2006 in Review

For a look back on what made Catholic news, both nationally and in the diocese, see Pgs. 8-9.

The Online Angelus

Please stop by The Online Angelus, updated Monday-Friday with daily readings, events in the diocese, reprints of stories in the Angelus, Catholic News Service headlines, feature stories and any breaking news that may be occurring in the Diocese of San Angelo.

You can find us at http://theonlineangelus.wordpress.com/.

If your parish would like something posted on The Online Angelus, please send the information to JimmyLPatterson@grandecom.net.

Dioecesan Conference Day

Mark your calendars for 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 3, 2007 for The Rhythms of The Spiritual Life: The Dynamics of Lifelong Conversion, the topic of the annual Dioecesan Conference Day.

Registration begins at 7:45 a.m., Feb. 3. Cost is $18 if postmarked before January 19; $20 if after Jan. 19. Lunch will be included. Mail fees with name(s) to Diocese of San Angelo, P.O. Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902.

For more information contact the Office of Education & Formation at 325-651-7500.

More information in DIOCESAN BRIEFS/Pg. 2

Youth 2000

A weekend for, of, and by young people! Youth 2000 retreat will be held Jan. 26 through 28 at St. Stephen’s Catholic Church in Midland. All youth and young adults, ages 13 to 30, are invited. More information in DIOCESAN BRIEFS/Pg. 2

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What makes a holy day of obligation a holy day of obligation?

By Jimmy Patterson

Editor

They are some of the holiest days of the Catholic calendar and this year there are five of them the faithful are called to attend.

But what exactly makes a Holy Day of Obligation a Holy Day of Obligation?

It’s not always the simplest thing to explain. As with many aspects of our faith, this, too, demands a little background.

If certain Holy Days of Obligation fall on a Saturday or a Monday, directly adjacent to a Sunday, they are not deemed obligation days during that particular year. Unless the particular Holy Day of Obligation in question is Christmas, Easter (which is of course always on a Sunday) or the Immaculate Conception (which is always celebrated regardless the day of week because it is the Patronal Feast in America.

Having said that, the five days you can expect to attend Mass other than Sunday this year are listed at right.

(Please See HOLY/15)

Bearing Gifts

At left, Rev. James Bridges, of St. Stephen in Midland, delivers groceries to Helping Hands. At right, Msgr. Larry Droll, pastor of St. Ann in Midland, helps with toys collected at his parish. The church’s Christmas toy drive was organized by teenager Frances Behrmann as a community service project. More than 600 toys were collected at Masses from St. Ann’s Parish and School. All toys were given to Helping Hands, which distributed them. St. Ann’s Youth Group also assisted Helping Hands in their distributions during the Christmas season.

Faces of Faith

Midland Ass’t U.S. Attorney converted while at Harvard

By Jimmy Patterson

Editor

It is no doubt a widely held view that Catholics often fall into two categories: Cradle Catholics, or those born into the faith; and converts, who come into the church when they marry someone of the faith, often a cradle Catholic.

Not Glenn Jackson. He’s a convert, but he didn’t have a change of heart because he was getting married. He converted when he was in college. And not just any college. Jackson made the switch when he was working toward his jurisprudence degree at the Harvard Law School.

(Please See JACKSON/15)

Good Samaritan practices corporal, spiritual works of mercy

On continuing to live out the Year of Reconciliation.

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

As a follow-up to our beautiful Year of Reconciliation for the Diocese of San Angelo, and as we remember and celebrate in our own lives the mercy that Jesus our King has manifested to each one of us, we are invited to have a new appreciation for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and to make a new commitment to be people of mercy, people of compassion — we are invited simply to be good Samaritans. Our merciful King reminds us in the story of the sheep and the goats that our eternal happiness depends primarily on how we reached out and helped our neighbor with their basic human needs. Hence, I propose that a way to continue to live out this Year of Reconciliation far into the future is to give new emphasis to living some special works that today perhaps have been lost not only in our terminology, but also in our Christian practice. I am referring

(Please See BISHOP/14)
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EVENT COMES TO MIDLAND

YOUTH 2000 OFFERS THREE DAYS OF FUN, FELLOWSHIP AND CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Young people around the world have responded with great enthusiasm to YOUTH 2000 retreats, and this internationally-known event will be held in Midland Jan. 26-28 at St. Stephen’s Catholic Church, 4601 Neely Ave. All young people, ages 13 to 30, are invited.

“YOUTH 2000 Retreats have provided a means for young people to develop a deep and lasting personal relationship with Jesus Christ,” said Suzie Fusco of YOUTH 2000 U.S.A. “Young people gain a solid foundation upon which to build their lives.”

Begun in 1990, YOUTH 2000 is a response to the challenge of the late Pope John Paul II given to young people at World Youth Day in Spain to “become shining heralds of the re-evangelization and generous architects of the civilization of love.”

YOUTH 2000 responds to this challenge by helping young people strengthen their love for the Holy Eucharist and to bear witness to the role Jesus has in their lives.

Michael Hill, 18, who attended a YOUTH 2000 Retreat two years ago in Midland, said, “I would recommend it to anyone. I was able to share my Catholic faith with 600 other teens. Just come and have a good time, and give God the glory.”

Young people are given the opportunity during the retreat to grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith and to deepen their commitment to the service of the Church and others. During the three-day retreat, young people will spend time in prayer, adoration, singing, listening to lively talks, and sharing with other young people.

The retreat on Friday is from 6:30-11 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The fee is $40 per person, which includes lunch and dinner on Saturday.

For more information, contact Dennis Robson, St. Stephen’s pastoral associate, at (432) 520-7394 or (432) 978-6570 or email drobson@st.wttxcoxmail.com. Registration forms are available at St. Stephen’s web site, http://www.ststephensmidland.org/, and watch the Angelus Online for more information and a YOUTH 2000 web site.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Register by Jan. 15: Registration forms and liability releases are required for participants 17 and younger. Those forms are available at parishes throughout the diocese. Return the forms to St. Stephen’s Catholic Church, 4601 Neely Ave., Midland, Texas 79707 by Jan. 15. The registration fee is $40 per person. Additional donations to help offset these costs for individuals are gratefully accepted.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

DIoCESAN CONFERENCE DAY

Mark your calendars for 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 3, 2007, for “The Rhythms of The Spiritual Life: The Dynamics of Lifelong Conversion,” the topic of the annual Diocesan Conference Day. Registration and exhibits open at 7:45 a.m. Cost is $18 if premarked before January 19; $20 if after Jan. 19. Lunch will be included. Mail fees with name(s) to Diocese of San Angelo, P.O. Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902.

For more information contact the Office of Education & Formation at 325-651-7500. Regardless of our personal role in the church, at the very heart of all ministries is the task of initiating and then nurturing lifelong conversion and spiritual growth. Perhaps at no time in the church’s history has that task been more complex and challenging.

In his presentation, noted author, teacher and retreat director Tom Danzig will propose a new way of understanding the dynamics of the spiritual life, one that will enlighten and enliven both our self-understanding and our perception of ministry and will propose practical implications and applications of that new vision.

For more information contact the Office of Education & Formation at 325-651-7500.

HOLY FAMILY-ABILENE MISSION

The Holy Family-Abilene Parish Mission is January 21-24. Father Daise Czaja, C.P. will conduct the Mission. The Theme is “Come Encounter Jesus.” Morning talks with Mass will be at 10 a.m. Evening sessions begin at 7 p.m. Everyone is invited!

Holy Family is located at 5410 Buffalo Gap Rd, in Abilene.

Call the church office for more information at 325-692-1820.

Czaja was born and raised in Port Arthur. After high school, he joined the Passionists and was ordained a priest in Louisville, Ky., in 1986. He began preaching at parish missions in 1972, a call to the church that has been his primary assignment for 35 years. He also served in India for three years and returned to America in 2004.

He is presently local superior of the Passionist community in Louisville.

PROYECTO 2007

During 2007, the Diocese of San Angelo will work with the Diocese of San Pedro Sula on a special project that will provide assistance in paying the salary of a doctor and assistant nurse in a dispensary serving the very poor in Comayagua, Espiritu, and people living in huts on the banks of the Piedras and Bermejo rivers. These medical professionals will provide consultation for three days a month and the program is under the responsibility of the Missioneras Claras (Claretian Missionary Sisters).

The salary assistance sought by the Diocese of San Pedro Sula is $5,580.00, which has been generously provided by the St. Vincent de Paul Conference of St. Ann’s Parish in Midland.

The Diocesan Partnership Team would like to invite medical professionals from the Diocese of San Angelo to consider ways they could be involved in this project. It might be by volunteering some time in Honduras, especially if you speak Spanish. It might be by sending supplies, samples, and things that could be used in such a dispensary. Someone suggested a simple First Aid Manual in Spanish. The Diocesan Partnership Team is eager to hear your ideas!

Please contact Msgr. Larry Droll (432-682-6303), Father Tom Bailey (325-651-7551), Father David Herrera (325-655-6278), Sister Hilda Marotta (325-651-7500) or Sister Malachy Griffin (325-949-8033).

‘WOMAN OF DISTINCTION’ SURVIVOR OF RWANDAN HOLOCAUST

The El Camino Girl Scout Council of San Angelo is very excited to announce that Immaculée Ilibagiza, author of Left to Tell Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust will be the keynote speaker at the El Camino GS Women of Distinction Award Luncheon on March 8th, 11:30 to 1 at First United Methodist Church in San Angelo.

Immaculée is a Catholic woman who survived the Rwandan Holocaust in a 3 by 4 bathroom with 7 other women for 91 days as approximately 1 million of her Tutsi tribes-people were slaughtered, including her family. She credits her survival and her life to intense meditation, prayer of the Rosary and her willingness to forgive the unforgivable.

Immaculée tells the story of her survival of the Rwandan Holocaust in her book Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust. It is a true story of her encounter with the Rwandan government andgenocide, and how in the midst of it she met Jesus. From that time on, she has been a voice of hope and healing to those who heard her story.

Drawing upon her own experiences as a woman of Distinction, Immaculée as she is known, has been working with women and girls around the world to help them tell their stories of triumph over adversity.

She is the recipient of the 2007 Heroines Award from the Girl Scouts of America. Immaculée Ilibagiza is a woman of strength, courage, and love.

The El Camino Girl Scout Women of Distinction is an event honoring women of strong character and values and who serve their communities and are positive role models for girls.

Nomination forms are available at gosanangelo.com or from the Girl Scout office. 655-8961. Tickets for the event are $50 and go on sale February 1st (all proceeds from this event go to support the El Camino Girl Scout Council).

As a gift from the Girl Scouts to the San Angelo community and surrounding area, Immaculée will also speak at an evening event. It will be held at the 1st Baptist Church in San Angelo at 7pm and it will be open to the public. There will not be tickets available.
The Catholic Church’s vision for immigration reform

The National Week of Migration is January 7-13, 2007

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

All of us, in reference to our final eternal goal, are migrants. The Church is a migrant Church. It always has been and always will be, as we are pilgrims on a journey. St. Paul wrote, “Here we have no lasting city but we seek the city which is to come.” (Heb. 13:14).

I invite all the people of our Diocese to remember in prayer and study the 26th observance of the National Migration Week that is celebrated from January 7-13, 2007. The theme for this year is “Receiving Christ in the Immigrant” which is both an invitation and a challenge to provide a welcome, hospitality and assistance to those who are migrants, immigrants, refugees and victims of human traffic and other people who come to our country looking for peace and justice.

The Catholic Church has a vision for immigrant reform, and the Church wants immigrants, including the undocumented, to become full members of our society. In the Church’s vision, all immigrants are to assume all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to be permitted to contribute fully to the common good.

In the Church’s vision, immigrants are to be afforded legal status and other indications of membership in our nation so as to further the good of us all. Extending labor and workplace protection laws to immigrants prevent employers from exploiting

(Please See IMMIGRATION/14)
Ford brought healing, restored integrity

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- In his brief, unelected tenure in the nation's highest office, President Gerald R. Ford restored integrity and character to the White House and brought a measure of healing to a country badly wounded and divided by the Watergate scandal.

Ford, who had a bout with pneumonia last January and two heart treatments in August, died Dec. 26 at his home in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

In a Dec. 27 statement, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called Ford "a great and good man who served his country with distinction."

"As a healing presence for the nation at a time when it was much needed, President Ford earned his country's lasting gratitude," said Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash. "We pray for the repose of the soul of our 38th president and express our heartfelt condolences to his wife and family."

During his 30-month presidency, South Vietnam fell to the communist forces of the North, high Nixon administration officials were found guilty of Watergate crimes, a blue-ribbon commission found the CIA was engaged in illegal activities, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty, the United States took in more than 140,000 South Vietnamese refugees and the country celebrated its bicentennial.

Ford, who was Episcopalian, won some favor from Catholic officials because of his support of federal aid to parochial schools, his increase of U.S. food aid in the face of widespread famine in 1975, his welcoming of Vietnamese refugees, his support for immigration reform that made family reunification easier and his efforts at detente with the Soviet Union.

But the bishops opposed his domestic policies of reducing the food stamp program and other areas of social welfare.

Ford was 93 at the time of his death.

Priest says children fear Gaza Strip too dangerous for Santa

JERUSALEM (CNS) -- Papa Noel is too afraid to come to the Gaza Strip, the first graders of Holy Family Parish told their teachers as they accepted the traditional holiday chocolates before Christmas.

Normally the younger children believed Papa Noel, or Santa Claus, brought them sweets for Christmas, said Msgr. Manuel Musallam, the Holy Family Parish priest, in a telephone interview with Catholic News Service.

But just days before Christmas, three children were killed in the infighting between Hamas and Fatah forces which is dragging the Gaza Strip even further into a spiral of violence and lawlessness. The killings terrified the students, leading them to believe the Gaza Strip was too scary for Santa Claus to visit, the priest said.

And parents were not able to buy traditional holiday gifts and clothing for their children, said Msgr. Musallam. Many are government employees who haven't been paid because of the international boycott against the Hamas-led government since January.

Pope tells audience Christmas ‘a reminder of God’s infinite love’

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — When God chose to become man through the birth of Jesus, he gave the gift of his infinite love to all people, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Christians joyously celebrate Christmas as it marks the mysterious event of God’s eternal word made into flesh for the salvation of humanity, he said Dec. 27 at his last general audience of 2006.

The Christmas message is: “With the birth of Jesus, God showed his good will toward all people,” he said to 9,000 of the faithful in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall.

When Christ was born in the cave in Bethlehem, the heavens broke out in praise of God: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests,” the pope said.

The pope said this song of praise helps explain why God decided to become man.

With his glory “shining on the face of Christ,” God was able to bring peace to his earthly creatures, he said. And by lovingly offering the world his only Son, God gave humanity the gift of salvation.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life,” the pope said quoting from the Gospel of John.

Love is the motivating force behind God’s incarnation, Pope Benedict said, since God is not about absolute power “but absolute love.”

“The God we contemplate in the Nativity scene is God-love,” he said.

The pope asked that the Christmas season help inspire the faithful to praise God’s glory and work concretely to foster peace on earth.

“The only way to glorify God and build peace in the world is in the humble and confident welcoming of the gift of Christmas: love,” he said.
**Bishop’s Calendar**

**JANUARY**

10 -- SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, 11 a.m., meet with Deans.
11 -- ODESSA, St. Joseph and St. Anthony, 6:30 p.m.
13-15 -- SAN JUAN, Meeting of Texas and Mexico Border Bishops.
16 -- SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Presentation to RCIA class, 6:30 p.m.
17-19 -- OKLAHOMA CITY, Southwest Liturgical Conference.
21 -- STERLING CITY, St. Paschal, Mass and Dedication of new building, 12:30 p.m.
22 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Pro-Life Mass, 6:30 p.m.
23-25 -- SAN ANTONIO, MACC Breakfast, meetings with Business Leaders.
27 -- SAN ANGELO, First Methodist Church -- Prayer Service for the City of San Angelo, 11 a.m.
27-28 -- MIDLAND, St. Stephen YOU TH 2000, Mass, Confirmation at 12:30 p.m.
30 -- AUSTIN, Catholic Health Association Advocacy Day.

**FEBRUARY**

1 -- ODESSA, St. Joseph – Prayer and Meeting with People of the South Odessa Parishes at 6:30 p.m.
2 -- SAN ANGELO, Newman Center at 12:00 noon – Day of Consecrated Life – Prayer and Luncheon for Religious Priests and Sisters
Annual NAACP Banquet at 7:00 p.m.
3 -- SAN ANGELO, Convention Center – Diocesan Conference Day
4 -- STERLING CITY, St. Paschal – Blessing of Building at 12:30 p.m.
5-7 -- DALLAS, National Catholic Bioethics Center Workshop for Bishops
8 -- ABILENE, St. Francis – Pastoral Visit with the Pastor and People of the Parish at 6:30 p.m.
9 -- SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Presbyteral Council meeting 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. – Sacred Heart Cathedral – Workshop on Marriage for Priests by Father Robert Ruhnke, C.SS.R.
10 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Scout Awards Mass at 5:00 p.m.
11-13 -- AUSTIN, Texas Conference of Churches
15-- SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Personnel Board meeting at 12:30 p.m.
16 -- SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Staff Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Staff Meeting at 11 a.m.
18 -- MERKEL, Our Mother of Mercy – Mass at 11:30 a.m.
20 -- SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels – Presentation to RCIA at 6:30 p.m.
22 -- AUSTIN – Give Opening Prayer for Texas Legislature
24 -- SAN ANGELO, United Methodist Church – Ecumenical Program – “Pilgrims on a Common Journey”
25 -- SAN ANGELO, Rite of Election at Sacred Heart Cathedral at 2:30 p.m.
27 -- BIG LAKE, St. Margaret – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
28 -- SAN ANGELO, Mass at Newman Center at 12:00 noon

**Christ The King Retreat Center**

- 8-9 -- Nun Run
- 9 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- 12-14 -- Diaconate Training Program
- 14 -- Why Catholic English & Spanish Confirmation Retreat
- 15 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 16 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- 19-21 -- Engaged Encounter
- 22 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 22-23 -- Texas Methodist Foundation
- 23 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- 25-28 -- Women’s Walk to Emmaus
- 29 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 29-31 -- Crestview Baptist Church Board
- 30 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

**Necrology-February**

- 5 -- Deacon David King (2006)
- 10 -- Rev. Leo E. Lavoie (1978)
- 20 -- Deacon Mark Reeh (2005)
- 21 -- Rev. Tom Kelley (2005)

**ROWENA CHRISTMAS**

The St. Joseph’s CCD program was held in Rowena on Sun., Dec. 10th. Kindergarten through 8th grade participated in a variety of songs and skits. The highlight of the program was the nativity scene which was put on by the 6th and 8th grade classes. Kindergarteners, above, dressed as Christmas trees and performed a finger play.
Bioethics

Feeding tubes needed? Patient ‘particulars’ should be considered

O ne of the very practical concerns that face patients near the end of life involves the question of feeding tubes. How can we discern whether a feeding tube is morally required? The answer always depends on the particulars of a patient’s situation, but there are a few broad considerations that can help in the discernment process. As a general rule, we ought to die from a disease or an ailment that claims our life, not from an action (or inaction) by someone that causes our death (for example, withholding hydration). Our death, in other words, should result from the progress of a pathological condition, not from a lack of food or water if it could have been readily offered to provide comfort and support to a patient.

In general, there should be a presumption in favor of providing nutrition and hydration to all patients, including those who require the assistance of a feeding tube. A feeding tube can be conceptualized as a kind of “long spoon” that assists us in feeding someone who has difficulty swallowing. The proper starting point for the discussion, therefore, is the recognition that feeding tubes should be offered to patients because they are likely to provide two benefits: they bring comfort to the patient and alleviation of the suffering that comes from hunger and dehydration, and they may also serve as a bridge to healing, depending on the details of the case.

Does this stance imply that feeding tubes must always be used, no matter what? Certainly not. There will be circumstances where feeding tubes will become “disproportionate” or “extraordinary” and will not be morally obligatory. One very clear example would be the situation in which a feeding tube fails to provide nourishment to the patient. If someone has advanced cancer of the digestive tract, for instance, so that he lacks a functional stomach or intestines, and cannot absorb nourishment, a feeding tube would not be required, since this would constitute a futile kind of “force feeding.”

Several other examples where feeding tubes would not be required could be mentioned. In some cases, feeding tubes may actually cause significant problems of their own for a patient. For example, if someone is very sick and dying, perhaps with partial bowel obstruction, the feeding tube may cause them to vomit repeatedly, with the attendant risk of inhaling their vomit repeatedly, making it more difficult for them to breathe or cough, and suction may be required. Providing IV hydration can also cause a flare up of fluid accumulation in the abdomen and expand the edema layer around tumors, aggravating symptoms, particularly pain. Hence the use of IV drips and feeding tubes will always have to be evaluated in terms of the totality of the patient’s condition.

Human life: a precious gift to love, defend in each one of its stages

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

Pope John Paul II, in his Lenten Message 2005, affirmed that “Human life is a precious gift to be loved and defended in each of its stages. The Commandment, ‘You shall not kill!’ obviously requires respecting and promoting human life, from its beginning to its natural end. It is a command that applies even in the presence of illness and when physical weakness reduces the person’s ability to be self-reliant.”

In its 1973 Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court created a new “right” to abortion. The Court made abortion legal nationwide throughout the full nine months of pregnancy with no meaningful limitation.

A Seismic Shift has occurred

Roe v. Wade was a watershed event. One day, we were a nation that protected the lives of unborn human beings. The next day, seven justices of the U.S. Supreme Court said that throughout pregnancy, abortion is a fundamental constitutional right. Many people sensed that a seismic shift had occurred. The Court had said, in essence, that we were a people who could not be expected to commit to care for the children we helped to create. And we began quickly to make that a self-fulfilling prophecy, as over the next decade the number of abortions skyrocketed to 1.6 million a year.

Now, let us jump ahead some 27 years. Another major shift occurred, as in June 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court expanded the right to kill, from children in the womb (Roe v. Wade) to children almost completely born (Stenberg v. Carhart).

It is this, partial-birth abortion, that the U.S. Supreme Court has now wrapped in the mantle of our nation’s Constitution. The Court overrode the judgment of the American Medical Association and respected specialists that partial-birth abortion is never medically necessary. With its decision in Carhart, the U.S. Supreme Court has moved beyond abortion to near infanticide. And in doing so it has created a new level of moral blindness and insensitivity. How much killing can we stand without losing our humanity?

Thank God that our President, after listening to the Congress, has proposed a ban on partial-birth abortion, but now this is being challenged in the courts.

As the Supreme Court debates this issue, hopefully this highest court of our land will take the high road of common sense and morality and finally decide in favor of a ban of partial-birth abortion.

Roe’s Legacy

Since Roe v. Wade became the law of the land, more than 45 million unborn children have lost their lives and untold numbers of women have suffered the aftermath of abortion. The practice of medicine has been degraded by those in the profession who participate in destroying life. And society as a whole has been coarsened and degraded by the tolleration and even acceptance of the widespread taking of innocent human life. Roe v. Wade has poisoned all it has touched.

Legal and Moral Issue

As regards abortion, the moral issue is clear: human beings deserve respect and protection from harm. The legal issue is clear: Roe v. Wade is bad law. The effects are clear: bad medicine and bad social policy. No wonder the vast majority of Americans believe that

(Please See BIOETHICS/11)

Doctor becomes unlikely Internet evangelist with podcasts on saints

By Joe Bollig
Catholic News Service

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Dr. Paul J. Camarata never planned to become a worldwide Internet evangelist. It just worked out that way.

Camarata, a neurosurgeon who practices in Kansas City, Mo., and lives in Overland Park, Kan., is the creator of SaintCast, a weekly Internet podcast about saints.

SaintCast has gained fans across the United States and as far away as Japan, New Zealand and Ecuador. He estimates that the SaintCasts have been downloaded 70,000 times in the past five months.

“As soon as I heard about the SaintCast, I subscribed to it on my iTunes,” said Gloria Denis, a regular listener. “On (one) particular show, Dr. Camarata had a trivia question on St. Francis of Assisi under his ‘Saint Jeopardy’ segment. I was so excited about answering that question, even with my limited knowledge of the saints. That was it. I was hooked.”

“Podcasting” is a term that comes from the iPod, Apple’s small electronic device that can receive audio programs that have been downloaded from the Internet.

“It’s actually a way of broadcasting over the Internet,” said Camarata, a member of the Church of the Nativity Parish in Leawood. “It can be a textual reading or a music program.”

One of the benefits of podcasting is that the listener can download the file and listen to it at his or her leisure—at home, driving or while taking a walk. Another benefit is that, unlike conventional radio, the podcast can be received wherever there’s an Internet connection.

Podcasting also is relatively inexpensive to start. Anyone with a computer and an Internet connection just needs to (Please See PODCASTS/7)
be a fee, but a love offering will be taken for the Girl Scouts of Rwanda.

Scholarships for Catholic laity now available
SAN ANTONIO -- Catholics who want to serve the Church in a professional capacity, but need additional education to do so, have a resource for funds.

Scholarship applications are being accepted for full-time graduate study from Catholic laymen and women who want to pursue graduate education in theology and church-related professions.

"Today many dedicated Catholics, who are not ordained clergy or women religious, serve parishes as Parish Coordinators or Administrators, as Pastoral Associates, Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministers,Liturgists, and many other roles," said Msgr. Droll. "This scholarship can help provide the funds to earn the advanced educational degree in theology or religious studies that is often required for these positions."

Who Can Apply: The scholarship is open to students who are enrolled in Catholic graduate schools of theology or religious studies and who have already completed a bachelor's degree. The applicant, who does not have to be a Catholic Church member, must be a practicing Roman Catholic and reside in one of the states in which Catholic Life operates, which are Texas, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, or Mississippi. The scholarship funds are paid directly to the school where the student is enrolled. "Students may attend any Catholic graduate school in one of the states in which Catholic Life operates," added Msgr. Droll. "Applicants may also be enrolled in an extension program or in The Catholic University of America School of Canon Law."

How To Apply: To obtain an application, please call Catholic Life Insurance at (210) 828-9921 or 1-800-292-2548 or write to Catholic Life Insurance, attn: Communications Department, P.O. Box 659527, San Antonio, TX 78265-9527. You can also download an application from our website at www.cliu.com. The deadline to apply is February 15, 2007.

Calvary Cemetery -- Unauthorized Fencing, Curbing
Calvary Cemetery in San Angelo is experiencing major problems in the maintenance of the cemetery because of fencing, curbing and brick borders placed around cemetery plots. This prevents the mowers from cutting grass and creates a safety hazard from flying chips and stones. These borders and fences also hinder excavators when moving their digging equipment in order to open, close or maintain grave spaces. Cemetery rules clearly state: "No fencing will be tolerated. Curbing of any type is not allowed." Please remove all fencing, curbing or brick borders from cemetery plots by February 28. This also includes various types of rocks, stones, shells, outdoor carpet, etc., placed on top graves. -- Mike Wyse, Chanceller

A New Beginning
Starting over after the divorce or death of a spouse difficult but possible with support, love

By Kathy Keaton

Many of you who are reading this are divorced, about to get a divorce or separated, or have experienced the death of your spouse. You may have a friend or family member who is experiencing such a loss and be anxious to offer help to other. Those experiencing these situations may be feeling devastated, lost, angry, scared, guilty or any other number of feelings that accompany a failed marriage, separation or death of a spouse.

Those experiencing the loss of a spouse know there is often unfinished business, many unanswered questions and sometimes stumbling blocks before one can accept the loss and begin moving forward. There are daily problems as well as long-term concerns. The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo offers help and support to those who are struggling with these situations and offers help and hope for a new beginning.

Three times a year Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo, opens its doors for a spiritual weekend retreat to offer help and support for those who are divorced, separated or widowed. For hundreds these retreats have proven to be the springboard for a fresh start and a truly new beginning. According to Father Tom Barley, pastor of St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Wall Texas,"the weekend ministry offers a forum of healing where individuals can face together the issues they are dealing with after the loss of a marriage or spouse for whatever reason."

Father Tom has served as spiritual adviser for "The Beginning Experience" peer ministry team for several years. Fr. Tom continues, "the weekend is supportive and safe and confidential." It helps people move from brokenness to a feeling of not being alone. Feelings come and feelings go and healing comes in stages.

The weekend helps participants connect with something deeper. It offers new strength and self-confidence. After attending a weekend participants find not only have they connected with others facing the same fears and emotions but they find they are often stronger than they realized.

William Rosser, pastor and Public Relations Director for Hospice of San Angelo, has also attended several weekends as a spiritual counselor. William reminds participants that "they must take ownership for their part in the divorce. Sometimes that is very hard to understand when you feel you are the victim. Even if you are the person that has been wronged you will never heal if you cannot take responsibility for your part and only your part. You can forgive and be forgiven but often there are still consequences to be faced. God is the God of the past, present and future. By first dealing with our past we can then begin to make a difference in our future."

The weekend offers that guidance and strength to begin anew.

Janice Gonzales, (name changed for confidentiality) one of the original participants of "The Beginning Experience" says, "I went into the weekend feeling very guilty after my divorce. Between my religious beliefs and my ethnic heritage there was much stigma attached to the failure of my marriage. I didn't know what to expect and was very apprehensive. It was life changing to learn that even after a divorce that God still loved me and that I was ok right where I was. After the weekend I resolved my anger, reconciled with the church and renewed my self worth and self esteem."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please watch future Angeluses and The Angelus Online for dates for the next New Beginnings workshop.)
Islamic relations, Pope Benedict named top story, person of 2006

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Catholic editors voted the Islamic relations story as the top news story of 2006, followed closely by continuing debate over immigration reform in second place and the Iraq War in third.

Pope Benedict XVI, in the first full year of his papacy, was far and away the editors’ choice as newsmaker of the year. President George W. Bush was second and Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., was third.

The poll was the 45th annual survey of Catholic News Service client newspapers. This year’s ballots were distributed Dec. 6 and the deadline for returns was Dec. 15.

When the editors’ poll was first conducted in 1962, the overwhelming choice for top story was the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Last year, editors chose the death of Pope John Paul II as the top religious story of the year and Pope John Paul as the top newsmaker.

In the 2006 poll, 10 editors submitted ballots, 16 return a list of 10 stories from a list of 26 selected by CNS staff, and the top two newsmakers from a list of 17. Votes were weighted by the number of editors who voted — 2 points for a first-place vote, one point for second, etc., and six points for newsmaker, four for second, etc.

With 26 editors in the United States submitting ballots, the maximum points a story could have received was 264. The most newsmaker could receive on the five-point scale was 10. Some editors’ ballots included ties, resulting in half-

For the first time in recent memory, first-place votes were spread among 10 different stories, with the first-place winner receiving seven first-place votes, the most for any topic.

Here is the editors’ choice of top 10 stories and top five newsmakers of 2006, followed by points received in the weighted ballot count and, in parentheses, the number of first-place votes received.

1. Pope Benedict XVI, 115.5 (22.5)
2. President George W. Bush, 54 (1)
3. Pope John Paul II, 45 (3)
4. St. Mother Theodore Guerin, 35.5 (1.5)
5. Immigration, 168 (5)
6. St. Mother Theodore Guerin, 35.5 (1.5)
7. Vatican’s role in resolving the conflict in Darfur, 31 (3)
8. Pope Benedict XVI, 26 (1)
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Catholic aid agencies warn repeated droughts have put 3.5 million Kenyans in danger of starvation. Boston Catholic Charities halts adoption programs because state law makes it offer adoptive services to same-sex couples. Chicago immigration rally draws 100,000. Fire destroys $10 million student housing complex under construction at Gonzaga University. California Franciscans reach $28 million settlement with 25 sex abuse victims. Bishops’ Administrative Committee reiterates opposition to legal recognition for same-sex marriages. Vatican shifts to emphasis on cultural exchange as basis for interreligious dialogue. The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is published in English and Spanish by U.S. bishops. Arlington (Va.) Diocese allows female altar servers, leaving Lincoln, Neb., as only U.S. diocese still banning female altar servers. Dialogue with Islam is among topics of papal meeting with world’s cardinals. Pope bestows red hat on 15 new cardinals. John Deedy, noted Catholic journalist and author, dies. New clergy sex abuse audits of U.S. dioceses are released; National Review Board says higher performance standards are needed in future audits. Analysis of new audits shows clergy sex abuse cost to church has topped $1.5 billion in last 50 years, almost all of it since 2002. Burundi’s bishops say honestly about AIDS is needed, marriages won’t be allowed without proof of HIV test.

APRIL

MAY
May 1 immigration rallies draw large crowds across United States. Argentina declares three days of mourning for death of Cardinal Raul F. Primateste. Vatican says Pope Benedict was “profoundly displeased” by ordination of two Chinese Catholic bishops without Vatican approval. Dominican Sister Rose Thering, Catholic-Jewish relations pioneer, dies. Darfur peace agreement offers hope but fails to stop genocidal violence. Father Gerald Robertson of Toledo, Ohio, is sentenced to life in prison for 1980 murder of Mercy Sister Margaret Ann Pahl. Pope makes four-day trip to Poland, calls his visit to Auschwitz death camp a “duty before God.” Indonesian earthquake kills more than 5,400 people, destroys 45,000 buildings. Canadian section of Amnesty International votes to treat abortion as a human right.

JUNE
Top courts in Georgia and New York affirm their state bans on same-sex marriage. First international conference on Catholic ethics, in Padua, Italy, draws more than 400 moral theologians from 63 countries. Pope makes two-day visit to Spain, urges strong family life. President George W. Bush vetoes bill that would expand federal funding of human embryonic stem-cell research. Vatican rules when a parish is suppressed its rectors may excommunicate them. Pope urges Card. Paul Poupard, a top Vatican official, says even former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein should not get death penalty. Vatican conference says greater intermingling of Christians and Muslims around world makes dialogue urgent. Vatican delegation visits China for “informal talks” on church-state tensions.

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AUGUST
Iraqi bishop says exodus of Iraq’s Christians since 2003 has reduced their numbers from 1.2 million to 600,000. Gail Quinn, executive director of USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, retires after 40 years with conference.

DECEMBER
BIOETHICS: Are feeding tubes even necessary?

(From 6)

dition, taking into account any undesirable effects, and the likelihood of benefit.

Other circumstances must also be considered. Is the patient suffering from dementia, perhaps due to Alzheimer’s or another nervous system ailment? Demented patients present a special challenge, as they may need to be restrained in order for a feeding tube to be inserted, and that restraint may need to continue so as to prevent them from pulling the tube out. Both the restraint and the presence of the tube can cause fear and anxiety in the demented patient, and one must therefore carefully consider whether such a tube would really be proportionate to the patient’s health care needs, especially in advanced dementia at a point close to death.

Our desire to comfort and palliate those suffering from an end stage disease is an important part of the equation in mapping out the best options for health care treatment. If we have to tie down our loved ones and cause them grave discomfort and uncontrollable anxiety in order to provide a feeding tube, such a tube may well become disproportionate and non-obligatory.

These considerations hold most notably for patients who are near death, where it is clear that we are not obligated to extend or “string out” an imminent death, and where the benefits of the feeding tube will be subject to considerable discussion. It should be emphasized, however, that in withholding the propriety of tube-feeding, we must specifically examine the burden of the technique itself, and not try to make some kind of global assessment about whether we believe that person’s life in general is burdensome or “not worth living.” Life can be burdensome, as it is for all of us at times, but that doesn’t provide us with license to short it by refusing a standard and effective intervention.

Sometimes when families are discussing whether to provide a feeding tube to a loved one who is dying, there may be concern that such a tube, once inserted, can never be ethically removed after it has been put in place. In point of fact, however, such an understanding would be incorrect. Merely because a feeding tube has been placed does not say anything about whether that tube can later be withdrawn. If the patient’s circumstances change so that a feeding tube has now become a burdensome and extraordinary intervention, that tube can be withdrawn without hesitation or compunction. We must be concerned first and foremost with providing the best possible health care interventions for our loved ones, and feeding tubes will often times, but not in every circumstance, assist us in exercising proper stewardship over the great gift of human life that each of us has received from God.

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Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

LIFE: Pray, use your gifts as ways to do your part

(From 6)

an unlimited right to abortion is wrong. Science is clear that human life begins at conception when a new human being is formed.

We who are Christian Americans believe in an anthropology that views all persons as members of a community who are made in the image of the Triune God and who have both rights and responsibilities. Therefore, we cannot endorse a woman’s right to abort an unborn child as a morally neutral decision because we understand that the child also has a right to live and the community has a responsibility to care for this child if the mother is unable to rear it.

Some people would want us to think that “legal abortion is safe, and illegal abortions are dangerous.” The fact is that abortion is more dangerous to more women now than before it was legal. Former abortionist Bernard Nathanson has admitted that he helped invent the story about back alley abortion fatalities. Legal is not safe. Besides, the best doctors don’t aspire to be abortionists.

Some continue to dispute, in spite of scientific research, that human life exists from the moment of conception. However, when there is any doubt that there exists a human being’s life to preserve and protect, such doubt shall be resolved in favor of the existence of a human being, and when two or more human beings are in a situation in which their lives are mutually endangered, all available ordinary means and reasonable efforts shall be used to preserve and protect the life of each and every human being endangered.

The Politician’s Song

As regards abortion, the politician’s song has been sung so often for so long that it sounds quite logical – and sadly some pro-lifers believe it. “I’m absolutely against abortion,” they insist, “except, of course, in the cases of rape and incest.” They argue that it’s somehow “compassionate” to offer the woman victim the opportunity to eliminate the results of an attack. The ultimate question, however, is: “What about the baby?”

In simple terms, two wrongs do not make a right. A second wrong only makes a bad situation worse. Abortion for rape cases punishes the innocent child more severely than the guilty rapist. An “innocent bystander,” if you will, is given the death sentence while the criminal has the opportunity to amend his life.

The Greatest Human Rights Movement

The pro-life movement is the greatest human rights movement on earth – a struggle founded on unconditional love even for the pro-abortionists – unconditional empathy for the victims, both the child and his or her mother, and unconditional courage.

With each passing year, the horrific toll on women’s lives becomes more evident. And it’s time the media stopped censoring this truth. Women deserve better than abortion and the compelling stories of the brave post-abortive women who are silent no more need to be heard. These very special women bear witness not only to the agony and trauma of their own abortion but to the hope of healing, reconciliation, and inner peace as well.

Now what can you and I do each day to help love and defend human life that is a precious gift to be loved and defended in each and every one of its stages? Here are some concrete recommendations that I present for your reflection, and hopefully for your implementation.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Pray every day that our nation will again respect the lives of every human being from the moment of conception to natural death. I ask that at every Sunday Mass, prayers be offered for peace, for a new respect for human life, and for an end to abortion.

Learn the facts about abortion. Read Catholic magazines and the West Texas Angelus. The newsletter Life Insights, and other educational materials are available from the bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. Also visit www.nccbuscc.org/prolife and www.hopeafterabortion.org.

Communicate with others Believing in our hearts that abortion and infanticide are evil and beneath us as a people is not enough. We need to speak out when we can. It is in speaking with others that we can help them to understand and touch their hearts with a message of respect for human life.

Serve with your gifts Programs that serve pregnant women and children always need extra hands. Offer to help. Help for women and men suffering because of abortion requires special expertise. You may want to help financially, or in other ways.

Organize on behalf of life. The most effective vehicle for building a community that respects each and every human life is to establish a Parish Respect Life Committee or similar committee. Together parishioners can encourage prayer, educational activities, and involvement in the public realm. Through parish Respect Life Committees we can make a difference.
**From the Easy Chair**

**‘I stopped looking for myself a long time ago’**

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

Since Mama died last January, Daddy has left Irving once to attend a stamp show competition in nearby Grapevine. (A show at which he won several honors, I might add.) It's been hard for Dad to get away. He hasn't wanted to get too far from the house he and Mama lived in since 1965. He's made plans several times over the last several months to go on trips, but when the day would come to leave, he would not feel like going. And we all understand.

So when Dad told us he wanted to visit Big Bend again, we all looked forward to it with the appropriate amount of skepticism. That would be great, we all thought. And then we didn't give it much more thought.

But then last week came and not even the notion of 3-5 inches of snow in Big Bend could scare him away. My brother told me that Dad woke up one day before the trip in December and something in him had changed; apparently nothing would stop him from making the grueling 600 mile, one-way trip from his suburban Dallas doorstep to a nice warm bed in the Chisos Mountains.

Last Thursday, he and my sister Claudia showed up at our Midland home at 5. Even though they called when they were in Stanton, to see them actually standing there was still almost unbelievable. Daddy hadn't been to Midland to visit us since our oldest graduated in 2004.

My dad, sister, son and I landed in Big Bend, following some at-times perilous road reports that never materialized. We made it. Daddy made it.

But that was only the half of it really. Certainly such a long car trip would be hard enough. But Dad had in mind to do more than just survive a long car trip. He wanted to hike into Santa Elena Canyon.

The walk into that canyon is by most Big Bend trail standards not particularly difficult. When you're 82, and 83 is just around the corner, and your legs have seen better days and your back hurts every morning along with most every other bone in your body, walking into Santa Elena is more than just a stroll in the park.

It's maybe equivalent to walking up 8 or 10 flights of stairs to complete the elevation change going into the canyon. Again, for most, not terribly difficult. For the older among us, though, it can be fairly strenuous.

Dad would not be turned away though. He held on to me the whole way, and in fact I would stumble over more rocks and small stumps than he.

(Please See PATTERSON/15)

**Your Family**

**How can one face a life of aloneness?**

By Antoinette Bosco
Catholic News Service

We have just been in the season of joy, rejoicing in the wondrous story of the Nativity. At this time most of us think of big family gatherings, lots of fun and laughter and conversation. But this year I was reminded several times, in a way I never expected, that this is not the scene for many people.

It had to do with a new book I wrote on divorce for Catholics.

I expected I would get calls from people seeking help, perhaps on how to contact marriage tribunals or what the impact of divorce would be on their Catholic faith. Instead, the majority of responses dealt with something else very human -- their pain in facing a future life "alone."

Some of my callers who had been told their marriage had been valid and that they did not qualify for an annulment said they still were determined to remain in communion with the Catholic Church. Yet, they spoke of such incredible loneliness and a kind of fear that they would not be able to go on in that state.

While I never applied for an annulment because I never intended to remarry, I certainly could relate to their loneliness. I had -- and have -- been there so many times. I tell in my book about a day I vividly remember some 20 years ago that I could label only as "a new experience."

Coming from a large family and being the single parent of seven children, all my years until that day had been spent in the midst of people. Now I was alone when I came home from work. It was a new experience for me to be in an empty, noiseless house.

I wandered from room to room, somewhat disoriented, unable to cope with the quiet or to decide how to spend my time, even though I had much to do and there were many choices I could make. Worst of all, I suddenly visualized my coming years as an endless stream of bleak, boring, lonely days, and I was asking God, "How can I live the rest of my life alone?"

The answer, of course, is that I couldn't. No one can. Each of us needs relationships, commitments, interactions, friendships and closeness with others.

Without relationships, life seems sterile and we put ourselves in danger of pathological loneliness. The need for relationships is universal. The challenge of finding them is one that must be met not only by divorced persons, but also by the widowed, the young, the old and, yes, even the married.

We can see this position as a trap or as an unusual setting for a new kind of self-growth. On the positive side, we can accept this as an opportunity to make a conscious choice to be individuals capable of standing alone and taking responsibility for our lives, while buttressed by the experiences and support of the church -- and wise others -- to help us find greater meaning in our lives.

I benefited when I heard a speaker say that "uncertainty is the gate to new discoveries," and "self-doubt is an invitation to put on a new hat."

That is upbeat advice, good to think about as a new year begins. I hope it brings each of us a new determination to stay in charge of where we are going despite our loneliness.
Coming of Age

Our friend Sebby and the many lessons she taught

By M. Regina Cram
Catholic News Service

We were 16, that summer between sophomore and junior years of high school. Well, most of us were 16; my birthday wasn't until Christmas, so I was the baby at 15. There were about 10 of us in our group of friends, and we hung around together as often as we could. A few families had small Sunfish sailboats that we'd sail on the local pond. When we raced I always lost but it didn't matter; we just enjoyed shouting insults to each other across the water.

One time we had a contest to see who could fit the most grapes in his mouth at once. Rick Hampton won with 43 grapes. No one else came close.

Mostly we just hung out. Occasionally in the evening we organized games of Manhunt in quiet neighborhoods where the silence was pierced by our shrieks and laughter. It was a great summer.

We were all good students but Sebby was the smartest. Someone told me that Sebby was brilliant, but you wouldn't know it by talking to him. He was just a quiet kid with a kind face and a quirky sense of humor. He was the type of kid it was impossible to dislike.

As that summer began, Sebby was quieter than usual. He began to look pale, too, which was odd. His skin was usually a rich Mediterranean olive hue, but by June it looked sallow. Maybe he was just tired.

It didn't get better. Eventually Sebby told us he was sick. He didn't give any details but his family's hushed tones led us to believe it might be serious. Still, Sebby was smart and kind and funny, and...
IMMIGRATION: Positive, responsible reform needed

(From 3)

According to a recent Brookings Institute paper, a system that honored the “rule of law” would feature prospective, coherent laws that are stable and sensible enough to be followed. They should produce predictable outcomes, and be administered consistently. We need to control our borders, but we also need an immigration system that meets these criteria.

Myth 3: “Immigration reform threatens our nation’s security.”

Terrorists have exploited our system of legal immigration. However, an earned legal status program would make us more secure. Instead of policing millions of peaceful immigrants without documentation, governmental agencies could target those who do not pass through the legal filter of a broad immigration system. Here is how one security expert, Stephen Flynn, puts it: “If we legalize those who are here and are coming for valid purposes, we can concentrate law enforcement resources on the few bad actors. As it stands, it is not the rule-breakers who create the security risk: instead it is unenforceable laws. Our current system creates larger shadows for would-be terrorists to hide in. We need to ‘drain the swamp from the fish.’”

Myth 4: “We need to control the borders first; only then can we liberalize our standards for legal status and admission.”

Our experience teaches us the “enforcement only” will not work. We know this because we have tried it and it has been accompanied by a large increase in the undocumented population. We need a comprehensive solution. It would be more accurate to say that, if we liberalize our standards for admission, then we will have a chance at controlling our borders.

MIGRANTE: Agociendo a Cristo en el migrante

(From 3)

de gran necesidad. Muchos migrantes ahora siguen el paso similar al embarcarse en una jornada de esperanza. Vivimos en un época en que los forasteros entre nosotros se han convertido en fuente de sospecha y temor. El mandamiento de Jesús de acoger a estos forasteros como lo acogieramos a él está reñido con gran parte del sentimiento prevaleciente expresado hoy. Los debates sobre si se debe abordar el fenómeno de la migración, y cómo, llenan no sólo los vestibulos gubernamentales sino incluso los vestibulos de comunidades y parroquias. El espíritu estadounidense historicamente genroso ha sido reemplazado en algunos sectores con llamados al aislamiento y la restricción.

During this week dedicated to the migrants, invite to all the communities of our parishes to receive a Christ in the migrant through the oracion, the education, and in programs of service directo in our parishes. For así asistirlos en esta expresión de fe, una grande variedad de recursos han sido creadas para las parroquias y las escuelas, y son disponibles en el sitio de la red de la USCCB/MRS Semana Nacional de Migración en: www.usccb.org/mrs.nmwy.shtml.

When extending ayuda y consuelo a los recién venidos a nuestra tierra, definitivamente estamos ofreciéndonos nosotros mismos y nuestros dones en el servicio al Señor. No es solamente nuestro deber Cristiano, pero es un privilegio, sabiendo que nosotros, también, hemos sido adoptados entre la familia de Dios. Que sean ricaçmente bendecidos todos por sus hechos fieles de hospitalidad en el nombre de Cristo.

BISHOP: Remembering the corporal, spiritual works of mercy

(From 1)

Near and dear to us or virtual strangers. These corporal works of mercy flow from what Jesus tells us in Chapter 25 of Matthew’s Gospel: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” [Mt.25:35-36]

Let me remind you of the Corporal Works of Mercy:

First, we reflect on the corporal works of mercy which are rooted in Scripture and are an ancient expression of our love for God by caring for the physical needs of God’s children. These works embrace a compassionate way of life, a generous attitude toward those in need, whether

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Visit the sick.
- Visit the imprisoned.
- Clothe the naked.
- Feed the hungry.

These corporal works of mercy help us to touch the hearts and souls of people in need through our compassion, our care, and our concern. Just as God’s mercy brings hope and new life, we are called to bring that mercy to others through prayer, forgiveness, patience, consolation, or simply by our presence. Here is a list of the seven corporal works of mercy:

- To teach the ignorant.
- To counsel the doubtful.
- To comfort the sorrowful.
- To pray for the living and the dead.
- To bear wrongs patiently.

Now let me say a few brief words about the seven spiritual works of mercy. These spiritual works of mercy help us to touch the hearts and souls of people in need through our compassion, our care, and our concern. Just as God’s mercy brings hope and new life, we are called to bring that mercy to others through prayer, forgiveness, patience, consolation, or simply by our presence. Here is a list of the seven spiritual works of mercy:

- To forgive enemies.
- To comfort the sorrowful.
- To pray for the living and the dead.
- To bear wrongs patiently.

When asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied with the story of the Good Samaritan: A man was assaulted, robbed and left for dead. Two respected religious people passed by without helping. Then a third person, a Samaritan who was rejected, who was looked down upon by others and considered to be a heretic, stopped, provided assistance. He bandaged the victim, got him to an inn, and paid for his care. Then Jesus asked his questioner which one was the neighbor. “The one who showed mercy,” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”” [Lk 10:37]
**PATTERSON:** My father’s resolve an inspiration to generations of our family

(From 12)

I was inspired at the fact that Daddy had come so far in so many ways. Both literally and symbolically. I finally asked him something that I had hoped to ask him for several weeks.

“Why? Why did you want to come back here?”

He looked at me and thought for a moment, drawing his response out in a lengthy pause as he often does.

He smiled.

“Well, I’m not searching for myself or anything,” he said.

I smiled a little, wondering what was next.

“I tried searching for myself a long time ago and couldn’t find anything, so I stopped looking.”

OK. Not the inspirational response I was hoping for, but humor’s good, too. At this point, laughter is inspirational in its own way.

Dad went home that following Monday, a survivor of one more journey in life. He goes home from a trip that proves he is capable of doing whatever he sets his mind to. Just like he always taught us when we were growing up. And is still teaching us now.

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Jimmy Patterson is editor of the West Texas Angelus

**JACKSON:** Attorney finds Catholicism ‘great blend of faith, reason’

(From 1)

Raised in the Unitarian faith by his parents, Jackson was first exposed to Catholicism by his Grandma “Tootsie” who insisted that Mass be a regular Sunday obligation. It was through that constant, provided at the hands of loving grandparents, that his foundation for Catholic formation began.

Jackson and his wife Nyria, whom he met at Harvard Law, are the parents of two children. He received his undergraduate degree at Duke.

Mrs. Jackson was hopeful of returning to Texas, where she was raised in El Paso and neighboring Juarez. That played a role in his accepting his position as assistant U.S. Attorney in Midland. Jackson said had he not met Mrs. Jackson at Harvard he likely would’ve returned to North Carolina and sought a position with the U.S. Attorney’s office, perhaps in Charlotte.

Jackson said Harvard is not really a place conducive to the religious conversion experience, but being around others who held similar faith backgrounds was helpful.

“I had a few classmates and one of them was a former Jesuit and probably when considering pure, raw intelligence, he was the brightest in the class and a very devout Catholic.”

Jackson would attend Mass regularly, both alone and with classmates who practiced the faith.

“I just always felt myself drawn to it,” Jackson said of the faith. “I went to some of the RCIA classes. In a way, to me it just kind of blends reason and faith together really well. For a half-second or so, I even considered the priesthood. If you could be married and be a priest, I would definitely have ended up doing that.”

Jackson said at some point, once his children are grown, he would seriously consider entering the diaconate.

One subject for which he insists he has no personal aspirations: politics. A classmate of both Illinois U.S. Senator and likely 2008 Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, and U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement at Harvard, Jackson twice sidestepped questions about a political future.

“The only thing I have aspirations for now is being a good father,” he said.

A lengthy conversation with him is all the evidence one needs to see that his primary interests are indeed not in public service at this time, but in his family and faith.

“I can’t stress the importance of both of those enough,” he said.

Jackson said his mother “tried to take us to the Unitarian church somehow” yet not frequently and remembers her saying that thinking about faith was important.

“It was not much more structured than that,” he said of his early teachings.

Jackson said he couldn’t point to one particular moment when a light went on or someone spoke to him about his conversion.

“I never had a St. Paul-Road-to-Damascus moment, but I certainly felt by late college I was starting to feel a pull in a number of ways, which is not to say that I understand it all now,” Jackson said. “There was something about the church, not just the intellectual aspects of it, which were important to me, but I am one of those people who’s a rational, linear thinker, and from an intellectual standpoint Catholicism just makes a lot of sense and this is the place where I really know that my faith will be nurtured and I can grow and be where I want to be.”

**HOLY:** Easter the holiest of days in faith

(From 1)

“Traditionally, a holy day marks a special day when we are asked to reflect upon a certain mystery of the life of Christ, Mary or one of the saints,” said Bishop Michael Pfeifer.

“In past times, there were many holy days, and the number of holy days varies from country to country. The holy days are determined by the conference of bishops of each country, and need the approval of Rome. In recent times, some of the holy days that used to fall during the week were placed on a Sunday as this is when more people go to Mass. For example, the Feast of Corpus Christi used to fall sometime during the week but now is placed on a Sunday.”

This year’s holy days mark Christ’s ascension into Heaven (May 17), the Assumption of Mary, body and soul, into heaven by her divine Son (August 15), a day when Catholics honor all the saints who came before us (All Saints Day, Nov. 1) and The Immaculate Conception (December 8), a day that honors Mary’s conception in her mother’s womb and that Mary was kept free from original sin by the power of divine grace. The Incarnation, incidentally, is the term used to remember and honor the conception of Jesus in Mary’s womb. Easter is of course the holiest of Holy Days and always observed on Sunday.

“It is considered a Holy Day as are all Sundays,” Pfeifer said. “For the church, every Sunday is a miniature celebration of the great Feast of Easter, the greatest Feast of Easter, which is the Resurrection of Christ.”

January 1, normally a Holy Day of Obligation celebrating the Feast of Mary, Mother of God, was not commemorated this year because it fell on a Monday.

**AGE:** Death can bring with it the reality that tomorrow not certain

(From 13)

A week later Sebby died. He was 16.

We all went to the wake. Most of my friends never had attended a wake so they had no idea what to expect. Some didn’t even realize there would be a casket, and they certainly didn’t expect to see a body.

The first few friends to arrive walked in alone. Each one rounded the corner to the parlor where Sebby’s body was laid out and gashed. One girl started to sob, then turned and bolted out the door.

My mom was there and saw that these kids were totally unprepared. So she parked herself at the front door of the funeral home, and as friends arrived my mother quietly explained to each one what they’d be seeing and how to greet the family. Then she accompanied them into the parlor so they wouldn’t have to face Sebby’s body alone. She was a gift from God that day.

My friends and I lost a certain innocence when Sebby died, or maybe it was just the dawning of the reality that tomorrow is not guaranteed. It was a lesson that came at a very high cost.

Rest in peace, Sebby.
Books explore interfaith dialogue, shared experiences


Reviewed by Allan F. Wright
Catholic News Service

Deacon George Dardess, a Catholic member of the Muslim-Catholic Alliance in Rochester, N.Y., offers an educational tool for Christians and Muslims in his book, “Do We Worship the Same God?” Deacon Dardess does an excellent job of presenting basic beliefs in lay terms. He provides solid theological background in “Lumen Gentium” and “Nostra Aetate,” the foundational documents for our understanding of the relationship between the Catholic Church and Islam.

The beauty of Deacon Dardess’ book is that he tackles fundamental questions such as “What do we believe about God’s creation of the universe?” and “What do we believe about prayer?” In addition, Deacon Dardess is not afraid to consider the difficult, direct questions which many believers frequently tiptoe around, including Jesus’ relationship to God, his crucifixion and resurrection, and jihad.

Like any good teacher, Deacon Dardess does more than place the Bible and Quran side by side to reflect on the writings of our faith. Rather, he guides the reader through excellent discussion questions to aid in the ongoing process of Catholic-Muslim dialogue. A major strength of this book is that it can be used by interreligious groups to encourage dialogue in which not only our traditions and faith will be shared but our very lives as well.

Arthur J. Magida’s offering, “Opening the Doors of Wonder,” explores the religious rites of passage from the experiences of well-known men and women. While the reader may expect to reflect on stories of faith and transformation through the rituals of the five great religions, more often than not Magida writes about people who were not transformed by the rituals and found little contact with the divine through them.

While some individuals undoubtedly experience little contact with the divine by simply going through the motions, it would have been refreshing to read about a Christian who was illuminated by a specific ritual experience of baptism, confirmation or the reception of the Eucharist. Jewish people who experienced a meaningful bar mitzvah or other sacred rituals within the Jewish tradition were found wanting. Only those writing from the Islamic point of view escape criticism of their experience within their tradition and seem to have authentic religious experiences.

Magida is an inviting storyteller who keeps the reader interested, and his work can serve as an impetus for others to reflect on their own personal religious experiences, for better or worse.

“Abraham’s Children: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation” is a wonderful compilation of essays by knowledgeable Jewish, Christian and Islamic scholars. In the first section the scholars explore the lives of prominent figures in history such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed from each tradition’s perspective. The book serves as an excellent resource for anyone interested in discovering the views on pluralism, gender, the environment and life and death from these three monolithic faiths.

The depth of research and documentation adds to the presentation of the material which seeks to explain each tradition’s point of view rather than defend it. The editors conclude each chapter with a summary of the similarities, differences and potential points of contact that can help to further understanding and dialogue.

Wright is a professor at Union Catholic and Assumption College for Sisters in New Jersey and a member of the Commission for Interreligious Affairs of the Archdiocese of Newark.

‘Marshall’ a moving, effective story about community, football

By Harry Forbes
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- “We Are Marshall” (Warner Bros.) is the moving true-life story about the aftermath of a 1970 plane crash in West Virginia, which killed 70 players, coaches and fans of a college football team, and how the grieving university town came to recover its spirit.

This came about largely by the formation of a largely new team -- the Thundering Herd -- galvanized by the leadership of Jack Lengyel (a dynamic Matthew McConaughey), a new coach from Wooster, Ohio. He's hired by Marshall University president Donald Dedmon (David Strathairn), who's persuaded to fill the position after some surviving team members, especially varsity player Nate Ruffin (Anthony Mackie), poignantly demonstrate that the football program must be continued.

Once Jack is on board, he reaches out to the former team's assistant coach, Red Dawson (Matthew Fox), who like several others carries enormous guilt because he narrowly missed being on the fatal flight himself.

Director McG's (actually Joseph McGinty Nichol) film, though to some extent formulaic and predictable, rates as more than several notches above average in showing how the tragedy affected the townspeople in many different ways, while Jamie Linden's script tries hard to avoid cliches.

There are solid performances -- including Ian McShane as Paul Griffen, a grieving father who opposes the new team's formation -- and worthy messages about winning not being everything, accepting loss, and learning how to heal, with several references showing directly and indirectly that this was a faith-based community.

The film contains several uses of the s-word as favored by the coach, a few other cuss expressions, and discreetly handled plane crash. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-II – adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.