Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6 Matthew 2:1-12
January 9, 2011 — The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord	Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 Psalms 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 Acts 10:34-38 Matthew 3:13-17
January 16, 2011 — Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 49:3, 5-6 Psalms 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 John 1:29-34

All daily and Sunday readings, as well as a daily reflection video, are available in text or audio at:

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and after their children are born. Pregnancy care centers provide confidential services and referrals for women in need – some of whom are tempted to abort their children. All such organizations help women and their families realize that it is never impossible to do the right thing, and that the answer to a crisis pregnancy is to eliminate the crisis, not the pregnancy.

This Christmas, through the motherly intercession of Our

Lady of Guadalupe, may we and our families receive the Christ Child into our hearts, recognize all the vulnerable holy pilgrims in our midst whether born or unborn, and share the little we have “en el nombre del cielo” – in the name of Heaven.

For a novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe, go to [www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rfp/2009/liturguide.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rfp/2009/liturguide.pdf) (pp. 9-11).





**The Flock**  
By Jean Denton  
Copyright ©2005, Jean Denton



The Flock Cartoon is now on the Web with more of the sheep's lighthearted approach to the serious matter of faith. Go to <http://www.sheepdotcom.com>. If you are looking for a quick daily reflection, The Flock has a new cartoon and Advent Thought of the Day, everyday, until Christmas. It's at <http://www.sheepdotcom.com/Advent2010.html>

## Pauline Books & Media produces Psalms and Prayer iPhone App

BOSTON — Pauline Books & Media has released a new app for the iPhone and iPod Touch called Healing Psalms and Prayers for Day and Night. The app allows users to listen, meditate, journal, and pray for their needs and those of others. Users may choose to begin and end each day with a rhythm of psalms, contemplation, and intercession, or find a few minutes for prayer in their busy lives. Healing Psalms and Prayers is the first app on the market that can be used by priests, spiritual directors, and those who minister to the sick to share contemplative moments.

Features of this app include:

- Forty-eight audio psalms with contemplative images and twenty-four meditations accompanied by contemplative music which take up real concerns and challenges users face in relationships, work, family, and personal issues
- A number of display options, including fonts, font sizes, backgrounds, and colors
- A variety of litanies of intercession
- Thirty-six prayers for healing on top-

ics of interest to the modern person (loss of a parent, coping with job loss, overcoming sadness, etc.)

- A journal feature allows the user to write about their feelings, needs, desires, or to craft their own prayer to God.
- Option to import the user's photo gallery with their personal images of loved ones, home, sacred spaces, etc.

Healing Psalms and Prayers is an app created by Pauline Books & Media, the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul. Other apps by PBM include: Rosary Miracle Prayer and Saint a Day. (continued on next page)

All apps are available for download in the iTunes store or via [www.downloads-forcatholics.com](http://www.downloads-forcatholics.com). Visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Pauline-BooksandMedia](http://www.facebook.com/Pauline-BooksandMedia) for special promotions, coupons, free downloads, and more!

Pauline Books and Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international Congregation of women religious whose mission is evangelization through the means of social communication.



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## THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope  
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

## Pope marks beginning of Advent with prayer for life

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI welcomed the beginning of Advent with a prayer for life and a defense of the human embryo.

The pope presided over an evening prayer service at the Vatican Nov. 27, part of a worldwide pro-life vigil. He said it was an appropriate initiative to launch Advent, the liturgical period in which the church prepares to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

In a homily, he said the church's teaching against abortion comes from its teaching about the dignity of every human life and its concern that the unborn is most vulnerable to "the selfishness of adults and the clouding of consciences."

"There are cultural tendencies that seek to anesthetize consciences with spurious arguments," the pope said.

Regarding the human embryo, the pope said science itself has demonstrated the embryo's autonomous capacity of interaction with the mother, the coordination of its biological processes, the continuity of its development and its complexity as an organism.

"It's not a question of a collection of biological material, but of a new living being, dynamic and marvelously ordered, a new individual of the human species," he said.

"This is how Jesus was in Mary's womb; this is how we each were, in our

mother's wombs," he said.

The pope cited the early church author Tertullian, who reasoned that abortion is wrong because, as he wrote, "He is a man, who is to be a man." The pope added that "there is no reason not to consider him a person from the moment of conception."

Pope Benedict emphasized that the threat to human life does not end at birth. He said children today are often subject to abandonment, hunger, poverty, disease, abuse, violence and exploitation. Faced with this "sad panorama of injustices" before and after birth, the church calls everyone to responsibility, he said.

He urged leaders in politics, economics and communications to do everything possible to promote a culture that respects human life and to establish a network of services that support human life.

On Nov. 28, the first Sunday of Advent, the pope spoke to pilgrims from his apartment window about the importance of "expectant waiting" in the period before Christmas and in people's lives in general.

"We think of the expectation of a child by a married couple, or of a visit by a distant relative or friend. We think of a young person who awaits the outcome of a decisive examination, or a meeting at work," he said.

"One can say that a person is alive as long as he is expectant, as long as hope lives in his heart," he said.

## Bishops' Web site Offers Resources for Advent and Christmas Seasons Including Book of Reflections from Pope Benedict XVI

WASHINGTON — The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is continuing its tradition of providing online resources for the Advent and Christmas seasons with suggestions for daily prayer, reading, reflection and action. As a special spiritual gift this season, USCCB is providing a downloadable book of scriptural reflections for Advent and Christmas featuring the words of Pope Benedict XVI from his homilies, speeches and other addresses during his papacy.

"This has become one of the more popular features on the bishops' Web site," said Helen Osman, secretary of communications for USCCB. "It is a

great one-stop resource for families and individuals seeking ways to enter more deeply into the spirit of the Advent and Christmas seasons."

Other resources on the Web site include a list of recommended holiday-themed movies, prayers and blessings from the USCCB publication Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, and suggestions for remembering the immigrants and the poor throughout the season.

The Advent/Christmas site (<http://www.usccb.org/advent/>) was created by the USCCB Department of Communications with funding from the Catholic Communication Campaign.

### Como reportar un abuso.

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido abusado sexualmente por un clérigo o cualquier miembro del personal de la iglesia puede registrar su queja.

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- Rev. Gary Janak al (979)543-3770 o a la Hna. Emilie Eilers al (361)575-7111, que son los coordinadores del Pastoral Care and Outreach;
- También puede comunicarse por escrito enviando su carta a:  
Most Rev. David Fellhauer  
Diocese of Victoria  
P.O. Box 4070  
Victoria, TX 77903  
Por favor, escriba en el sobre:  
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También podemos ayudarle a comunicar su queja a cualquier otra diócesis donde haya ocurrido el abuso si ahora usted se encuentra viviendo en la nuestra.

Si no se encuentra seguro de proceder con la queja o necesita más información, por favor comuníquese con el Rev. Gary Janak al (979)543-3770.





## Pope's remarks in book renew condom debate

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a new book, Pope Benedict XVI said the use of condoms may be a sign of moral responsibility in some specific situations when the intention is to reduce the risk of AIDS.

The pope addressed the issue in the book-length interview, "Light of the World: The Pope, the Church and the Signs of the Times," which was released Nov. 23. The Vatican newspaper published excerpts from the book Nov. 20, including the comments on condoms.

In the book, the pope repeated what he said during a trip to Africa last year, that "we cannot solve the problem (of AIDS) by distributing condoms." Focusing exclusively on condoms damages human sexuality, making it "banal" and turning it into a kind of "drug," he said.

But the pope went on to say that in particular cases — he mentioned prostitutes — condom use may be justified as a first step toward taking moral responsibility for one's actions.

Here is the key passage as translated in the English edition of the book. The pope was asked whether it was "madness to forbid a high-risk population to use condoms."

"There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward discovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants. But it is not really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality," the pope said.

Peter Seewald, the German journalist who conducted the interview, then asked: "Are you saying, then, that the Catholic Church is actually not opposed in principle

## Meeting Highlights

2010 USCCB fall general assembly

- Broke with precedent to elect Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan as president rather than Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, USCCB vice president.
- Affirmed a historic agreement with four Reformed church communities that will allow mutual recognition of baptisms.
- Elected Msgr. Ronny Jenkins as USCCB general secretary, with his five-year term to begin in June.
- Heard a lengthy update on relief and reconstruction efforts following the January earthquake in Haiti.
- Approved a \$180 million balanced USCCB budget for 2011 but voted to keep the 2012 diocesan assessment at the 2011 level.
- Affirmed a letter from Cardinal Francis E. George to President Barack Obama urging greater U.S. efforts to protect Christians in Iraq.
- Heard a plea from Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio for more chaplains to serve the needs of the military.
- Heard a review by Cardinal George of the debate over health reform and the "wounds to the church's unity" caused by differences over the legislation.
- Approved new guidelines for support of retired bishops, setting their minimum compensation at \$1,900 monthly.
- Authorized the drafting of a brief policy statement on assisted suicide.

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to the use of condoms?"

The pope answered: "She of course does not regard it as a real or moral solution, but, in this or that case, there can be nonetheless, in the intention of reducing the risk of infection, a first step toward a different way, a more human way, of living sexuality."

It was the first time Pope Benedict — or any pope — has said publicly that condom use may be acceptable in some cases.

In an earlier statement, Father Lombardi said Nov. 21 that the pope was not "reforming or changing" the church's teaching on sexual responsibility, but rather considering an "exceptional situation" in which sexual activity places a person's life at risk. While the pope was not morally justifying disordered sexual activity, he was saying that use of a condom to reduce the risk of transmitting the disease may be an act of moral responsibility, Father Lombardi said.

The spokesman said it would be an exaggeration to call the pope's comments "revolutionary," but he said they offered a courageous and important contribution to a long-debated question.

The pope's remarks underscored a distinction made previously by other church experts: that the church's teaching against condoms as a form of birth control is different from its position on condom use in disease prevention. The comments seemed destined to open a new chapter in the church's internal debate on that issue.

For years, in fact, Vatican officials and theologians have studied the morality of condom use to reduce the risk of AIDS. The Vatican has never proclaimed a "ban" on condom use in AIDS prevention; on the contrary, some Vatican theologians and officials have argued that for married couples in which one partner is HIV-infected, use of condoms could be a moral responsibility.

More generally, however, they have argued that promotion of condoms as the only or best answer to AIDS carries grave risks, mainly by promoting the idea that condoms

guarantee "safe sex." In that sense, the pope said on his flight to Cameroon in 2009 that rather than solve the issue of HIV/AIDS, condoms "increase the problem." He encouraged campaigns to promote responsible sexuality instead.

When that episode was raised by Seewald in the book, the pope seemed to bristle.

"The media coverage completely ignored the rest of the trip to Africa on account of a single statement," he said. He said he felt "provoked" by the question, because the church does so much to care for AIDS patients.

"I had the chance to visit one of these wards and to speak with the patients. That was the real answer: The church does more than anyone else because she does not speak from the tribunal of the newspapers, but helps her brothers and sisters where they are actually suffering," he said.

In the book, the pope criticized the "fixation" on condoms in AIDS prevention, but without categorically ruling out their use.

## William and Kate?

### We have royal weddings here

Catholic News Service

By Thomas J. Dermody, editor  
The Catholic Post, Diocese of Peoria, Ill.

The announcement that there will be a royal wedding in 2011 topped the news on Nov. 16. Camera flashes were blinding when Prince William and Kate Middleton made a brief appearance in London that afternoon to confirm the news. Speculation began about every detail of the approaching wedding — the date, the location, the dress, the line of succession, etc.

It was good to see such excitement about marriage in a week that otherwise showed how embattled it is.

The day before the royal announcement, at the fall gathering of the U.S. Catholic bishops in Baltimore, an alarm was sounded regarding threats to traditional marriage. Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., minced no words in likening present legislative challenges to the definition of marriage to the period just before abortion was legalized in 1973.

"If you had seen Roe vs. Wade coming three years out, what would you have done differently?" asked Archbishop Kurtz in urging support for projects that reinforce the church's teaching on the sanctity of marriage.

How badly those efforts are needed was made clear the day after William and Kate's announcement. A study by the Pew Research Center was released, showing, among other findings, that 39 percent of Americans believe marriage is becoming

obsolete. With one in three American children living with a parent who is divorced, separated, or never married, more people are accepting the view that wedding bells aren't needed to have a family.

As the church confronts that mindset, we'd like to make an announcement of our own. Assemble the press. Blare the trumpets. Here it comes:

"The Diocese of Peoria is delighted to announce there will be not one but nearly 1,000 royal weddings within its borders in 2011. The guest of honor at Catholic wedding Masses and interfaith ceremonies from Rock Island to Danville will be none other than Jesus Christ the King, who blesses his sons and daughters with grace, seals their covenant with the Holy Spirit, and feeds them at a banquet rich beyond imagination."

The buzz surrounding Prince William and Kate's announcement shows that our culture, which repeatedly challenges marriage, still likes a royal wedding. We Catholics would do well to better remember, embrace and proclaim the presence of our King — and Queen Mother — at our wedding ceremonies and within our marriages.

We thank all who did so in 2010, including not only brides and grooms but families and friends who model Christ-centered marriage as well as those on the diocesan and local levels who assist with marriage preparation. And we excitedly congratulate all who are planning a royal wedding in 2011.

## Cremation and the Catholic Church

By Father Bob Knippenburg  
From Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish  
Web site: [www.sscmshiner.org](http://www.sscmshiner.org) under "Recent Forms."

Cremation is allowed by the Catholic Church when cremation is not "inspired by motives contrary to Christian teaching" (cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 1176 §3).

However, cremation does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Catholic Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites (i.e., the Vigil for the Deceased and the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy outside Mass) since the presence of the human body better expresses the values, which the Church affirms in Her funeral rites.

We must never forget that the body of a deceased Catholic Christian is also the body once washed in baptism, anointed with the oil of salvation, and fed with the Bread of Life. The body of the deceased brings forcefully to mind the Church's conviction that the human body is in Christ a temple of the Holy Spirit and is destined for future glory at the resurrection of the dead. This conviction in faith finds its expression in a sustained and insistent prayer that commends the deceased person to God's merciful care so that his or her place in the Communion of the Saints may be assured. A further expression is the care traditionally taken to prepare the bodies of

the deceased for a burial that befits their dignity, in expectation of their final resurrection in the Lord.

Hence, unless extraordinary circumstances ("convenience" is not an extraordinary circumstance) dictate otherwise, cremation of the deceased should take place AFTER the Funeral Mass. After the cremated remains are returned, a graveside Rite of Committal should take place. When extraordinary circumstances are present, the Church does allow the celebration of the Funeral Mass (or Funeral Liturgy outside Mass) in the presence of the cremated remains.

One final note, the cremated remains of a body should always be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains must be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. A plaque or stone, which records the name of the deceased should always be present at the place of burial or entombment.





## The Catholic Difference

By George Weigel



### Thoughts at the Alamo

On a recent visit to San Antonio to help support an exciting new project, John Paul II Catholic High School, I had the opportunity to re-visit the Alamo, one of my favorite American historical sites, and San Fernando Cathedral, a masterpiece of Hispanic Catholic architecture and decoration. The shrine of Texas liberty and the cathedral church of the Archdiocese of San Antonio are a few blocks from each other; their proximity prompts a reflection on the paradoxes of Catholic history in the New World, and the contemporary challenges facing Catholicism on both sides of the Rio Grande.

The war for Texas independence in 1835-36 and the annexation of the Republic of Texas by the United States in 1845 were preludes to the Mexican-American War of 1846-48—and the latter, I think most historians now agree, was a war of conquest. Yes, various corrupt Mexican governments hadn't done much to develop the upper one-third of the country. But the circumstances under which President James Knox Polk contrived to wring a declaration of war out of Congress were murky at best, and both young statesmen like Abraham Lincoln (who vigorously opposed Polk's policy) and young soldiers like Ulysses S. Grant (who distinguished himself in combat in Mexico but declared the war an unjust one in his memoirs) knew that the American cause was not without blemish, to put it mildly.

It was also, from one point of view, a war by what was a sometimes-militantly Protestant country against what had long been a deeply Catholic country. And then there was the aftermath: the argument over how to digest America's new southwestern territories widened the breach between North and South, such that, in his history of the Civil War, Battle Cry of Freedom, James McPherson argues persuasively that the Mexican-American War's results made the great bloodletting of 1861-1865 virtually inevitable.

Yet the men who died at the Alamo (including Protestants and Lodge members like William Barret Travis, Davy Crockett, and Jim Bowie) fought and died next to Catholic Tejanos—and in so doing, made it possible for the Catholic Church in San Antonio, embodied by the magnificence of San Fernando Cathedral, to live a life of faith and service today that is as least as well-developed as any in Mexico. Some of

those who fought the Texas war of independence and the Mexican-American War may have thought that they were displacing a decadent Catholic culture and making space for an energetic, freedom-loving Protestantism; it seems inconceivable that any of the victors of 1836 and 1848 imagined they were securing the conditions for vibrant Catholicism in the American southwest. But over time, that is precisely what they accomplished.

In another turn of the historical wheel, the favor is now being returned, so to speak. A man born in Mexico will become archbishop of Los Angeles next February. Another native Mexican has been appointed archbishop of San Antonio. Catholicism throughout the United States is being reinvigorated by its Hispanic members. Meanwhile, the Church in Mexico (and throughout Latin America) continues to struggle with poverty, political corruption, and the challenge of an evangelical Protestantism that seems, in some respects, better equipped to inculcate the human virtues that make better material conditions of life possible.

Catholicism has been a powerful cultural force in Mexico for almost five centuries. Today, despite a vicious 20th-century persecution by secularists and Marxists that gave the Church new martyrs like St. Cristobal Magallanes and Blessed Miguel Pro, Mexico remains a profoundly Catholic nation. Yet Mexico in 2010 is also perilously close to becoming a failed state, its northern provinces rendered almost ungovernable by a catastrophic failure of public authority in the face of drug cartels and their wars against each other and the government.

Can an increasingly Hispanic Church in the United States challenge its brethren south of the Rio Grande to stop blaming their problems on "El Norte" and to become the protagonists of their own history—and aid in that transformation? The answer to that question is the next act in the drama symbolized by the Alamo and San Fernando Cathedral.

*George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. His column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver.*

### Bishops' spokeswoman urges life-saving preventive health services for women "Pregnancy is not a disease"

WASHINGTON—Deirdre McQuade, spokeswoman for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, addressed the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Preventive Services for Women as they convened for the first time on November 16. She urged them not to recommend contraception or sterilization among mandated "preventive services" to be announced next August by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as the Department implements the new health care act.

"As you study the vital question of preventive services for women under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), I urge you to focus on services that will offer authentic care and save lives," she said. McQuade serves as assistant director for policy and communications at the bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.

Echoing the letter sent by the Office of the General Counsel ([www.usccb.org/](http://www.usccb.org/)

[ogc/preventive.pdf](#)) to HHS on September 17, McQuade said, "The Conference has a particular concern that contraceptives and sterilization not be mandated as 'preventive' services. To prevent pregnancy is not to prevent a disease—indeed, contraception and sterilization pose their own unique and serious health risks to women and adolescents. In addition, contraceptives and sterilization are morally problematic for many stakeholders, including religiously-affiliated health care providers and insurers."

According to McQuade, the preventive services recommended under the Interim Final Rules share a basic medical profile. "They pose little or no medical risk themselves, and they help prevent or ameliorate identifiable conditions that would pose known risks to life and health in the future," McQuade said, but contraception "presents the opposite profile."

*See Bishops' spokeswoman, p. 17*

## Texas Catholic Conference Urges Catholics to Be Faithful Citizens During Texas' 82nd Legislative Session

AUSTIN—The elections are over, bills are being drafted, and before we know it, the 82nd Texas Legislative Session will be here. This year's Texas House general election results have left Capitol observers and advocates scrambling to rethink their strategy and priorities. As a part of this post-game analysis several people have contacted the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas, to ask how the election results affect its approach to the upcoming session.

"For us, the answer is simple: we will continue to advocate for the fullness of the Bishops' legislative agenda," said Jennifer Carr Allmon, Associate Director of the Texas Catholic Conference. "In the same way that we don't get involved in recommendations for the election, we also don't make predictions about the fate of our issues based on the election outcomes. Keeping in mind the instructions of St. Paul to Timothy (2 Tim 4:1-5), we will be persistent in season and out of season, whether convenient or inconvenient, to fulfill our ministry of proclaiming church teaching to the people of Texas. We congratulate all the election winners and we look forward to working with them this session. We thank the legislators, who are moving on, for their service."

The Texas Catholic Conference reads all legislation filed and monitors issues pertaining to Catholic moral and social teachings as well as the institutional concerns of the

Catholic Church. The Conference encourages all Catholics to be faithful citizens and continue to engage in advocacy during and after the legislative session.

"Why do we advocate?" asked Cardinal Daniel DiNardo at the Conference's Annual General Assembly. "Because religion is part of the public square." At the General Assembly, diocesan staff learned about issues in the upcoming session, as well as discussed organizing for the 2011 Texas Catholic Conference Advocacy Day, which will be held on April 6, 2011.

Visit the Texas Catholic Conference Web site at [www.TXcatholic.org](http://www.TXcatholic.org) to learn more about Advocacy Day as well as the other resources and opportunities for Catholics to get involved as faithful citizens. The Web site includes the Conference's Legislative Agenda, policy papers (two-page documents that provide Catholic teaching and other information on the issues), previous testimony, and options to search issues by topic area.

The Conference also publishes the Texas Catholic Voice e-newsletter and Action alerts to help Catholics stay abreast of relevant issues. You can also subscribe to the Texas Catholic Voice, by clicking the "Get Involved" banner at [www.TXcatholic.org](http://www.TXcatholic.org) or by texting your e-mail address to 512-537-9882. You can also find the TCC on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/TXcatholic](http://www.facebook.com/TXcatholic)) and on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/TXcatholic](http://www.twitter.com/TXcatholic)) and at the *Lighthouse Newspaper* section of [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org).

### Imagining America: Film, mass media helped Catholics enter mainstream, shaped post-war U.S. identity, global direction

DAYTON, Ohio — In the contentious debate about the "Ground Zero mosque," Anthony Burke Smith hears echoes of a not-so-distant history when the controversial building was a church and the faith was Catholicism.

"For a long time, Catholic places such as churches and convents were depicted as places of suspicion and danger for much of mainstream America," said Smith, an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton. "Much of the animosity for Muslims today is an echo of the animosity Catholics faced in the 19th century and the early 20th century."

"How Catholics were portrayed and the stereotypical images used to characterize them sound familiar to what is going on today. Media images of religious minorities are important to examine not only for what they reveal about the minority group but for what they illuminate about American culture itself."

In the case of Catholics, Smith argues in his new book *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War*, published by University Press of Kansas, the period between the 1930s and 1950s witnessed a "Catholic moment" that helped change negative perceptions of Catholics through Catholic-themed films such as *Going My Way*, and through the works of Catholic artists such as film director John Ford.

Because of the involvement of Catholics in film, television and photojournalism, Smith said, Catholics were able to create and circulate their own compelling images in a way that changed not only how the mainstream viewed Catholics, but also contributed to a dramatic change in how Americans viewed the nation and its role

in the world.

"Catholics became deeply involved in forging a Cold War-era vision of America organized around cultural unity at home and American leadership abroad," he said.

Prior to the Cold War era, the American view of the nation's role in the world was as a New World, Protestant alternative to the corruption of Old World Europe, Smith said. However, during 1940s, Americans began to see the nation as a global defender of freedom against totalitarianism.

"Many popular images of and by Catholics became commercially and critically successful," Smith said. "These were images that spoke beyond Catholics; they were speaking to all Americans. They remade American mass culture in ways that placed Catholic perspectives at the center of what it meant to be an American in the new global era that emerged in the 1940s and Cold War period."

"These popular films are very much about the American identity. Bing Crosby's portrayal of a Catholic priest as a modern-day 'Everyman' illustrates how much America had changed to become a much

*See Imagining America, p. 18*

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## Journalist says US penchant for marijuana, guns fuels Mexico's violence

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — A top journalist who is a veteran of covering violent conflict in Mexico and Central America has a sober warning for anybody who smokes marijuana: If it comes from south of the border, "it's heavy with the blood of innocent people." Robert Rivard, editor and executive vice president of the San Antonio Express-News, who has lost colleagues killed in violence in countries where he has been posted, told an audience at St. Mary's University of San Antonio that buying pot feeds and finances the ongoing violence on the U.S.-Mexico border and elsewhere. It is the same, he said, for the thousands of weapons that make their way from Texas across the border and into the hands of the drug cartels' gunmen every year. According to Rivard, another factor in the escalating violence is police and government corruption and an atmosphere in which there are no consequences for breaking the law. Rivard spoke at the university earlier this fall as part of its 2010 President's Peace Commission series, which focused on violence on the border. The series was prompted by stories professor William Israel heard last year from students in his communication studies class who came from the border towns of El Paso, Eagle Pass, Laredo and Brownsville. Their personal accounts of the magnitude and reach of drug-related violence were an education for him and their classmates, he said.

## Executive orders spell out details of faith-based federal fund programs

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Executive orders issued by President Barack Obama Nov. 17 won both praise and criticism from organizations with an interest in how the initiatives of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships affect federally funded social services. The six pages of orders affirmed fundamental principles for policies such as "no organization should be discriminated against on the basis of religion or religious belief" and that orga-

nizations which receive federal funding are prohibited from discriminating against beneficiaries of social services on the basis of religion. The orders followed many of the major recommendations in a 106-page report sent to the White House in March by the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The orders spelled out that faith-based organizations may participate in federal programs "without impairing their independence, autonomy, expression outside the programs in question or religious character." Specifically, they cannot be required to remove or alter religious art or other symbols of faith from facilities where federally funded services are provided. Institutions also may include religious terms in their names, may select board members on a religious basis and include religious references in documents such as mission statements. People who receive social services also will be entitled to be referred to another organization if they object to the religious character of a provider. And each beneficiary should receive written notice of that option. The changes affect operating principles in place since President George W. Bush created the predecessor to the organization and Obama renamed the office and gave it a somewhat broader focus in 2009.

## Pope says Catholic newspapers have 'irreplaceable' role

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said the Catholic press has an irreplaceable role in forming Christian consciences and reflecting the church's viewpoint on contemporary issues. Despite the crisis in print media today, the Catholic newspaper still has a vital role to play in diocesan communications, the pope said. He made the remarks Nov. 26 to members of the Italian Federation of Italian Weeklies. The pope said that while secular media often reflect a skeptical and relativistic attitude toward truth, the church knows that people need the full truth brought by Christ. "The mission of the Church consists in creating the conditions so that this meeting with Christ can be realized. Cooperating in this task, the communications media are called to serve the truth with courage, to help public opinion see and read reality from an evangelical viewpoint," he said. The pope said the

printed newspaper, because of its simplicity and widespread distribution, remains an effective way of spreading news about local diocesan events and developments, including charity initiatives.

## Priest says service for unclaimed cremains gives deceased 'back to God'

STURGEON BAY, Wis. (CNS) — The prayers recited Nov. 18 at St. Joseph Cemetery were identical to any other Catholic funeral rite. But this service, led by Father Carl Schmitt, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish, was different. The funeral service was for the unclaimed cremains of 33 people, donated to St. Joseph Cemetery by Huehns Funeral Home and Forbes Funeral Home of Sturgeon Bay. Many of the remains had been at the funeral homes for decades, said the spokesmen at the homes. "A lot (of the cremains) were just unclaimed and for a number of reasons," said Father Schmitt following the service. "The funeral homes did their diligence in trying to find family members first." As the priest said during the service, no one in attendance knew who the deceased were but everyone understood it was a way to "give them back to God." According to Todd Huehns of Huehns Funeral Home, giving the cremated remains a dignified resting place was the main reason he contacted St. Joseph Cemetery earlier this year. All but one of the cremains were identified, and after unsuccessful attempts at uniting them with families, the funeral homes decided to approach the Catholic cemetery. "Once (efforts to find relatives were) exhausted, we contacted Father Carl and asked if we could proceed" with interment at the cemetery, Huehns told The Compass, newspaper of the Diocese of Green Bay.

## Colleagues recall commitment of churchwomen slain in El Salvador

MELBOURNE, Fla. (CNS) — Dec. 2 marks the 30th anniversary of the martyrdom of Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, lay missionary Jean Donovan and Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, the four churchwomen of El Salvador who were savagely brutalized and killed for spreading the good



**HAITIAN RESIDENT HOLDS CHILD SUFFERING FROM CHOLERA AT HOSPITAL IN HAITI**—A Haitian resident holds his relative who is suffering from cholera at St. Catherine hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Nov. 12. Since the cholera outbreak began Oct. 19 up to Nov. 15, more than 900 people have died and nearly 15,000 had been hospitalized, the Haitian health minister said. (CNS photo/St-Felix Evens, Reuters)

news and teaching people to read and pray. "I can't say this to anybody because they wouldn't understand," Sister Dorothy wrote to her former missionary partner, Sister Martha Owen, in October 1980. "I want you to explain why I have to stay." El Salvador was experiencing civil unrest, repeated military coups and finally civil war. Amid the death squads and countless disappearances, the four churchwomen attempted to bring life to the communities they served. "Dorothy had a true and genuine concern for people," Sister Martha said. "She was always open to both

sides of an issue — trying to bring light, not heat, to the issue. The preferential option for the poor was in her heart even before we went. She felt the needs of the poor so deeply within herself that she identified with them. She was willing to sacrifice anything. She offered herself for the violence to stop." Sister Martha had shared a one-room hut with Donovan. "Jean had a call there and tried to follow that," she said. "She was easy to be around. She was involved with the young people and totally committed to the kids. Jean was everybody's sister and daughter and maybe God had exactly that in mind."

## Bishops' spokeswoman urges life-saving preventive health services for women

*Continued from p. 16*

She continued, "Use of prescription contraception actually increases a woman's risk of developing some of the very conditions that the 'preventive services' listed in the Interim Final Rules are designed to prevent, such as stroke, heart attacks and blood clots (especially for women who also smoke), so a policy mandating contraceptive services as 'preventive services' would be in contradiction with itself."

McQuade added, "At various times women may have serious personal reasons for wanting to avoid or delay a pregnancy. However, these personal reasons

do not transform a temporary or permanent condition of infertility into a prerequisite for health, or turn a healthy pregnancy into a disease condition."

She also highlighted the potential impact on conscience rights. "Currently, such employers and insurance issuers [who object to contraception and sterilization] are completely free under federal law to purchase and offer health coverage that excludes these procedures. They would lose this freedom of conscience under a mandate for all plans to offer contraception and sterilization coverage," McQuade said. "Thus

the Administration's promise that Americans who like their current coverage will be able to keep it under health care reform would become a hollow pledge."

She concluded, "The Administration rightly does not include contraceptives or sterilization as preventive services in its Interim Final Rules, and future rulemaking or other guidance should also refrain from doing so. We hope these considerations will be taken into account as the Institute of Medicine prepares to make its recommendations on a final list of required preventive services for women."

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\*\* Funerals: A Consumers Guide", June 2000

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## Capital Comments

By Jennifer Carr Allmon  
Associate Director  
Texas Catholic conference



### Modern Day Money Changers and Closing the Loophole

My commute to work is blissfully short—just enough time for one or two songs on the radio. So when I hear a commercial, I am quick to change the station. Yesterday as I headed out, I heard a peppy woman encouraging me to get \$2,500 in fast cash today for an auto title loan. Annoyed, I tried another station where I was urged to get quick cash now with no credit check. When my third station offered another payday loan commercial, I was disgusted enough to simply turn off the radio altogether.

The claim of payday lenders is that they offer a solution to fami-

lies who face short-term crises. However, instead of promoting financial stability for families, these lenders actually benefit more from a family's financial struggles. Payday and auto title loan businesses have tripled in number in Texas since 2006, when they discovered a loophole in Texas law allowing them to charge excessive fees for loans that trap people in debt.

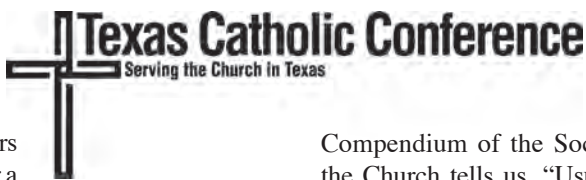
Payday and auto title lenders in Texas often charge upwards of 500 percent APR for a \$300 loan. More than 75 percent of payday loans are taken out within 2 weeks of the previous loan in order to fill the financial gap caused by the loan itself. Because of the debt trap, in Texas an average payday borrower pays \$840 for a \$300 loan. Regulatory standards are already in place for small dollar lenders, but payday and auto title loan operators take advantage of a loophole in Texas law to avoid that regulation. They use the loophole to get around Texas laws that cap rates and fees for consumer loans by claiming that they are not lenders, but Credit Service Organizations. Legitimate credit service organizations (CSOs) help people clean up

their credit and pay off debt. Payday and auto title loan operators advertise no credit check for fast cash.

In the teachings of our faith we have many warnings about usury and the exploitation of people. Lending practices that take unfair advantage of one's desperate circumstances are unjust. Such practices risk the stability of the family. Catholic Social Teaching demands respect for the dignity of persons, preferential concern for the poor and vulnerable, and the pursuit of the common good. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church tells us, "Usury is a scourge that is also a reality in our time and that has a stranglehold on many peoples' lives. Although the quest for equitable profit is acceptable in economic and financial activity, recourse to usury is to be morally condemned. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them. (341)

These principles, coupled with our teaching on economic justice, compel our questioning of current payday lending practices. In the upcoming legislative session, the Texas Catholic Conference calls on the legislature to close the loophole in our state law that allows payday, auto title, and other consumer loans to operate as CSOs, and provide a level playing field by requiring that all lenders and brokers of payday, auto title, or other consumer loans be licensed and comply with the same standards and consumer protection laws of licensed lenders in the Texas Finance Code. In the meantime, my car radio will be off.

For more information visit [www.TXcatholic.org](http://www.TXcatholic.org) or [www.TexasFaithForFairLending.org](http://www.TexasFaithForFairLending.org).



### Imagining America: Film, mass media helped Catholics enter mainstream, shaped post-war U.S. identity, global direction

Continued from p. 16

more inclusive national community."

At a time when the United States assumed a new role as a worldwide leader against totalitarianism, Catholics' identification with a church that crossed national boundaries was no longer the same liability as in the 19th century, he said.

Smith said while the rise of Cold War-era American culture brought Catholics into the mainstream, the cost of that movement was displacement of the Catholic emphasis on social justice evident in popular representations in the 1930s, especially seen in the films of John Ford.

"Catholicism was a potent force in Ford's movies as an indirect influence reshaping a familiar American story of the struggle between insiders and outsiders," he said. "That struggle translated the historical memory of Catholics' fight against ethnic and religious prejudice into an expanded sense of a larger American community that included Catholics."

At the same time, influential Life magazine frequently and favorably depicted Catholics in photo essays as typical or even exemplary Americans, Smith said. In fact, Life used Catholics as examples of "family bliss" in a "harmonious, middle-class America."

"We see that Catholics did not passively assimilate, there was nothing passive about Catholics actively shaping the American culture into which they were assimilated," Smith said. "They were reshaping the culture into one in which Catholics could have a home."

Smith said the social prejudice and animosity to difference, immigration and religious minorities are recurring ideas in American history, and are "intimately bound up with wider debates on the character of American identity."

"In many ways, at the beginning of the 21st century, we now see a complete disengagement from the previous history as outsiders that formed the basis of earlier depictions of Catholics," he said. "There is an erasure of historical memory and a loss of the memory of struggle that shaped this image of a more inclusive America."

"Some Catholics now sound like the very people their grandparents struggled against," he said. "At this moment in our history, the emphasis of some Catholics on a personal morality based on individual behavior, divorced from social and economic realities is a far cry from the concern for the common good that once characterized Catholics."



**PEOPLE PRAY DURING KOREAN MASS AT NEW YORK CHURCH**—Worshippers pray during a weekly Korean Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Woodbury, N.Y., Nov. 28. With tensions escalating between North Korea and South Korea, the congregation prayed for peace in the region. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

### Pope says nuclear weapons remain threat to humanity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said nuclear weapons remain a threat to humanity, and he urged steps to curb their proliferation. Addressing Japan's new ambassador to the Vatican Nov. 27, the pope recalled that this year marks the 65th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He said the "horror" of the bombings becomes more poignant every year. "This tragedy strongly reminds us how necessary it is to persevere in the efforts toward nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and toward disarmament," he said. "Nuclear weapons remain a source of great worry. Their possession and the risk of their eventual use generate tension and mistrust in numerous regions of the world," he said. He said the experience in Japan should remind the world of the need to find political solutions to international problems, and of the need to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. That's something the international community should promote by patiently establishing economic and political sanctions against the use of force, he said.

## Making A Difference

By Tony Magliano  
Catholic News Service



### Vatican II's most challenging document turns 45

The most important event in the modern history of the Catholic Church was born 45 years ago.

On Dec. 8, 1965, the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church's 21st and most recent ecumenical (general/worldwide) council, officially concluded.

Pope John XXIII (now Blessed John), who opened the council and Pope Paul VI, who closed it, together with the world's bishops, wanted to make the ancient Catholic faith relevant to contemporary men and women of all cultures. They called on modern Catholics to fully embrace the ageless Gospel message of love, justice and peace, and to use it to heal and transform our suffering world!

The roadmap they designed to help guide us on this urgently important journey was Vatican II's powerful and prophetic document on social justice and peace, "Gaudium et Spes" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). Many observers call this the most important document in the church's social tradition.

The compelling tone of this entire document is reflected in its first sentence: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."

The document instructs us to do no less than bring the transforming power of the Gospel to the world's often greedy and violent cultural, political and economic institutions.

But sadly, we have not responded well. The bishops' clarion call to social justice and peace has been ignored by too many.

Pope Paul VI and the world's bishops declared that "abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes." Yet, 45 years later, abortion on demand and throughout all nine months of pregnancy still continues to claim the lives of approximately 1.2 million unborn babies in the U.S. every year! And throughout the world the number is in the

tens of millions.

The bishops insisted that "the right of having a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone." But sadly, according to the United Nations, more than 1.4 billion fellow human beings live in extreme poverty and are struggling to survive on less than \$1.25 a day!

One very significant reason as to why the poor remain poor is due to an insane, insatiable appetite for military spending on war and weapons of war.

The world's bishops declared that "the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity, and one which ensnares the poor to an intolerable degree."

Yet, according to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, world military spending exceeded \$1.5 trillion dollars in 2008, and the United States was responsible for more than 44 percent of total spending -- 800 percent higher than what Russia spent.

Just imagine the good that could be accomplished with such huge sums of money. Global poverty could be completely eliminated!

Indeed, the bishops were right: the arms race has injured the poor to "an intolerable degree."

Furthermore, considering "the horror and perversity" of modern warfare, the world's bishops at Vatican II declared: "All these considerations compel us to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude. ... Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation."

The world's unborn, poor and war-torn people are still waiting for Catholics and governments to develop this entirely new attitude toward abortion, poverty and war.

Must they wait another 45 years?





# EVENTS

## Special Collection Tri-Conference Fund for Retired Religious — December 12

### Ongoing Events

**The Gabriel Project**—meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Holy Family Church, 2011 Briar Lane, Wharton. The Gabriel Project is a ministry of the Office of Respect Life for providing help to pregnant women in need of spiritual guidance, direction and basic needs. If interested in volunteering in this ministry please call (979) 532-3593, Monday thru Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**Catholic Family Services**—For a listing of e-mails and Web sites of Catholic organizations that focus on the family from marriage preparation to marriage enrichment, fatherhood, parenting, healing, bereavement, separated or divorced, and widowed, please go to the Catholic Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers at <http://www.nacflm.org/>

**St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity/Secular Franciscans**—For more information, please go to their Web site at [www.lostrescompaneros-sfo.org](http://www.lostrescompaneros-sfo.org). For meeting dates, please call Mary Ann LeBlanc at (361) 575-1858.

**Marriage Encounter**—The Marriage Encounter Weekend is open to married couples, Catholic and non-Catholic. Worldwide Marriage Encounter is designed to make good marriages even better. For more information, see [www.wvme.org](http://www.wvme.org); or for upcoming weekends, please contact Milton and Diane Rejcek at (979) 245-0323 or at: [register@mevictoria.org](mailto:register@mevictoria.org).

**Retrouvaille** — The word Retrouvaille means ‘rediscovery.’ Retrouvaille is a program that offers the chance to rediscover yourself, your spouse and a loving relationship in your marriage. Tens of thousands headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending. Go to <http://www.retrouvaille.org> for more information, or to register for the upcoming Victoria Retrouvaille, please go to: <http://www.retrouvaille.org/dates.php> or contact Gerd and Linda Conner at [lbconner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lbconner@sbcglobal.net), (979) 543-3493. Other contacts are at (800) 470-2230 and [www.helpourmarriage.org](http://www.helpourmarriage.org)

**The Beginning Experience**—The Beginning Experience is an international ministry that helps divorced, separated and widowed individuals resolve their grief surrounding the loss of a marriage partner. It is a ministry of the San Antonio Archdiocese Family Life Office. For more information, go to their Web site: [www.beginningexperience.org](http://www.beginningexperience.org); e-mail: [sanantonio@yaho.com](mailto:sanantonio@yaho.com); phone: (210) 734-2146.

**Natural Family Planning**—For information about the Symptom-Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact David and Annie Coffey at [victorianfpteachers@yahoo.com](mailto:victorianfpteachers@yahoo.com). The final fall class will be held on Sunday, Dec 12, at 4 p.m. in the Our Lady of Victory Library. Some great links: <http://learn-nfp.org/nfpmyths.html>; [www.onemoresoul.com](http://www.onemoresoul.com); and [www.priestsforlife.com](http://www.priestsforlife.com)

**Goliad**—Presidio La Bahia Museum and Visitor Center — a National Historic Landmark — is the only Spanish fort in the possession of the Catholic Church in North America. A tour program is available to groups. The Presidio is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is closed on major holidays. Admission is \$4 (ages 12-59); \$3.50 for (60 and older and military personnel) and \$1 (ages 6-11), with children five and younger admitted free. Group rates are available with advance reservations. A re-enactor will be available for school groups with advance reservations. The fort is handicapped accessible. For more information call (361) 645-3752 or see the Web site at [www.presidiolabahia.org](http://www.presidiolabahia.org).

**Engaged Encounter**—Register as soon as you have contacted your pastor due to limited space. *It is strongly recommended that you attend an encounter weekend four to six months prior to your wedding date.* For a registration form, contact your pastor, visit the Web site at [www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm), or write to: Engaged Encounter, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903. The weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. The dates for 2011 are: Feb. 25-27, April 15-17, June 24-26, Sept. 8-11 and Nov. 11-13. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 30. All registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee must accompany registration form.

### Picnics, Activities, etc. December

**Cuero**—St. Michael’s Home and School Association presents Santa’s Arts and Crafts Show Saturday, Dec. 4 at the parish hall. The event begins at 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information see the ad on page 17 or contact St. Michael School at (361) 277-3854 or [www.stmichael-cuero.org](http://www.stmichael-cuero.org).

**La Grange**—A special Christmas affair at the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center Dec. 11. An open house of TCHCC will be from 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. with many events throughout the afternoon. Go to their Web site at [www.czechtexas.org/events.html](http://www.czechtexas.org/events.html) for a brochure with the days events.

**Victoria**—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Dec. 19 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1.50 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council’s projects.

### Upcoming Events

**Edna**—“A Celebration of Life” program will be held at the Jackson County Services Building, 411 N. Wells St., Jan. 19, 2011, 7 – 8 p.m., sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, #1350, St. Agnes Parish. All church ministers, youth, parents and laity from all denominations are invited to attend. No admission will be charged and refreshments will be served.

### Masses • Retreats • Conferences

**Salt Lake, Utah**—Southwest Liturgical Conference 49th Annual Study Week titled “Ever Ancient, Ever New - Preparing for the Revised Roman Missal” will be held Feb. 2 - 5, 2011, in Utah. Early registration deadline is Dec. 11. Register now at [www.swlscslc.org](http://www.swlscslc.org).

**Victoria**— Solemn Vespers – Please join the IWBS Sisters on the following Sundays during Advent: Dec. 5, Dec. 12 and

Dec. 19, from 5:00-6:00 p.m. in the Convent Chapel, at Incarnate Word Convent, (1101 N.E. Water Street) for solemn vespers. This Evening Prayer Service, a gift from our Jewish brothers and sisters, focuses on the Psalms and readings. These prayers give thanks and praise to God for His blessings throughout our day.

**Victoria**—Taizé Prayer Experience – Join the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters Tuesday, Dec. 7, from 7-8 p.m. in the auditorium at Incarnate Word Convent, (1101 N.E. Water Street) for a Taizé prayer service held in a candle-light atmosphere consisting of music, song, chant, scriptural reading, meditation and prayers of intercession. Questions, please call (361) 575-7111.

**Flatonía**—The fourth annual celebration of the feast day of the Holy Innocents will be held at Raphael’s Refuge on Tuesday, Dec. 28. Father Joe Hybner will celebrate Mass in the Monument to the Innocents at 11:00 a.m. Light refreshments will follow. The monument, still under construction, is located two miles west of Flatonía, at 2715 West Highway 90. For information, contact Midge Elam at (361) 865-3021 or [raphaelsrefuge@att.net](mailto:raphaelsrefuge@att.net).

**East Bernard**—Holy Cross Church presents Sondra Abrahams Jan. 15 at Riverside Hall, beginning at 1:00 p.m. with a rosary followed by keynote speaker, Sondra, at 2:00 p.m. She is from Lake Charles, during a near-death experience 40 years ago on the operating table, after being given a drug that stopped her heart, she was given visions of the future. Following her recovery she shares her experiences with people all over the world. She has been called a mystic and a visionary by priests and bishops, but the only title she claims is Warrior for Christ. For more information contact Holy Cross Church at (979) 335-7551.

**Victoria**—Healing Mass and Prayer at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 105 N. William St., on the first Saturday of the month (except for January) at 10 a.m. with Father Phi Nguyen, chaplain of IWBS Convent. For more information, please contact Sister Louise Marie Jones at [iwbsvoc2@yahoo.com](mailto:iwbsvoc2@yahoo.com).

**Bay City**—Weekly Men’s Group, “That Man is You! ~ A Light to the Nations,” meets at Holy Cross School cafeteria each Friday morning beginning with breakfast at 5:45 a.m. Program ends by 7:10 a.m. All men are welcome. That Man is You! is transforming men, families and society as it presents the vision of man fully alive! Combining the teachings of the Church and wisdom of the saints with the best research from modern science in an interactive, multimedia format, That Man is You! puts this vision within the grasp of every man ([www.thatmanisyou.org](http://www.thatmanisyou.org)). Questions? Call Mike Allison at (979) 479-1370 or Allen Green at (979) 245-2598.

**Victoria**—Missing something in your life? Do you need an uplifting experience? Why not try some PRAISE and WORSHIP. Come join Incarnate Word Prayer Group on Monday nights

from 7:30-9:00 p.m. at Incarnate Word Auditorium. For more information call Paula at (361) 575-7120 or Sr. Louise Marie at (361) 575-7111.

**Tivoli**—Our Lady of Guadalupe Church invites you to a Healing Mass and Prayer Service every First Friday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Mark your calendars now for next month. Mass is followed by praise and worship/adoration, healing prayers, praying over, etc. Counseling available. Please come; bring your family and friends; and experience the healing touch of the Lord! For more information, please contact Rev. Gabriel P. Coelho at (361) 286-3349.

**ACTS Retreats**—For information on ACTS retreats, please go to ACTS Web site at [www.actsmiissions.org](http://www.actsmiissions.org). For more information about the ACTS community movement in the El Campo Deanery, to download an upcoming ACTS retreat application, or to submit/view the prayer requests across the El Campo Deanery, please visit their site at <http://ecdeaneryacts.org/>.

### Pilgrimages, Tours, etc.

**Victoria**—Victoria, Where Texas History Began will be open to the public through January 29, 2011. Viewing hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Museum of the Coastal Bend, located on the campus of The Victoria College, at the corner of East Red River and Ben Jordan. Visit [www.museumofthecoastalbend.org](http://www.museumofthecoastalbend.org) for more information. Admission is \$3.50 for adults, \$2.50 for senior citizens, and \$2 for students ages 4 years through 8th grade. Admission is free for museum members, faculty, staff and students of The Victoria College and the University of Houston - Victoria, and for children under 4 years of age.

**Europe**—13-day Pilgrimage to Italy & France May 16 – 28, 2011, with spiritual director Father Tony Boateng-Mensah of St. Mary’s in Victoria. Go to Lourdes, St. Anthony of Padua, Venice, Assisi, tomb of Padre Pio – San Giovanni Rotondo, Mass at St. Michael’s Cave, hometown of Padre Pio - Pietrelcina, tour of ancient Rome, St. Peter’s Basilica, papal audience, panorama of Paris, Basilica of St. Therese of Lisieux. Tour operated by Little Flower Tours & Travel, Ltd.; hosted by St. Mary’s Catholic Church Padre Pio Prayer Group, Victoria. For detailed itinerary/reservation form, please call Dora Silva at (361) 573-7761.

Have an event???

Contact us at

(361) 573-5725 (FAX)

or e-mail: [janakr@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:janakr@victoriadiocese.org)



## Nativity Art Around the World

LA GRANGE—The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center in La Grange, Texas, is announcing the opening of a holiday museum exhibit titled “Nativity Around the World,” which will be open to the public from December 1 through January 6, 2011.

The scenes gathered for the exhibit were selected for their imaginative approach to the Nativity, their distinctive cultural features, craftsmanship and artistic medium. The one from Uganda is made of banana leaf; the one from Viet Nam, from recycled magazines; the one from Jerusalem, from polished Olive wood. And there is one that measures two inches carved out of an Ecuadorian Tagua nut.

“The Nativity is an important event in human history,” said Jim (Doc) Ayres, TCHCC museum chair, “and we invite everyone to witness these very interesting interpretations of it.”

Surrounding these scenes as a special feature are three, three-dimensional panoramic scenes by Moravian artist Ferdinand Pribyl (1840-1915). These very impressive panels painted on cardboard (one is fifteen feet long), presented to the public for the first time, stretch across the museum’s walls revealing the pilgrimage of Moravian folk to the manger scene playing musical instruments, carrying children, bread, pigs, chickens, baskets of fruit, cakes, and herding sheep. There is even an elephant in the mix.

The panels of Pribyl’s work come to the TCHCC through the generosity and dedication of Elizabeth Stockbauer and Bette Stockbauer-Harris, of Victoria,

A special feature are three, three-dimensional panoramic scenes by Moravian artist Ferdinand Pribyl (1840-1915). This picture was taken in front of one of the scenes while it was being assembled. Pictured are James Harris, Bette Stockbauer-Harris and Elizabeth Stockbauer, descendants of the artist.

descendants of the artist.

Many have told Ayres that this may well be the first museum Nativity Art exhibit in Texas. “That would be wonderful,” he said, “but if it is not true, the enthusiastic interest in what we have been attempting, of so many in lending us nativities, in underwriting the exhibit, in offering us assistance in setting it up, and in building the future of the exhibit is distinction enough.”

The museum, located at 250 West Fairgrounds Rd. in La Grange, will be open on Wednesdays-Fridays, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Admission is \$1.00. Children under 12 will be admitted free. Further information about the exhibit and school or other group tours may be obtained by calling (979) 968-9399 or by writing [info@czechtexas.org](mailto:info@czechtexas.org).



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## *Bishop David E. Fellhauer and the Chancery Office Staff Wish You a Blessed Christmas and New Year!*

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from (seated l-r) Sharon Jones, Tanya Starnes, Regina Janak, Minnie Bochat; Msgr. Eustace Hermes, Cindy Brewer, Janie Carrales, Chris Alvarez, Sister Digna Vela, IWBS, Martha Pearson-Vela; John Quarry, Melissa Gutierrez, Jeri Joseph, Mike Brown, Debbie Vanelli, Melissa Perales; Gary Rangnow, Jose Ortega, Bishop David E. Fellhauer, Ryan Sprinkle and René Garcia. Not pictured: Mary Haas, Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin and Mariah Raz.

Feliz Navidad

Joyeux Noel

Mo'adim Lesimkha. Chena tova

Merry Christmas

Natale hilare et Annum Faustum!

Froehliche Weihnachten

Nollaig Shona Dhuit

Vesele Vianoce

Chung Mung Giang Sinh

Mele Kalikimaka

Boze Narodzenie

## Sing the Eternal Song of the Liturgy

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- ✦ Learn and sing a beautiful chant to pray in our liturgies

**Place:** SS. Cyril & Methodius Church, Shiner, Texas

**Dates:** Eight Saturday afternoons:

Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 — Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26

**Times:** 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Followed by the 5:00 pm Saturday Vigil Mass  
sung in the Chant we have learned

For Program, registration and tuition visit our website at  
[www.GregorianChantSchool.org](http://www.GregorianChantSchool.org)

832-758-1250



## Parishes help raise funds for Guatemalan orphanage

By Cynthia Brewer

A place that has been near and dear to the heart of Father Dan Morales, current pastor of St. Mary's in Victoria, is Asociacion Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro (Social Work of Saint Brother Pedro or Las Obras Orphanage), the second largest health care provider in Las Antigua, Guatemala.

Father Dan has been visiting Las Obras Orphanage in Guatemala since 2005, as well as inviting friends and parishioners from throughout the Diocese of Victoria to join him. As diocesan vocation director, he has also taken diocesan seminarians with him for the past two years.

Although the term orphanage generally brings images of children playing about, Las Obras Orphanage is quite different from the normal mental image that the term brings to mind. For the past 29 years, Las Obras has provided care for newborns, children, adults, and the elderly, all with disabilities, such as cleft lip and palate, cerebral palsy, paralysis, blindness, and other handicaps. Most of the patients are abandoned or have come from extremely poor families whose contribution, when given, cannot cover the cost of their care.

Las Obras, a 230-bed, non-profit organization, is run by Franciscan brothers, providing 24-hour/seven-days a week, long-term or permanent residential care for all ages from all over the country. The orphanage's medical facility has treated 174,978 patients, and 93,066 procedures have been performed, since its establishment.

The main source of visiting doctors at Las Obras come from Faith in Practice, a Texas non-profit organization. Their mission is to improve the physical, spiritual and economic conditions of the poor in Guatemala through short-term medical, surgical and dental mission trips and related programs of education. In 2006, Faith In Practice completed the expansion and renovation of the operating rooms at Las Obras, thus providing five state-of-the-art operating rooms.

As part of his devotion, Father Dan hosted the director of Las Obras, Father José Giuseppe Contran, at his parish from Oct. 30 – Nov. 16, taking him to places throughout Texas networking with

medical personnel and developing and marketing people who are interested in helping Las Obras.

Father José is a Franciscan who grew up in Italy, but has spent the past 38 years in Central America, 17 of which have been spent in Guatemala serving the poor, abandoned and sick, just as St. Brother Peter, a Spaniard who is buried in Antigua, had done in the 1600s.

With Father Dan interpreting Spanish to English, Father José spoke at several parishes and organizations in the diocese

as a means of raising money and awareness for the orphanage and healthcare center that, due to political reasons, has lost its monetary government support.

"On Nov 2, Father José spoke to the Holy Family #9088 KCs," said Father Dan, "thanking them for raising the funds to enable the (Diocese of Victoria) seminarians to visit and work there each year."

To St. Mary's RCIA group he showed a video of the works of the Asoc-

ciacion Obras and spoke to the class Nov. 9. In speaking about the seven sacraments with the candidates and catechumens, Father José said, "The sacraments aren't just for us – for our personal selves – but to help us serve – to serve Christ through serving the poor."

Fundraisers for Las Obras were held at Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca Nov. 11, and Father José spoke at each of the Masses at St. Philip Parish in El Campo Nov. 12 and 13. Parishioners who have visited the orphanage with Father Gary Janak held a dinner for Father José Nov. 13.

Father Dan invites people to come to Las Obras to volunteer for a week at a time, caring for babies or doing handyman jobs, while also taking Spanish classes. Go to [www.obrashermanopedro.org](http://www.obrashermanopedro.org) to learn more. And Faith In Practice invites doctors, dental professionals, translators, computer operators, cooks and spiritual leaders to join their teams in a week-long mission experience assisting them to meet the medical needs of Las Obras' patients; please contact them at [www.faithinpractice.org](http://www.faithinpractice.org). May God continue to bless Asociacion Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro.



Father José Giuseppe Contran



Participants greeted Fathers José Giuseppe Contran and Dan Morales at a fundraiser Nov. 11 at The Heritage Center in Port Lavaca. The "Hope of a Miracle" fundraiser included a social, silent auction, dinner, performance by Ballet Folklorico, a presentation by Father José, and was closed by Father Dan, who sponsored the fundraiser. Committee members consisted of nearly 20 OLG parishioners who have traveled to Guatemala with Father Dan.