Diocese enters social network age with Facebook page

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

It is almost impossible -- literally -- to find someone today who does not have a Facebook page. Add to those growing numbers the Diocese of San Angelo. The page will include links to articles on the diocesan web site as well as information on events, the bishop’s schedule and news or information in the diocese. A Survey of Diocesan Media Usage conducted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishop’s Communications Department, shows that Facebook is easily the most used new media -- 80 percent of U.S. dioceses have a presence on Facebook, compared to about 50 percent that have a presence on Twitter and YouTube, while only 20 percent report having a diocesan blog.

To find our Facebook page, you must be a registered user. Enter Diocese of San Angelo in the search field. Press the “Like” button at the top of the organization page.

The diocesan web page is sanangelodiocese.org. To send information from your parish for the Facebook page, email JimmyLeePatterson@gmail.com.

Diocese to honor pioneer families at 50th anniversary dinner in October

SAN ANGELO -- In preparation for its 50th anniversary celebration, the Diocese of San Angelo is searching for pioneer families to be honored at a special dinner October 15, 2011.

To be considered, a pioneer family must have been Catholics committed to their local parish when the diocese was established in October 1961.

Families chosen will be honored at a dinner with diocesan officials, bishops from Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas (Region 10) and Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, of the Archdiocese of Houston-Galveston.

To have a family considered, send your nominees and why they deserve to be honored to JimmyLeePatterson@gmail.com.

A Reason for Thanksgiving

Bishop Michael Pfeifer, right in above photo, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving Dec. 12 at Sacred Heart Church in Coleman for Fr. Romanus Akamike, left. Fr. Romanus miraculously survived a car accident in December 2009 in which the Toyota he was driving lost control and rolled numerous times (photo at right). The Mass was attended by friends and family of Fr. Romanus from places like Los Angeles, New York and Nigeria.

Only one diocesan-wide Mass on anniversary Sunday

The Angelus

Bishop Michael Pfeifer has announced that on Sunday, October 16, 2011, the day that marks the 50th anniversary of the diocese’s official designation and establishment by Pope John XXIII, only one Mass will be celebrated — at 11 a.m. at the San Angelo Coliseum.

“No masses will be said except for the anniversary Mass in San Angelo and pastors should advise their people of this,” Pfeifer said. Ordinary masses of anticipation and perhaps added masses of anticipation will be said on Saturday, Oct. 15 at individual parishes, but there will be only one Mass in the entire diocese on October 16.”

Pfeifer added that people who must work, or because of reasons of age or health who cannot attend the anniversary Mass in San Angelo are dispensed of their obligation the weekend of Oct. 15-16.

Blessed Mother Teresa said that abortion kills not only the child but also the conscience. More than 50 million deaths have numbed our consciences to the horrible reality of abortion since the deadly decision of our Supreme Court in 1973.

Youth 2000

St. Stephens in Midland will again be host to the Youth 2000 Retreat, January 28-30. Details, Page 5.
Every unborn is a life with potential, not a potential life

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Blessed Mother Teresa said that abortion kills not only the child but also the conscience. More than 50 million deaths have numbed our consciences to the horrible reality of abortion since the deadly decision of our Supreme Court in 1973. All too often we have ignored the plight of the unborn, and even ignored their existence. Many dehumanize the unborn through terms like mass-of-tissue, zygote, embryo, or fetus. Those are words used by Planned Parenthood and other death centers, not God’s. We know the truth: at every stage, every unborn is a life with great potential, not a potential life. Would God ever want them aborted? Can anyone honestly believe that God approves our sacrificing the most innocent and defenseless humans of all—the unborn? Can anyone find a word or sentence in the Bible, or a teaching of Christ, to justify the barbaric evil of abortion.

All the life issues are connected, however, these issues depend on the protection of the most fundamental right, the right to life. Pope John Paul II explained this important aspect of church teaching when he said: “Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights—for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture—is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination.” (“Christifidelis Laici”)

The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It is the pre-eminent life issue. This means that one cannot make other social issues such as education or health care morally equivalent to the deliberate destruction of innocent human life. Pope Benedict has called this “the key to [our] entire existence.

Some would want to promote falsely and erroneously that abortion empower women. It can’t. Abortion is a sin, an intrinsic evil, and sin spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically enslaves its victims. It strips women of dignity and self-respect.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Dioconate Ordination invitation

BIG SPRING -- Patrick Chris Akipanobong, a seminarian of the Diocese of San Angelo, will be ordained a deacon, receive the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands by Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, Bishop of San Angelo, at a special Ordination Mass, 6 p.m., Friday, January 14, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 1009 Hearn, in Big Spring. All are invited to attend this ordination Mass.

Encounter with the Holy Family

MIDLAND -- On January 22, the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, experience an “Encounter with the Holy Family: Jesus, Mary and Joseph,” at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland. Talks will be given by ordained and lay persons. There will also be music, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, pro-life meditations on the mystery of the rosary, and Mass.

Cost for this event is $10, and includes breakfast and lunch.

The day’s events begin at 8 a.m. with registration and a continental breakfast; the Encounter begins at 9 a.m. and Mass at 5 p.m. will conclude the day.

For information or to RSVP, please contact one of the following people: Oscar Hinjosa (432-559-7685 or oscar.hinjosa@atl.net ), Brenda Viscaino (432-349-2582 or bviscaino@midlansdis.net ), Deacon Jesus Napolas (432-638-2536 or jnapolas@gandrecom.net ).

Parish Mission-Holy Family Abilene

ABELENE -- “Celebrate Life!” will be the theme for the Holy Family Parish Mission, January 15-19.

Redemptorist Father Vic Kelis, C.Ss.R. will conduct the mission. Originally from Middletown, Wisc., soon after his ordination in 1970, Father Vic began his missionary work along the Amazon River in northern Brazil. Upon his return to the US, he became involved in a number of apostolic activities including teaching in the seminary, parish ministry, directing retreats, directing marketing of Liguorian Magazine, and preaching of parish missions. He is presently the coordinator of the Liguori Mission Team and is the community Superior at Liguori Mission House, Liguori, Mo. His talks will begin at 7 p.m. Sunday-Wednesday nights. Weekend masses will be at 10 a.m., followed by Fr. Vic’s talk. Evening and Morning talks are different. Childcare will be provided.

Catholic Engaged Encounter

The Diocese of San Angelo Family and Married Life Department will conduct an Engaged Encounter Team Recruiting Day February 26, 2011 at Christ The King Retreat Center in San Angelo.

Catholic Engaged Encounter is a weekend retreat away with other engaged couples with plenty of time alone together to plan for a sacramental marriage. It is designed to give couples planning marriage the opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together— their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, their attitudes about money, sex, children, family, their role in the church and society— in a face to face way.

If you are interested in attending this informational day and being an EE team leader, please contact your parish priest.

Career Opportunity

Due to the growth of the Knights of Columbus in Texas we have openings in various places such as Wichita Falls. This is a unique opportunity to run your own business as a Knights of Columbus Field Agent.

Perfect for an outgoing self-starter, selling Fraternal Benefits to our members. If qualified you’ll earn better than average income. Excellent benefits and training. You need to have some sales experience, a good work record, ambition to succeed and good people skills.

For more information or an interview, please contact James Seideman, General Agent at (806) 797-7146 or Toll free (877) 797-5632, or e-mail: james.seideman@kofc.org

Holy Angels Cruise

Holy Angels Parish is hosting an Alaska Sawyer Glacier Cruise on July 1-9, 2011. You’ll cruise through the Inside Passage with its majestic fords, islands and bays and see the lush greenery of Tongass National Forest, the world’s largest and northernmost temperate coastal rainforest. Alaskan ports of call will include Juneau & Skagway. In addition, you will spend a day in Victoria, British Columbia and a day & night in Seattle, Washington. A brochure can be found on Holy Angel’s website (www.talleyspress.com/holyangels/23) or you can call Lori Hines at Holy Angels to request a trip flyer. For more information call Lori at (325) 942-8192.

Pilgrimage to Ireland

Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish has announced the dates for its annual trip to Ireland. The third annual trip will be held from August 3-12, 2011. The Irish adventure will visit Dublin, Glendalough, Blarney Castle, Waterford, Killarney, the Ring of Kerry, Cliffs of Moher, Galway, and other points of interest. Also included are pilgrimage stops at various Irish cathedrals and ancient monasteries, as well the Basilica of Our Lady of Knock. Mass will be celebrated at several locations. There will also be a festive medieval banquet in an Irish castle, as well a dinner and cabaret night in Dublin. Msgr. Maurice Voity, Cathedral Rector, will again be the pilgrimage leader. Cost of the trip is currently $3,195 per person in twin, with departures available from San Angelo, Midland, Abilene and Dallas/Fort Worth. For more information, or to request a trip flyer, please contact Msgr. Voity at the Cathedral, 325-658-6567, or e-mail at mvoity@hotmail.com.

Scheduled Executions

The Angelus publishes the execution dates of Texas offenders on death row each month so that the faithful in the Diocese of San Angelo can pray for them. The following offenders face upcoming execution dates. Please pray for them as well as the victims, families and all who are affected by violence.

Offender/Scheduled Execution Date:
Cleve Foster/January 11, 2011
Michael Hall/February 15
Timothy Adams/February 22
Christ the King Retreat Center

JANUARY
7-9 -- Encounter the Cross Healing Ministry Teams
10 -- DOSA 50th Anniversary Steering Committee
10 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
11 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5:6 pm
14-16 -- Engaged Encounter
16 -- Natural Family Planning 2-4 pm
17 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
18 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6 pm
21-23 -- Marriage Encounter Retreat
24 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
25 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6 pm
27-30 -- Men's Small Town ACTS Retreat
31 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

FEBRUARY
1 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6 pm
4-5 -- First Central Presbyterian
7 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
8 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6 pm
11-13 -- Engaged Encounter
13 -- Natural Family Planning 2-4 pm
14 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6 pm
20 -- CKRC Confirmation Retreat
21 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
22 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6 pm
27 -- St. Ambrose 1st Holy Communion Mini Retreat
28 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

Marriage and Family Life
Families: vital sources of life, faith, service

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In the recent World Congress on the Family, sponsored by the Vatican’s Pontifical Council on the Family, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the role of the family in these words: “The Christian family passes on the faith when parents teach their children to pray and when they pray with them (cf. Familiaris Consortio, 60); when they lead them to the sacraments and gradually introduce them to the life of the Church; when all join in reading the Bible, letting the light of faith shine on their family life and praising God as our Father.”

The pastoral leadership of our Diocese and I have chosen family life and marriage as the number one pastoral priority of our Diocese. Our main focus in all ministries will be to see how we can build up family life and strengthen marriage.

The story of family life is a story about love -- shared, nurtured, and sometimes rejected or lost. In every family God is revealed uniquely and personally, for, as we read in 1 John 4:16, “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

So we can say, as St. Paul said to the Ephesians (5:2): "Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you." The first place everyone is challenged to follow the way of love is in his or her own family, however divided, imperfect or broken it may seem to be. It was God's love that brought each of us to life as members of a family. It is God's love that sustains families through good times and bad.

The family is an intimate community of life and love.

Related Story/Pg. 4

The challenge for the family is to create a community of love, to help one another to grow, and to serve each one according to each one's needs. This is important not just for the health and holiness of families, but also for the strength of society and of the Church. It is a participation in the work of the Lord, a sharing in the mission of the Church. To be a Christian family is a holy thing.

In fact, the family is in its own right the Church—the Domestic Church. Baptism brings all Christians into union with God. Family life is sacred because family relationships confirm and deepen this union and allow the Lord to work through them. The profound and ordinary moments of daily life -- meal times, work days, vacations, expressions of love and intimacy, household chores, caring for a sick child or elderly parent, and even conflicts over things like how to celebrate holidays, discipline children, or spend money -- all are the threads from which families can weave a pattern of holiness.

A family is our first community and most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world. The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a "domestic church" or "church of the home" The point of this teaching is simple, yet profound. Christian families not only belong to the Church, but are a true expression of it.

How do families carry out the mission of the

Del Escritorio del Obispo

Cada no nacido es una vida ‘de Potencia, no vida potencial

Toda Vida Humana se hace a la Imagen Divina

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

La Beata Madre Teresa dijo que el aborto mata no solo al niño sino que también la conciencia. Más de cincuenta millones de muertes han paralizado nuestras conciencias a la horrible realidad del aborto desde la decisión mortal de nuestra Corte Suprema en 1973. Muchos hemos ignorado el estado del no nacido, y hasta hemos ignorado su existencia. Muchos han deshumanizado el no nacido por medio de los términos como masa-de-tejido, zigoto, embrión, o fetos. Esos son los términos usados por el Planned Parenthood y otros centros de muerte, no las de Dios. Nosotros sabemos la verdad: en cada etapa, cada no nacido es una gran vida de potencia, no vida potencial. ¿Aún acaso, quisiera Dios que fueran abortados? ¿Pudiera alguien honestamente creer que Dios aprobaría el sacrificio de nuestros humanos más inocentes e indefensos – el no nacido? ¿Podría alguien hallar una palabra o frase en la Biblia, o enseñanza de Cristo que pueda justificar el mal viaje del aborto?

Todos los temas de la vida están conectados, sin embargo, estos temas dependen de la protección del derecho más fundamental, el derecho a la vida. El Papa Juan Pablo II explicó este importante aspecto de la enseñanza de la iglesia cuando dijo: “Sobretodo, el clamar común, que está hecha justamente a favor de los derechos humanos—por ejemplo, el derecho de salud, de hogar, de trabajar, de familia, de cultura—es falsa e ilusoria si el derecho de la vida, el derecho más básico y fundamental y la condición
Diocesan Conference Day to focus on diversity in the Church

Featured Presenter: Arturo Chavez, Ph.D.

The featured speaker is Dr. Arturo Chávez. Dr. Chávez is the President and Chief Executive Officer of MACC, the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio. He has been a member of the MACC faculty since 2000, and was appointed president in 2007. Since then, Dr. Chávez has led the organization into its current transition from a Cultural Center to a Catholic College that offers B.A and M.A. degrees in Pastoral Ministry.

Dr. Chávez holds a B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Incarnate Word, a Masters Degree from the Oblate School of Theology of the Southwest, and a Ph.D. in Religious and Theological Studies from the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology.

By Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer
Bishop of San Angelo

I am happy to present a letter of support for the fundamental institution of marriage signed by many religious leaders of our country, including Archbishop Timothy Dolan, of New York, who is the President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The letter is entitled “The Protection of Marriage: A Shared Commitment.”

I have written a special letter of thanks to Archbishop for his stand and to let him know that I gladly add my name to the list of those who have signed this proclamation. I strongly encourage all of our priests and people to promote and protect the unique fundamental institution of marriage.

In light of the current challenges facing marriage and religious liberty in the public square the following letter is highly significant as a source of encouragement for the Catholic faithful as well as for people of other communities. It is also a sign of the broad-based consensus across religious boundaries regarding the meaning of marriage.

I strongly encourage all to speak out on the true meaning and sacredness of marriage as it has been understood from the beginning of time, as it is mentioned in the first book of the Bible.

S. Hilda Marotta
Director / Office of Education and Formation
Diocese of San Angelo

The annual Diocesan Conference Day will be Saturday, February 12, at the San Angelo Convention Center. The theme of the Conference is Diversity and the Call to Unity. The focus of the day will be “Diversity and Inclusivity in the Church.”

Registration begins at 7:45 a.m. Displays of catechetical resources for exhibitors offer a good opportunity to interact with the publishers and also a chance to review available resources. The opening session is at 9 a.m. Lunch, included in the registration is at 12:15 p.m. A Sunday Liturgy, with Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, presiding, is at 3 p.m. The day concludes at 4 p.m.

Early registration (postmarked before Jan. 21) will be $20. Registration (postmarked after Jan 21) will be $25. For more information, contact the Office of Education & Formation at 325-651-7500.

The National Directory for Catechesis states “Since persons can only achieve their full humanity by means of culture, the Catholic Church in the United States embraces the rich cultural pluralism of all the faithful, encourages the distinctive identity of each cultural group, and urges mutual enrichment. At the same time, the Catholic Church promotes unity of faith within the multicultural diversity of the people.”

The Protection of Marriage: A Shared Commitment

Marriage is the permanent and faithful union of one man and one woman. As such, marriage is the natural basis of the family. Marriage is an institution fundamental to the well being of all society, not just religious communities.

As religious leaders across different faith communities, we join together and affirm our shared commitment to promote and protect marriage as the union of one man and one woman. We honor the unique love between husbands and wives; the indispensable place of father and mothers, and the corresponding rights and dignity of all children.

Marriage thus defined is a great good in itself, and it also serves the good of others and society in innumerable ways. The preservation of the unique meaning of marriage is not a special or limited interest but serves the good of all. Therefore, we invite and encourage all people, both within and beyond faith communities, to stand with us in promoting and protecting marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Sincerely yours,

Leith Anderson
President-National Assoc. of Evangelicals

Dr. Thomas E. Armiger, Dr. Jo Anne Lyon and Dr. Gerry G. Pence
The Board of General Superintendents
The Wesleyan Church

Dr. Gary M. Benedict
President
The Christian and Missionary Alliance

Gienn C. Burrus, Jr.
President-The Foursquare Church

Bishop H. David Burton
Presiding Bishop
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dr. Ronald W. Carpenter, Sr.
Presiding Bishop-International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Nathan Diament
Director, Institute of Public Affairs
Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America

Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President-U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Most Rev. Robert Duncan
Archbishop, Anglican Church in N. America,
Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh

Rev. Jim Eschenbrenner
Executive Pastor-Christian Union

Rev. Dr. Stephen A. Gammon
Conference Minister
Conservative Congregational Conference

Rev. Matthew C. Harrison
President-Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

John Hopfer
Director
Great Commission Churches

Dr. Clyde Hughes
Bishop-Int’l Pentecostal Church of Christ

Ken Hunn
Exec. Director-The Brethren Church

Bishop Harry Jackson
Sr. Pastor, Hope Christian Church;
Bishop, Fellowship of Int’l Churches

The Most Blessed Jonah
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of all America and Canada, Orthodox Church in America

Dr. Richard Land
President-Southern Baptist Ethics
and Religious Liberty Commission

Rev. Frederick J Mourney, Jr.
Nat’l Conference Chair-Evangelical Congregational Church

Dr. James Murray
Interim Executive Director-General Association of General Baptists

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez
President-Nat’l Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Mannolian Singh
Secretary General-World Sikh Council-America Region

The Rev. Paul E. Spring
Bishop-N. American Lutheran Church

Dr. Joseph Tkach
President-Grace Communion Int’l

Rev. Phil Whipple
Bishop-Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA

Dr. George O. Wood
General Superintendent
Assemblies of God
MIDLAND -- The three day Eucharistic centered YOUTH 2000 retreat is again coming to St. Stephen’s 4601 Neely Avenue, Midland, from January 28-30, 2011. YOUTH 2000 retreats provide a means for young people (ages 13-30) to develop a deep and lasting personal relationship with Jesus Christ. During the three day retreat, young people will spend time in prayer, adoration, singing, listening to lively talks by the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Renewal, and sharing with other young people. Registration forms have been sent out to all parishes in the Diocese or through St. Stephen’s Parish office. The fee is $40 per person. YOUTH 2000 responds to Pope John Paul II’s call for young people to bear witness and bring the Gospel into the third millennium. YOUTH 2000 organizes and promotes retreats with catechism on the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist as the central part of the retreat. This focus of the Blessed Sacrament demonstrates to young people that Christ must be the center of their lives. Through the sacraments, adoration, prayer, talks, meditation and music, young people are drawn into a closer relationship with God. 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. In this way, YOUTH 2000 also responds to the U.S. Bishop’s directives as stated in “Renewing the Vision,” to draw young people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and to encourage young people to become active in their parishes and in the programs in their Diocese.

YOUTH 2000 is an international initiative founded by Ernest Williams, a citizen of the United Kingdom. The first YOUTH 2000 Retreat was held in former Yugoslavia in the summer of 1990 and was attended by over 6,000 young people from all over the world. YOUTH 2000 has since spread to England, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada, Australia, and the United States. The first YOUTH 2000 in the U.S., of which Bishop Michael Pfeifer O.M.I presided, was held in Dallas, in June of 1992. Since that time, hundreds of YOUTH 2000 Retreats have been held all over the country, with many retreats scheduled every year.

The YOUTH 2000 Retreat program booklet, outlining the theological content and liturgical practices of the retreat, was granted an Imprimatur from Bishop William E. Lori, Vicar General of Washington, D.C., with the Nihil Obstat by Reverend Augustine Di Noia, O.P. The Imprimatur was given on December 12, 2000, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of YOUTH 2000.

Deadline for registration is January 17, 2011. Additional donations to help offset these costs for individuals are gratefully appreciated. For more information, contact Victor Garza, Youth Director, or Dennis Robson, Pastoral Associate at St. Stephen’s, by phone, 432-520-7394, or by email, at d.robson@att.net.

Ministry of the third cross a new program

By Fr. Tom Barley, JCL Judicial Vicar

On the weekend of November 19-21, I was blessed to be a part of a new ministry in our Diocese. The Ministry of the Third Cross (MOTC) is a faith renewal weekend for the incarcerated or those who have been incarcerated.

On that weekend I was the Spiritual Director for the MOTC at the Ron Jackson Texas Youth Commission facility in Brownwood. We ministered to the girls who were able to attend the retreat. In this facility the girls are ages 12-19.

I was introduced to MOTC by friends in San Antonio while on sabbatical two years ago. Last year I attended the retreat with Sandy Seidel and Olivia Gonzalez to learn how to bring this ministry to our diocese. This year we took half of a team to Brownwood while San Antonio brought the other half. Next year the team will be completely from our diocese.

I have also attended an MOTC retreat in San Antonio for women on parole and probation. At each time I witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit touch the lives of at least some of the retreatants in a way that gives them the possibility for conversion and healing. At each retreat I heard the stories of the incarcerated. Many of them had been abused and used for most of their lives in ways that we can only imagine, and would be horrified if we ever saw these abuses in our own communities.

The retreat is basically a modified ACTS retreat inside the facility and a full ACTS retreat on the outside. What is different is that the retreatant population bears the social and legal stigma for being found guilty of a crime. I have been asked why minister to these people. The answer is simple. We are all sinners. By our sins we all crucified the only perfect man, the son of the only perfect woman. The only person in all of Sacred Scripture who is assured heaven is St. Dismas, the good thief, not one the self-righteous. As we have been forgiven, so must we try to forgive other people. In Matthew chapter 25 we are told to use our talents wisely and to tend to the needs of those we would consider to be the least of Jesus’ brothers. Catholic social teaching tells us that a community is only as strong as its weakest and most vulnerable members and the incarcerated are our brothers and sister in Christ. Hasn’t each of us been given a second chance at some time or another in our lives?

During the retreats I saw young girls who had never been to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament fall to their knees before the Consecrated Host. I saw older women break down and cry when their hands are blessed because no one had ever asked God to give them healing from their pains. I saw the retreatants, young and old, come to the Sacrament of Healing to confess their sins and cry at the time of absolution. I witnessed the powerful love and compassion of the MOTC Team members as they walked with the retreatants during the weekend. This was not a ministry I ever wanted to enter. However, when I saw the power of the Spirit of God at work during the few hours we spent with them, I knew that I was being called (Please See MOTC/21)

Irving’s Holy Trinity hosts encounter weekend for prospective seminarians

The Angelus

Holy Trinity Seminary would like to invite potential seminarians between the ages of 17 and 29 to its 2011 Live-In Weekend, Feb. 3-6, 2011. If interested, please contact Fr. Hubert Wade, vocations director for the Diocese of San Angelo, at 325-365-2687.

What would a weekend be like? Three West Texans, Carlos Garcia, Alex Figueroa and Patrick Russell, recently attended an encounter weekend at Conception Seminary in Missouri. Their letters detailing their experience, are included below:

From Patrick Russell:

How can I put into words my experience at Conception Abbey? Flying in the plane I did not know what to expect except that I was getting ready to enter into a different world than what I was accustomed to. Once we walked through the doors a welcoming presence was felt and already began encountering God’s call. Personally was able to learn more about what it means to pursue God’s calling and experienced first-hand what it (Please See SEMINARY/20)
All annulments are different, but petition process unchanging in formal cases

By Fr. Tom Barley
Judicial Vicar
Diocese of San Angelo

First, the Petitioner makes a decision and a commitment to petition for an annulment (a Declaration of invalidity) on a past marriage. Often, this occurs when the person has met someone and a serious relationship is being established and marriage is a possibility. (Remember that the annulment process often takes around a year to complete.) We recommend that the Petitioner begin with prayer. Then the Petitioner should contact the parish office and talk to the priest or ask to visit with an Annulment Advocate. The materials of every case are kept confidential by the Advocate and the Tribunal.

When visiting with the priest or Advocate the Petitioner will begin the petition. This will include filling out the petition form, begin gathering the necessary documents (recent official baptismal certificate, official copy of the marriage license, church marriage certificate, copy of the divorce decree, copy of the marriage packet), and begin writing the Petitioner’s story.

The Petitioner’s story includes the following areas of life – pre-relationship (growing up, home setting and experiences) for the Petitioner and the Respondent (the ex-spouse), the couple’s dating and engagement, the wedding and honeymoon (generally how was the relationship at these times), marriage, and divorce and life after. This is to be written in narrative style – as a story. Writing this story can be difficult, but it can also be a time of spiritual and emotional healing when the Petitioner begins with prayer and asks for God’s presence. The petition, the story, and the documents are sent to the Tribunal. All companion cases – other previous marriage of the Petitioner and the Petitioner’s intended must be submitted to the Tribunal at the same time. If the intended has a previous marriage that need to be addressed by the Tribunal and will not petition for an annulment, then the process cannot continue until that previous marriage is included in the petition.

The Tribunal reviews the petition for acceptance and to set the grounds (the point of canon law that will be used in the case). Questionnaires are sent to the Respondent and witnesses. Sometimes, additional questions need to be sent to witnesses. When sufficient proofs have been received by the Tribunal, a decision is rendered by the Tribunal Judge. If the invalidity of the marriage in question has not been proven, then a negative judgment is rendered by the Tribunal Judge.

In divorce cases there are two parties. In annulment cases, there are three parties – Petitioner, Respondent, and the Defender of the Bond. The Defender of the Bond is the advocate who defends the validity of the marriage. After the Defender of the Bond – First Instance (local Tribunal) reviews the Judge’s decision, the case is automatically sent to the Appellate Court in San Antonio (Second Instance). This court receives cases from each of the fifteen dioceses in Texas. After the Appellate Court reviews the findings of the First Instance Tribunal, a final decision is rendered in the Tribunal process. If the Appellate Court agrees with the First Instance Court, the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of San Angelo issues the Decree of Invalidity.

The Tribunal Judge of the case can place monitums or vetitums on either party of the union. A monitum is a strong recommendation for the party that is to be met prior to entering the next marriage. A vetitum is a requirement that must be met prior to that party entering another marriage in the Catholic Church.

Pauline Privilege: a distinct method of freeing men, women from bonds

By Tom Burke
Tribunal Office
Diocese of San Angelo

Over the months, the West Texas Angelus has contributed several articles concerning matrimony with regard to the Laws of our Church. Throughout these articles, there is one constant: the Tribunal Office begins its investigation at the request of the former husband or former wife. And, the familiar pattern is that the former husband or former wife is approaching the Church because he or she wants to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony with a different somebody.

In this article, let us explore a distinct method of freeing a divorced man and woman from the bonds of a prior marriage. It is identified by the moniker: Pauline Privilege.

As we know, nearly half of the New Testament consists of the letters of St. Paul to different faith communities that were formed as he traveled the Roman Empire. Some of the letters of St. Paul were responses to questions that arose within these communities. (Although St. Paul references the existence of such letters (i.e., 1 Cor 7:1), archaeologists have not discovered those texts.)

In St. Paul’s time, there were many, many people who were not Christian. Consequently, the growing Christian communities were facing this dilemma: what happens when two non-believers marry and, later, one becomes a believer? Such a conversion often times created (and continues to create) untold stresses between a husband and wife. And, the believers in Corinth wanted to know St. Paul’s thoughts on how they should proceed with regard to a separation or a divorce in such circumstances. (You see, (Please See PAUL/23)
From the Archives

Historical marker placed in front of cathedral

( Editor's Note: During its Golden Jubilee Year of the Diocese of San Angelo, the Angelus will reprint selected articles or portions of articles from past editions. The following reprint was first published on May 3, 1985.

SAN ANGELO -- The Texas Historical Commission, situated in Austin, has placed a historical marker in front of Sacred Heart Cathedral.

The marker was unveiled at a special ceremony Sunday morning, April 21, following the 8 o'clock Mass.

On hand for the unveiling were members of the congregation, CCS students, the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, and a number of invited guests.

The historical marker notes that the Cathedral parish was founded more than 100 years ago and is the mother church of many West Texas Catholic parishes.

In remarks, Fr. Mark Woodruff, whose research into the early history of the Catholic Church led to the awarding of the historical marker, reviewed the life of Father Mathurin J. Pairier, the founder of the parish.

Fr. Pairier, a native of France, had come to Texas in 1869 after twenty years of missionary work in the South Pacific. Pairier came to West Texas in 1874, serving in Fort Stockton and elsewhere. In that year he

(Please See ARCHIVES/20)

Newly formed Catholic Charitable Foundation now serves W. Texas

By Kathy Webster

Bishop Michael Pfeifer provided the leadership and vision over the past two years to establish a Foundation that will serve the Catholic community in the Diocese of San Angelo in perpetuity. Under Bishop Pfeifer's guidance the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo was established in 2010.

This Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. Its purpose is "to develop the financial resources necessary to support, serve and otherwise benefit the pastoral and charitable activities of the Roman Catholic Church primarily within the territorial boundaries of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, and to receive, manage, and safeguard funds and property necessary or useful to accomplish these purposes."

The foundation is totally separate from the Diocese. The Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees. The present Board of Trustees include: Bishop Michael Pfeifer, Chairman; Kathy Webster of Abilene, President; Regina Bodiford Diocesan Finance Officer, Secretary/Treasurer; Mike Wyse, Chancellor, Trustee; Joe Ed Canon of Abilene, Trustee; Len Mertz of San Angelo, Trustee; and Deacon Mike LaMonica of Midland, Trustee.

Gifts to the Foundation will be used to either establish a new endowment or be placed in an existing endowment. An endowment is a fund that exists in perpetuity. The funds are invested under the supervision of the Trustees and usually the income from the funds will be paid out as grants on an annual basis.

The trustees will determine what

(Please See CCF/21)

How do we fix the priest shortage?

Find more priests

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

Everyone is aware that the No. 1 solution to fewer priests would be to obtain more priests. But this is easier said than done. It is far more difficult to promote vocations to the priesthood today than it once was in the not so distant past. Much of the difficulty is due to the fact that there are smaller families, diminishing feeder systems, a contrary climate in today's culture, problems in family life and in marriage, and the priesthood is not held in the high esteem as it once was. The debate on why there are fewer priests could go on and on. Much more needs to be done by all of us in the area of vocation ministry, because each one by his or her baptism is called to be a promoter of vocations.

While there was a significant decrease in the number of priests in recent years, thank God in the past three years we have seen an encouraging increase of seminarians for our diocese, and this is true in most of the dioceses of the U.S.A. Presently we have 15. Please pray for these seminarians, write them letters of encouragement, work and pray for more vocations. I want to thank our Vocation Director, Father Barry McLean, for his tireless personal efforts to seek more vocations for our diocese. I am also very grateful to our Director of Seminarians, Father Hugh Wade, for all the assistance he provides for our seminarians as he continues to pastor his own communities.

A solid strategy to help increase vocations to priesthood consists of:

1. A personal invitation for men to consider a vocation to priesthood.
2. A healthy modeling of the priesthood and a witness to ordained ministry on the part of priests led by their bishop, and,
3. Establishing a supportive climate for vocations within the local Church culture at a family, parish and diocesan level. When the entire Church - bishops, priests, religious, family members, parish members - exercise this method, it becomes a prime opportunity for men to hear and respond to God's call.

Our parish directories often list the names of pastors, parochial vicars, parish ministers, etc. It would truly help to promote the parish vocation committee as a key player in the mission of the parishes if our parish directories also included a space for the names of the Parish Vocation Committee, or Coordinator. This simple effort would help instill the message that vocation awareness is a priority in our local churches.

The responsibility of maintaining a steady course of action in vocation awareness needs to be shared by everyone. When priests in their priestly lives model Christ the Good Shepherd, when men are personally invited to enter into the beautiful mystery of priesthood, and when these men are supported by those around them, then we can say with certainty that we indeed have a future full of hope.

To help all of us become more involved in the promotion of vocations for priesthood as well as for religious life, we need to reflect on the following questions:

1. How can we all make a priority of developing successful vocation strategies?
2. In what way can we better encourage our priests to publicly witness to their priesthood and invite suitable candidates to priesthood?
3. How can we help every parish develop a vocation committee and deepen a sense of responsibility in helping men respond to God's call to priesthood?
Exceptionalism not helpful in working for peaceful world

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

Patriotism, widely understood to be love for or devotion to one's country, is what justifies citizens' pride in the United States as a uniquely free nation based on democratic ideas and personal liberty.

For that reason, to see that concept cheapened by office-seeking politicians is a bit worrisome.

A recent article in the Washington Post dealt with American exceptionalism -- the idea that the United States is inherently superior to the other nations of the world. And perhaps to all nations since the dawn of time for that matter.

It finds its expression in places such as the victory speech by Florida Senator-elect Marco Rubio:

"Americans believe with all their heart, the vast majority of them, ... that the United States of America is simply the greatest nation in all of human history, a place without equal in the history of all mankind."

Hyperbole such as this, taken together with statements that God has granted America a special role in human history, leads to mischief such as "liberation" and "regime change."

"It's beneficent, benevolence are unmatched by any nation on earth and by any nation in history," Mitt Romney, a once and future presidential candidate said of the United States in his book "No Apology: The Case for American Greatness."

There is something bothersome about this "best ever" contention, almost a lack of self-esteem in the way it is expressed.

"When exceptionalism degenerates into a sense of national superiority, entitlement, smugness and inflated self-importance, it simply becomes a camouflage for pride, an attractive quality in neither politics nor ethics," wrote Brian D. McLaren, author of several books on faith and public life.

Exceptionalism may help to understand why the United Nations is disdained in some quarters. If "We're Number One," it is easy to ignore or disregard the positions of others.

"Let us not misunderstand what it takes to bring about change in the world today," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a speech at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. "Gone are the days when one country or bloc could take big steps, almost by fiat. Truly global action on global problems requires patience and determination. It means bringing the world along, step by gradual step."

The Vatican observer at the U.N., Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, noted "a lot of good will and genuine motivation in the international community and especially at the U.N." This is done by focusing on its original objectives.

He said the main goals of the United Nations were to "maintain international peace and security, to strengthen universal peace, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, to promote respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all."

Insisting on superiority is inconsistent with forging the partnerships that build community. It leads away from the Christian belief in unity.

Exceptionalism is not helpful in working for a better, more peaceful world.

There is much to be said for humility, a virtue perfected by the one whose birth we celebrate this time of year.

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(Kent, now retired, was editor of archdiocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle. He can be contacted at: Considersk@gmail.com.)

Three teens with dilemmas prove anything is possible

By Erick Rommel
Catholic News Service

Every day we face simple obstacles. Even though they're easy to overcome, sometimes we're faced with the feeling that success will take too much effort.

The next time you feel this way, think of three special teenagers.

The first is Zach Lederer, a high school senior from Maryland. As an 11-year-old, he experienced incredibly painful headaches. An MRI revealed a walnut-sized tumor in his brain. His parents rushed him to Johns Hopkins, where doctors said nothing could be done.

The next morning, Zach was still fighting. In one week, he had four brain operations. He spent so much time in the hospital that his body lost most of its muscle.

He made a full recovery, but only after learning to walk and talk again.

When Zach entered high school, he wanted to be part of the football team. For three years, he served as its manager but wanted more. He wanted to reach his full potential.

Zach's coach agreed. He said he'd let Zach in for one play during his senior year, but Zach's goal was more ambitious. He wanted to play the whole season -- and he did!

While Zach decided to never stop reaching for his dreams, 19-year-old Joe Ginem faced a far more difficult choice. Four years ago, doctors diagnosed him with osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer.

Ordinarily, doctors would have amputated his right arm, but Joe faced a decision. He played the violin; if he lost his arm, he would also lose his music.

Joe believed in himself. For a year, he underwent surgery and chemotherapy near his Florida home. The last step was shoulder reconstruction surgery. But before that, his surgeon offered him another choice: Joe's shoulder could be rebuilt to make daily tasks easier, or it could be rebuilt so that he could play the violin better.

Once again, Joe chose his passion.

Today, Joe's cancer is in remission and he is playing the violin every day.

But his story came at a cost.

Joe now struggles with simple tasks, such as grabbing a cup of water. But to him, it's a small price to pay compared to what he could have lost.

Unlike Zach and Joe, 17-year-old Sarah Phillips does not have cancer, but she has been tragically touched by it. Last February, she lost her mother Debbie Phillips to it.

In her grief, Sarah sang the ballad "Autumn," by Paolo Nutini, for her mother, recording it into her own cell phone.

"Autumn" is an unbelievably sad song about loss. In part, it says:

"Autumn leaves, how faded now,"

"That smile that I've lost, well I've found somehow,"

"Because you still live on in my father's eyes,"

"These autumn leaves ... are yours tonight."

Hours after recording the song, Sarah's mother died in their London home. Sarah shared the song with her family, who insisted that it be played at her mother's funeral.

Soon after, a family friend who is also a music producer added music and created a video, using a montage of videos featuring Sarah's mother.

Visitors to YouTube loved the song. They've since played it almost a half-million times.

In response to the outpouring of emotion, Sarah created a charity fund in her mother's memory. In less than a year, it's raised more than $700,000.

That money won't bring Sarah's mother back, but maybe the research it funds will prevent another teenage girl from losing a parent.

In the end, that's the message of hope that Sarah, Joe and Zach give to all of us.

There is nothing we can't face, nothing we can't overcome, if we believe anything is possible.
Help to make healthy resolutions for the New Year

By Maureen Pratt
Catholic News Service

When it comes to New Year’s resolutions, the one thing I resolve to do is expect to modify my resolutions! It’s all too easy to make big plans leading up to Jan. 1, only to have “life intervene” shortly afterward when schedules return to frenzied normal and outside responsibilities once again eat away at time and energy.

Instead of setting up my expectations to fail (the “all or nothing” approach), I have developed some guidelines that can inform the goals I hope to achieve.

Here are a few of the things I keep in mind as 2010 rings out and 2011 begins:

Keep plans and goals simple. A complete reworking of a lifestyle is probably not achievable, at least not in the course of the 12 months of a new year.

Exercise plans that can fit into a current work schedule, for example, are more likely to be doable.

Other health care goals, such as getting cholesterol levels down, are easier to adhere to if they are broken up into simple steps.

Prioritize now and throughout the year. If you live with a chronic illness, what might be a priority for your health now might not be in the next month when another symptom could arise.

Although it can seem frustrating if all of your health goals can’t be met at once, it’s important to alleviate the stress of trying to accomplish so much by taking care of what’s most important at any given time.

Expect the unexpected. As soon as you return to work, school, and life in general, unexpected issues will arise. Whether pleasant or difficult, these will bump against the healthful resolutions you’d like to carry out and could derail them -- if you allow it.

This is why it is important to think through a “what if” scenario or two at the beginning of the New Year. You should also have contingency plans if something happens to threaten your well-laid plans.

Stay informed throughout the year.

In just the past two weeks, for example, widely differing study results regarding the efficacy of vitamin D have been reported. This underscores how quickly health news can evolve and shift, and how important it is to stay informed about our own health issues and those things that influence public health, such as flu demographics and food recalls.

Discuss health resolutions with others. The support and encouragement of others can give you tremendous strength, bolstering flagging resolve throughout the year.

You can also lend your support to others and build fellowship in the process.

Whether it is with loved ones, co-workers or support groups online, sharing our goals and struggles to achieve them is a great way to spread the word about meeting challenges and persevering.

Keep a realistic budget.

Living healthfully does not have to cost a great deal of money or be a full-time endeavor. At the beginning of the New Year, understand what is affordable in both weekly time commitments and monetary output. Then, tailor exercise, diet, health care and other considerations accordingly, reviewing these throughout the year and making adjustments as they are needed.

Finally, I always come back to “keep it simple.”

In this complicated, complex world, it’s easy to believe that everything we do has to be multi-layered and multi-tasked.

Yet, just like faith that is childlike and love that is pure, simple goals and dreams can shine with clarity.

(Contact Pratt) at www.maureenpratt.com

We love ex-Catholics, and want them back

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service

Recently, an article in an October 2010 edition of the National Catholic Reporter was about the 2008 findings of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, which indicated that many Protestant churches benefit from the exodus of lapsed Catholic.

Ex-Catholics draw a lot of interest because the church in the United States is so huge -- 68.1 million strong in a country of nearly 311 million.

Since there are about 23 million ex-Catholics, it means that lapsed Catholics alone are large enough to form the second-largest church in the country behind the Roman Catholic Church itself. The Southern Baptists, who number about 16.2 million, would come in third.

Nearly 70 percent of those who are born Catholic remain in the church until death. Of the 30 percent who leave, a little less than half become unaffiliated for life.

Of the unaffiliated Catholics, 48 percent said that they left the church before they were 18, which means they probably never really had a deep faith in the first place. They may have gone to Catholic schools, but their young minds didn’t accept what was being taught, especially with respect to the Eucharist.

An additional three in 10 of unaffiliated Catholics claim that they left between ages 18 and 23.

According to a Gallup poll, about 40 percent of them years later claim they are open to considering a return to the faith of their childhood, if they were to be invited back.

This tells us much about the importance of our “Come Home” programs. We love ex-Catholics and want them back.

Only 2 out of 10 of the unchurched ex-Catholics left the church after the age of 24.

Maybe we didn’t do a good enough job in educating them, or maybe it just means that they didn’t want to believe.

I now realize the fear we had that there is a mass exodus of adults leaving the Catholic Church is highly exaggerated.

According to the latest reliable surveys, we find that there is definitely some leakage taking place, but not a massive hemorrhaging.

However imperfectly Catholics may practice their faith, they are just about as loyal to their church as the Protestants are to theirs. Protestant fidelity to the denomination of their youth has been falling off sharply for the past 30 years.

The Catholic Church is far from mortally wounded. In fact, it is quite vibrant despite the recent disruptions due to the child abuse scandals and all the controversy surrounding abortion, homosexuality, celibacy, divorce and birth control.

These are undoubtedly the cause of much unrest in some places, but the vast majority of Catholics have enough faith and enough sense to recognize that they need the Eucharist more than they need a change of address.

Despite our disagreements over the various moral teachings of the church, the vast majority of Catholics believe that God’s revelation is more about mercy than about moralism.

They have oat fiber, wheat fiber and rice fiber, but no moral fiber.”
Making Sense of Bioethics

The ethics, morality of placing humans in frozen orphanages

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

A key argument in the embryonic stem cell debate — widely invoked by scientists, patient advocacy groups, and politicians — involves the fate of frozen embryos. Barack Obama put it this way in 2008: “If we are going to discard those embryos, and we know there is potential research that could lead to curing debilitating diseases - Alzheimer’s, Lou Gehrig’s disease - if that possibility presents itself, then I think that we should, in a careful way, go ahead and pursue that research.” The head of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins, embraced this same line of reasoning by asking a rhetorical question during a recent CNN interview: “Ethically, isn’t it more justifiable, if those embryos have been created, to use them for a purpose that might help somebody with a disease as opposed to simply discarding them?”

This argument sounds reasonable on first hearing. We prefer to recycle aluminum cans, rather than uselessly tossing them into landfills. It seems as if we should handle surplus frozen embryos in a similar way, getting some benefit out of them rather than discarding them.

Yet this argument has a deceptive, even seductive character because of the way it sets up a false dichotomy: either one discards the embryos or one destroys them in the laboratory to obtain miraculous cures for diseases. An important third option is often not even mentioned: namely, that we continue to store the embryos in their current, frozen state as part of our moral duty to care for our own offspring. They could be cryopreserved until a morally acceptable option for using them for a purpose that might help somebody with a disease as opposed to simply discarding them.

Discarding an embryo, it is important to be clear, means ending the life of a young human being, the tiny life that each of us once was at an earlier time. The embryos to be discarded are usually first thawed, and many do not survive this first step; those that do are summarily discarded as medical waste. A few years ago, Cardinal Sean O’Malley described the reality of what happens in the fertility clinic this way: “In discarding these embryos, the medical staff become their unwilling executioners, but executioners nonetheless.”

Perhaps an analogy can help us better visualize why we should not discard embryos or sacri-

fice them for research. Imagine a typical fertility clinic with a large room where several tanks filled with liquid nitrogen were holding a few hundred cryo-preserved human embryos, a kind of “frozen orphanage,” as these tanks are sometimes called.

In the building next door there happens to be a real orphanage filled with toddlers between the ages of 1 and 3 years old who are awaiting adoption. Suppose that the owner of the orphanage happens to be a shady character who has recently decided to take some of the “unadoptable” infants and clandestinely discard them into the dumpster behind the orphanage where they eventually die. Suppose also that when the local mayor learned about the children being put into the dumpster, he had the gall to suggest that since they were going to be thrown out anyway, we should start sacrificing them for scientific research and harvesting their organs for transplantation into sick patients.

Our first instinct would be to recoil with abhorrence at the proposal. We might prosecute the orphanage owner (and drum the mayor out of office as well). We would insist that each infant in the orphanage deserves full protection. Our children in frozen orphanages deserve the same protection and care.

Most of us, upon reflection, have a practical awareness that embryos ought not be discarded. A few years ago, the New York Times ran a piece entitled, “The Job Nobody at the Fertility Clinic Wants.” That job was the destruction of spare embryos. Medical staff members, when interviewed, said they dreaded being picked to carry out the discarding of embryos when patients requested it. A clinic director in Chicago described how often he had to destroy the embryos himself because his staff found the task so distasteful. The staff understood and had seen firsthand how these same embryos, when implanted, would yield beautiful, bubbly babies who brought joy and happiness to their parents. They seemed to appreciate instinctively, as each of us should, how living human embryos, even in the deep freeze, should never be discarded down the chute into the biohazard disposal or used as “raw material” for possible medical advances.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctoral degree 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

Eucharist is expressed in living lives of justice

Worship and prayer must lead to living our faith in an active manner

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

One of the key principles of the Liturgy, the Eucharist, given to us by the beautiful document of the Second Vatican Council on Liturgy, is the call for all people, the entire assembly, to take a full, conscious, active participation in the Eucharist, in our worship and prayer life. This full, active, conscious participation must not only be expressed during the time of our worship in Church, but must be alive in all that happens after Mass, and lead us to full, active, conscious living of our faith, especially by promoting justice and peace in our world.

The Prophet Isaiah, far back in the 8th century BC, understood the integral and intimate connection between worship, prayer and justice from a call to a contemplation of God and hope, especially for the poor and the defenseless. The inspired prophet stressed that worship without leading to showing mercy and love of neighbor is hollow, devoid of most meaning. The very first chapter of Isaiah brings out the intimate connection between worship and living justice. During his time, worship had become hollow, as people were mainly going through a ritual, hoping to appease God, but were not living and practicing justice and compassion for their fellow people, especially for the poor and defenseless.

God, speaking through Isaiah, has very harsh words for people who offer sacrifices in the Temple, who go through the gesture of prayer and worship, but do not follow up on their prayer by showing compassion, love and justice in their lives, especially for the abandoned and the marginalized. The people of Isaiah’s time thought that they had escaped the catastrophe of the northern kingdom of Israel, because God was pleased with their hollow sacrifices and offerings.

From the beginning of his ministry as a prophet, inspired by the great Spirit, Isaiah rails against such thinking. The law requires people to distinguish themselves from their pagan neighbors by making care for the poor and the defenseless the hallmark of their religious lives. Justice must be their aim. The people had fallen into ritual practices, but their hearts were not being given to God, were not centered on God. They truly lacked what we call full, active, conscious participation in worship, which was also a call to full, active participation in showing God’s mercy and compassion to neighbors in need. Simply put, the justice that was to be the fruit of their prayer life was lacking.

Today, we need to stress over and over that our celebration of the Eucharist, the Mass, does not just include our prayer and worship in church, but our prayer to truly be effective and pleasing to God must be expressed in our lives, especially by promoting justice and peace in our world.

By his devotion to the Temple, Isaiah the Prophet was clearly not trying to discourage worship or acts of piety. The great prophet was saying that sacrifice and even prayer without doing justice is hypocrisy of the worst kind. Isaiah clearly pointed out that unless people hear the cries of the poor, God will not hear them. The lesson for us is that if we do not listen to the poor with their many faces and show them compassion, then how can we expect God to hear our prayers for blessings?

(Please See EUCHARIST/21)
## Summary of Audited Financials
Diocese of San Angelo
Fiscal Year 2010
(ended June 30, 2010)

### THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM OFFICES OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO

#### STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
JUNE 30, 2010 AND 2009

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| **LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**          |             |             |
| Account payable and accrued liabilities | $ 521,032   | $ 390,485   |
| Accrued pension plan liabilities        | 1,209,145   | 1,278,253   |
| Held for cemetery                       | 546,649     | 494,747     |
| Parish collections for designated purposes | 15,490    | 16,285      |
| Parish savings deposits                 | 10,615,657  | 9,129,229   |
| **Total Liabilities**                   | **12,907,964** | **11,308,625** |

| **Net Assets**                          |             |             |
| Unrestricted                            | 4,751,265   | 4,406,785   |
| Temporarily restricted                  | 409,444     | 684,639     |
| Permanently restricted                  | 1,689,187   | 1,647,228   |
| **Total Net Assets**                    | **6,849,896** | **6,658,652** |

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

| ****                                | $ 19,757,860 | **17,967,277** |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.
January
Pope Benedict XVI names San Angelo-ordained priest and Taylor County native Joe Vasquez, 53, Bishop of Austin. Vasquez also served as a priest in several parishes in San Angelo before being transferred to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Five Catholics graduate from LIMEX (Loyola Ministry for Ministry Extension) program. The graduates are honored at ceremonies at St. Ann's in Midland. LIMEX is a graduate-level theology program offered through Loyola University-New Orleans.

February
Knights of Columbus Council 9215 at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Midland unveil twin granite Ten Commandment monuments in English and Spanish, at the Shrine to Our Lady, in Midland.

March
Most Rev. Joe Vasquez installed as Austin bishop at ceremony in St. Williams' Cathedral in Round Rock, March 8.

Menard native Sister Regina Decker, longtime Sister of Divine Providence assigned to the diocese, dies March 12.

O lunen native, former Bishop of Amarillo Leroy Matthiesen, dies March 22 at his Amarillo home.

Burglars break into Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo and try to bust open church's safe, March 13. Although unsuccessful, the vandals did do damage to the church by breaking into a stained glass window to gain entrance. First Christian Church, also burglarized in the same weekend, did report money taken.

April
Bishop Michael Pfeifer announces establishment of Catholic Charitable Foundation in Diocese of S. Angelo. (See Pg. 7).

Catholic Churches of South Odessa announce participation in Family Promise charitable effort, assisting homeless families short term by providing food, shelter, in cooperative effort with other churches in Odessa.

May
West Texas Angelus honored with two national writing awards at Catholic Press Association's annual convention in New Orleans.

June
Class of 29 deacons ordained June 5 at San Angelo Convention Center, meaning the Diocese of San Angelo now has more ordained deacons than priests.

Diocese announces plans for major celebration in observance of 50th anniversary of establishment of diocese by Pope John XXIII. The anniversary will be observed October 16, 2011. (See Pg. 1)

July
Capacity crowd at Sacred Heart Cathedral helps Most Rev. Michael Pfeifer celebrate his 25th anniversary as Bishop of San Angelo, July 26.

Diocese announces plans for major celebration in observance of 50th anniversary of establishment of diocese by Pope John XXIII. The anniversary will be observed October 16, 2011. (See Pg. 1)

Sister Malachy Griffin, former Campus Ministry Director and Newman Center Director at Angelo State University, retires.

August
Priests and other diocesan leaders begin series of meetings on implementation of new Roman Missal, which will be introduced November 27, 2011.

Compiled by Jimmy Patterson. Photos courtesy Knights of Columbus, 9215; Alan P. Torre, Jimmy Patterson.

September
Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, announces intentions to attend 50th anniversary of Diocese of San Angelo in October 2011.

Bishop Pfeifer helps parishioners at tiny Immaculate Conception Mission in Knickerbocker open their new church hall, September 7.

October
Bishops of Texas announce solidarity with brother bishops in Mexico in wake of growing drug violence there.

Abilene youth groups picket Planned Parenthood abortion centers.

Hundreds attend annual diocesan junior high youth event, October 16 in Odessa.

New CCD Hall opens at Holy Redeemer Church in Odessa, October 17.

November
Fr. Tom Goekler, frequent visitor to the Diocese and instrumental priest in diocesan Honduran Partnership, dies in his sleep, November 25.

Twelve diocesan parishes send more than 30 youth to Region X Catholic Youth Conference in Little Rock, Ark.

December
Our Lady of Guadalupe in Midland celebrates 50th anniversary of Mass attended by an estimated 1,500, December 11.

Bishop Pfeifer dedicates new San Miguel de Arcangel Church on south-side of Midland.
New abuse reports in 2010 led pope, Vatican to refine policies

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- New revelations about clerical sex abuse cases, particularly in Europe, led Pope Benedict XVI and his top aides in 2010 to look for ways to refine policies for handling accusations and strengthening child protection programs.

In a pastoral letter to Catholics in Ireland, at a Mass marking the end of the Year for Priests, in speeches and in meetings with victims of abuse in Malta and in Great Britain, Pope Benedict acknowledged the horror of abuse and the shame of a slow church response.

As 2010 drew to a close, he called the College of Cardinals to a meeting at the Vatican where the church's response to the scandal was one of the topics and where U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, announced the Vatican was working on new guidelines to ensure a "coordinated and effective program" for dealing with accusations and protecting children.

The Vatican and leaders of the Catholic Church in Ireland began the year trying to respond to a late 2009 report about the failures of the church in handling cases of abuse; soon afterward Belgian Bishop Roger Vangheluwe of Brugge was forced to resign when his family revealed he had sexually abused his nephew. Cases of abuse also were revealed in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands.

Closing the Year for Priests in June, the pope said that what had been planned as a year of celebration became a "summons to purification."

"In this very year of joy for the sacrament of the priesthood, the sins of priests came to light -- particularly the abuse of the little ones, in which the priesthood, whose task is to manifest God's concern for our good, turns into its very opposite," the pope said in a homily during a Mass June 11 with about 15,000 priests.

Pope Benedict's approach to the scandal consistently has been to see it as a result of serious sin that has polluted the church; the process of cleansing must be serious and profound, he has said, but it also must acknowledge Christ's power to heal and to strengthen the church.

In his letter to the Catholics of Ireland, released March 20, the pope wrote directly to the victims of abuse: "You have suffered grievously and I am truly sorry. I know that nothing can undo the wrong you have endured. Your trust has been betrayed and your dignity has been violated."

He ordered an apostolic visitation of Ireland's four archdioceses, its seminaries and its religious orders. The visits, being conducted by church leaders from the United States, Canada and England, began in November and were to conclude by Easter 2011.

As revelations of abuse hit the news in various parts of Europe, the Vatican faced the task not only of strengthening procedures to deal with the abuse, but also of explaining to the public what the church already had done over the previous 10 years to help victims and to expel abusers from the priesthood.

In April, it posted on the Vatican website a summary of the investigative steps, trial options and possible penalties for clerical sex abuse of minors, including dismissal from the priesthood. The summary underlines the local bishop's responsibility to follow civil law in reporting such crimes to the appropriate authorities.

By the end of the year, the web page -- "Abuse of Minors. The Church's Response" -- contained dozens of documents and papal speeches addressing the scandal.

The crisis even was one of the topics covered by Peter Seewald in "Light of the World," a book-length interview with Pope Benedict.

The pope told Seewald that the crisis "was really almost like the crater of a volcano, out of which suddenly a tremendous cloud of filth came, darkening and soiling everything."

2010 brought approval of new Roman Missal; implementation in '11

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A year from now, the liturgical celebrations of the Advent and Christmas seasons will have a different sound, as the new English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal begins being used in U.S. parishes.

In a decree of proclamation sent to the U.S. bishops in August, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, then president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said: "The use of the third edition of the Roman Missal enters into use in the dioceses of the United States of America as of the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 27, 2011. From that date forward, no other edition of the Roman Missal may be used in the dioceses of the United States of America."

The transition to the new translation took up most of the past decade and has not been without its rough patches, with some bishops, priests and laypeople criticizing changes in wording meant to bring the translation more closely into alignment with the Latin original.

But Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, N.J., who, as chairman of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship for the past three years, shepherded the missal through its final approval by the Vatican in 2010, said just before stepping down as chairman that catechetical preparation to implement the new translation was proceeding in U.S. parishes "with much enthusiasm and wide acceptance by both clergy and laity."

Announced by Pope John Paul II in 2000 and first published in Latin in 2002, the missal is the book of prayers used in the worship in the Latin rite church. It underwent a lengthy and rigorous translation process through the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, followed by sometimes heated discussions over particular wording at USCCB meetings until it received final approval from the U.S. bishops in November 2009.

Other English-speaking bishops' conferences went through a similar process and submitted recommended changes to the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

People attending Pope Benedict XVI's Masses in Scotland and England in September got a chance to hear and sing a few of the newly translated Mass texts.

Msgr. Guido Marini, papal master of liturgical ceremonies, said the prayers sung in English at the papal Masses in Great Britain used the translations from the new Order of the Mass approved by the Vatican in 2008.

Although the new translation of the Order of the Mass, which contains the main prayers used at Mass, was approved by the Vatican two years ago, bishops' conferences in English-speaking countries decided to wait to introduce the prayers until the entire Roman Missal was translated and approved.
Our Faith

Catholic practice: Is cremation OK?

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service

Q. For some reason, Catholics were formerly forbidden to have their bodies cremated, but I know that has changed.

What is the Catholic view on cremation today? We receive different ideas from one priest to another. Is there a general rule that applies everywhere? (Louisiana)

A. As you say, cremation was prohibited by the church for a long time. Anti-Catholic groups in some places encouraged cremation as a way to deny the resurrection. God, it was argued, couldn't possibly gather all the smoke and ashes to make us rise again.

That argument is seldom raised today, so cremation is no longer forbidden if the individual intends no disrespect for the body of the deceased or contempt for Christian faith.

Prayers and guidelines for funerals of Catholics who are cremated today arise primarily in two texts, the Order of Christian Funerals and Reflections on the Body, Cremation and Catholic Funeral Rites, published by the bishops of the United States in 1997. The following points are primarily from these documents.

Catholic teaching still prefers traditional burial, which demonstrates greater reverence for the human body, which in this life was a temple of the Holy Spirit. As we know, however, economic or other family factors sometimes make cremation a better practical choice. The latest statistics indicate that one out of five American Catholics chooses cremation.

Even when cremation is chosen, if at all possible the body of the deceased person should be present for all funeral rites -- vigil service, funeral Mass and prayers of commendation at the conclusion of the funeral liturgy.

If cremation must take place earlier, it is appropriate that the ashes be present for the funeral rites and then buried in a cemetery or mausoleum. In other words, cremation ashes should be treated with the same respect given to the deceased body.

No casket is required, as far as the church is concerned, nor to my knowledge does any state in the United States require a casket if the body will be cremated. Some states do expect a body to be shipped to the crematory in a casket or other suitable container.

Customs do vary from place to place, especially from country to country, and, of course, from one faith to another. Funeral directors can supply information about what is required locally.

My impression is that in light of our culture and traditions, decisions for cremation are sometimes made a bit too impulsively, without prayerful consideration of some serious concerns bearing on faith and how we care about other people.

Sixteen centuries ago, St. Augustine noted in a funeral homily that Christian burial rites are more for the living than for the dead. We all need the reminders of truths that confront us in the presence of the body of a loved one who has died, in the Eucharist we offer and in placing the body in the grave.

The entire Catholic funeral liturgy magnificently expresses those truths in the context of Jesus' own death and resurrection.

When a family is involved, it is important to discuss the matter thoroughly with members when decisions are made, to be sure they are psychologically and spiritually comfortable with cremation arrangements.

Should we ever lose touch with the spiritual realities that meet us in death and in the liturgies of burial, we would lose something precious in our Christian lives.

("Catholic Q & A: All You Wanted to Know About Catholicism" is a 560-page enlarged and updated collection of columns by Father John Dietzen; Crossroad Publishing Company, New York.)

At last! A scorekeeping method for homilies

By Dan Morris
Catholic News Service

My sister recently sent me a "Female Demerit System," which I am confident she intended for me to study for improvement of my marital relationship skills.

She loves my wife. She puts up with me.

So naturally one of my first thoughts was, "Hey, this would not be a bad score-keeping format for homilies."

The "system" has a couple of rules:

Foremost, make the woman happy; secondly, you receive few points for doing something expected. The rules explain further: "Sorry. That's the way the game is played."

An example is the merits and demerits noted under the "A Night Out" category:

You take her to a movie -- plus 1.
You take her to a movie she likes -- plus 3.
You take her to a movie you hate -- plus 6.
You take her to a movie you like -- minus 2.
The movie is called "Death Cop" -- minus 3.
You lied and said it was a foreign film about orphans -- minus 15.
This could be a parallel for homilies, for example, under "Language Employed":

The homily includes only one conjugation of a Latin or Greek word for the congregation's benefit -- plus 1.

The homily makes complex words or phrases make sense by their use -- plus 3.
The homily features the word "eschatological" more than three times -- minus 3.
"Eschatological," "epistemology" and "hermeneutics" are all used -- minus 15.
Each time one of them is used, it is preceded with the phrase "as you all know" -- minus 60.

Perhaps pace, gestures and movement could be considered one category?

The homilist rarely refers to notes, maintains eye contact with the congregation and pauses between thoughts -- plus 1.

The homilist smiles or raises his eyebrows or rolls his eyes or moves his head in a way that augments what he just said -- plus 3.

The homilist moves from behind the lectern at times and speaks comfortably without notes -- plus 10.

The homilist moves from behind the lectern, walks out of electronic mic range, rambles down the center aisle and/or sits in the front pew -- minus 6.

He grips his notes with both hands, keeps his head down and rarely takes a breath -- minus 12.

(Please See SCORING/23)
BIBLE ACCENT

The Magi that visited the baby Jesus also have been called Wise Men or kings over the years as part of our Christmas tradition. The song "We Three Kings" is about these men, although most likely there were more than three of them, and traditions have even given them the names of Melchior, Gaspar and Balthasar.

The Gospel of Matthew says that the Magi came from the East. There are differences of opinions among scholars as to whether these men came from Persia, Babylon, Yemen or somewhere else. Their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh are believed to represent gifts appropriate for a king, and they symbolize respect (gold), prayer (frankincense) and eventual death (myrrh).

SPOTLIGHT ON SAINTS:

St. Stephen

Stephen was a Jew who also spoke fluent Greek. Little is known about how he decided to convert to Christianity, but when the apostles told the people to choose seven men who were of good character, Stephen was named as one of them. The apostles prayed over these seven men, and they are considered to be the first deacons.

Stephen was a very eloquent speaker, and people loved to listen to him preach. However, some of the religious leaders did not like what he was saying, so they plotted against him. They accused him of blasphemy against Moses and against God.

Stephen was sentenced to death, but before he died, he gave a moving speech and asked God to forgive his attackers.

We honor the first Christian martyr Dec. 26.

PUZZLE

Match the characters from the Christmas story with the phrase that describes them the best:

1. Magi
2. Shepherds
3. Mary
4. Elizabeth
5. Herod
6. David
7. Emmanuel

a. mother of Jesus
b. visitors from the East
c. caretakers of sheep
d. ancestor of the earthly father of Jesus
e. wanted to know where Jesus was
f. God is with us
g. mother of John the Baptist

The Magi from the East stopped in Jerusalem to ask a question to anyone who might help them in their search. "Where is the newborn king of the Jews?" they asked. "We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard that a new king may have been born, he, too, wanted to know where this child was. He was very jealous and did not want any other kings in his land. He called his priests and scribes before him and asked them what they knew.

Quoting from a prophecy in the Scriptures, they told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written ... 'from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Herod invited the Magi to come to see him. He hoped he would be able to find out more information about the age and location of the boy. Pretending to be their friend, he said to them, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I, too, may go and do him homage."

The Magi left the king's presence and followed the same star that had been leading them on their journey until they reached Bethlehem. There they found young Jesus. They bowed before him and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Before they returned to their home, they were warned in a dream not to tell Herod what they had found, but to take a different route back.

After the Magi had gone, an angel appeared to Joseph and said to him, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."

Joseph immediately gathered his family together and left Bethlehem under the cover of darkness and stayed in Egypt until they received news that Herod was dead. By doing so, they fulfilled another prophecy that said, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

An angel again appeared to Joseph and told him, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."

Because Herod's son was now the king of Judea, Joseph brought his family into the region of Galilee and settled in a town called Nazareth.
Family

Volunteering and service to others: What good comes?

By Jimmy Patterson

A friend and I were having breakfast recently and not quite unpredictably the conversation turned to service. What are we supposed to do? How much? And why?

Being born and raised a Protestant, I guess I still have some questions about whether or not -- and how -- service is a part of salvation. Protestants say salvation comes by faith alone; Catholics hold that it is through faith and works that we enter the golden doors of heaven.

But the bigger question, bigger on this day at least, was quite frankly: what difference do we make? Sure, some people dig deep and give thousands of dollars or more to their charity of choice. Some build houses and can see the fruits of their volunteer labor. But for every tangible volunteer project, many others still work and may realize fully the outcome of their efforts. Specifically, I speak of the dedicated volunteers involved in Pro-life projects, and similar worthy efforts.

For all the hours of meetings and standing on street corners and in front of Planned Parenthood clinics, what good is being done? Are their efforts worth it? Millions of children have been aborted since the Roe V. Wade decision. If I attend a meeting once a month about pro-life efforts, am I doing anything at all to stop the madness?

Sure, there are the occasional -- and perhaps even frequent -- exceptions, when a volunteer worker convinces a woman arriving at a Planned Parenthood Center she should reconsider. No doubt watching a woman back up her car and leave -- even knowing what her ultimate decision will be -- has to be gratifying and must feel as though all the time put in is for much good.

That “What good am I doing?” feeling could understandably also be applied to people who rushed to the Gulf Coast to help clean the beaches after the BP oil spill last year. A gargantuan task, but why spend so much time on it? For every tar ball cleaned, another 50, 100, 1,000 surely rolled up to replace the one that had been seized.

What good then?

My friend theorized that while our efforts may be singular yet the problem mammoth and global there is still good in the effort.

In his book “The Holy Longing,” Fr. Ronald Rohrheiser, OMI, writes of how the incarnation did not stop with the death of Christ on the cross. It continued, and continues still today, as we are all the body of Christ. We are all incarnations of Christ on earth. We are all still supposed to be doing his work because we are Him. To not do as He would have as do and as He would do -- would not only be wrong, it would be tying the hands of Jesus.

Service, too, not only makes Good feel good about us and not only does it make us feel good about us, but, my friend theorized again, it makes others feel good about the world.

A Midland Baptist church handed out water and snacks to weary shoppers at the mall during the Christmas season -- for no other reason than to help people feel they had a friend during the frenetic season and that God loves them.

And then there was a recent picture in the Midland newspaper at the end of December. It was a photo of a young woman bending down to give a hug to an elderly neighbor. The caption talked of how the woman comes out of her apartment many days simply to wave to her neighbors as they pass by. The woman, Anne Robbins, is making a difference. She is not performing the valiant work of others who offer their time to causes to which they are committed, but she is making a difference.

Think for a moment about the trickle down effect. Ms. Robbins simply greets people, waves and smiles at them. The person on the receiving end no doubt walks away feeling more appreciated. And from that point, no telling how that feeling multiplies and may be spread to still others.

Yes, no matter how big or how small, the effort we give in improving other people’s lives is worth it. Whether we work for a multitude of others for all to see, or we smile at people as they pass by one by one. Our efforts are making a difference. And yes ... He knows of our efforts.

Your Family

When a senior family member has a drinking problem

By Bill and Monica Dodds

Catholic News Service

It can be startling to discover and hard to admit that a senior family member has developed a drinking problem, but there are a number of reasons why this can happen:

-- An older body has more difficulty processing alcohol. Maybe your loved one has been only a social drinker, but as he advances in years the same amount of alcohol packs more of a wallop and its effects last longer because his tolerance level has dropped.

-- Medications and alcohol don’t mix. She may be taking a new prescription or an increased dosage of one she has taken for a while. But this combined with what she may dismiss as “only a glass or two of wine” could have dangerous results.

-- An older person may come to rely on the numbing effect of alcohol to deal with pain. While alcohol seems to dull both physical and emotional pain, it eventually compounds both.

-- Society has a better net for catching the younger alcoholic. The police stop him for drunk driving. The boss notices an employee’s productivity is down at work. A husband or wife spots a spouse’s problem and courageously speaks up. But an elderly person might not be driving anymore, is probably retired and could be a widow or widower.

This is why it is important to keep an eye out for any warning signs of alcohol abuse among senior family members.

These signs include mood swings, general confusion, increasing isolation, bruises from bumping into furniture or falling, burns from falling asleep with a lit cigarette, a lot of empty bottles leaving the house -- and “nesting,” making one spot, usually a comfortable lounge chair, an entire world with cigarettes, ashtray, TV remote, glass and bottle within reach.

If you are concerned, get professional help. Talk to a doctor, nurse or social worker. All too often, if a family member doesn’t raise the issue, it remains buried.

It is understandable if you are tempted to ignore the situation. It is bound to cause a fight. You can easily rationalize that maybe you are simply overreacting. After all, Dad doesn’t have that much time left, and drinking seems to be his only pleasure.

Experts on alcoholism answer those concerns this way:

First, if you suspect a problem, there probably is one -- and it will only get worse.

And second, your family member is not happy. An alcoholic who’s drinking is not a happy person. Those final years or months will not be happy for him or her if the drinking continues. In fact, drinking might shorten your loved one’s life. It is chipping away at his or her health and increasing the risk of accidents.

Do some research and learn about alcohol and aging. Be prepared to give accurate information and have resource information ready. At this point in your relationship, there might not be a better way to show how much you love him or her.

While it can be very difficult to bring up the subject of alcoholism with your loved one, Al-Anon is there to help your family.

On the Web: Help for Families

To learn more about Al-Anon, go to www.al-anon.alateen.org.

ANSWERS:

1. b
2. c
3. a
4. g
5. e
6. d
7. f
'True Grit': An 'exceptional reimagining of Western'

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK -- With "True Grit" (Paramount) -- the second screen version of Charles Portis' 1968 novel of the same title, first adapted in a 1969 production helmed by Henry Hathaway and memorably starring John Wayne -- writer-directors (and brothers) Joel and Ethan Coen combine dramatic excellence and moral heft to create an exceptionally fine reimagining of the traditional Western.

Though scenes of gunplay and other strife -- together with some mildly salty language -- preclude endorsement for youngsters, adult viewers will likely find this slyly witty frontier foray a captivating treat.

Tasked with organizing her father's funeral in the wake of his murder, 14-year-old Mattie Ross (impressive newcomer Hailee Steinfeld) travels alone to the scene of the crime -- the small, free-wheeling town of Fort Smith, Ark. Preternaturally poised and remarkably determined, however, Mattie is intent on doing more than merely wrapping up her father's affairs. She means to bring the sole suspect in his killing -- cowardly outlaw Tom Chaney (Josh Brolin) -- to account.

But Chaney has escaped into Indian Territory, and Mattie quickly discovers that the local forces of the law have no interest in pursuing him. So, based on his reputation as a dogged tracker of fugitives, she enlists the aid of broken-down but resourceful U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn (Jeff Bridges).

Also hunting Chaney -- for a much older murder committed in the Lone Star State -- is cocksure Texas Ranger LaBoeuf (Matt Damon). He eventually joins forces with Cogburn and Mattie. But the resulting alliance is an unsettled, on-again-off-again affair, strained by conflicting goals and by the comic, boastful rivalry between the lawmen.

What follows is a richly enjoyable tale enlivened by archetypical characters, a mythic atmosphere and amusingly idiosyncratic dialogue. Typical of this last element is Mattie's characterization of the marauding gang Chaney has joined while on the run; "a congress of louts," she calls them.

While thoroughly entertaining, "True Grit" also plumbs deeper. It opens with a quotation from the King James translation of the Book of Proverbs: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," the first of several biblical and religious references scattered through the script.

These allusions draw attention to the film's serious reflections on the violent undertow of frontier life. Witnessed from Mattie's sensitive perspective, the shootouts and other death-dealing confrontations that take place here are never glossed over, but are shown instead to be unnatural and difficult to absorb.

In something of a conversion story, meanwhile, Cogburn and LaBoeuf struggle to overcome their personal shortcomings and petty mutual antipathy in the service of a larger cause.

The film contains considerable, occasionally bloody violence, brief gruesome imagery, a half-dozen uses of profanity and a few crass terms. The Catholic News Service rating is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service. More reviews are available online at www.usccb.org/movies.

'Combat Boots': Well-told living history of U.S. Church

"The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots, from Combat, to Camelot to Katrina: Memoir of an Extraordinary Life" by Archbishop Philip Hannan with Nancy Collins and Peter Finney Jr. Our Sunday Visitor (Huntington, Ind., 2010). 457 pp., $24.95.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Rackover
Catholic News Service

Readers of a certain generation will be drawn to "The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots," a well-told living history of a remarkable man of the cloth. But this is a book for anyone of any age curious to experience the interior structure of the American Catholic Church as it unfolds against the unsettled and unsettling backdrop of seven decades of American (and Vatican) history.

With the assistance of Nancy Collins and Peter Finney Jr., Archbishop Philip M. Hannan, the now 97-year-old retired archbishop of New Orleans has constructed a memoir that spans an impressive array of secular and ecumenical history. That it is his personal tale as well gives his anecdotes weight and meaning beyond simple storytelling. He maintains an easy conversational style, starting with the once-typical Catholic family portrait that is now rather sadly removed from our 21st-century lifestyle.

Following tales from his family life and seminary days, Archbishop Hannan marches us into his arena, throwing us straight into World War II where he served as a chaplain in the 82nd Airborne, helping free Jews in Germany and even mans a machine gun (under protest) during the Battle of the Bulge. For those of us who sought out the church's tenets on "just war" in the months following the 9/11 attacks against America, the archbishop goes deep into the trenches in a section called "Combat Morality." Catholicism at war, he writes, carries with it "broad moral dilemmas on a daily basis." He doesn't flinch from the hard stuff, and he gives compassionate counsel to soldiers who have killed.

And ah, yes, the Kennedy years. Archbishop Hannan befriended a young congressman, Jack Kennedy, and created a safe and supportive environment for Catholic politicians in Washington. "In those days (1960)," he writes, "Catholicism was shrouded in the same misunderstanding and mythical fear as,

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By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

the program, Peace in Sudan. This effort aims to engage Catholics in acts of prayer, learning, advocating, and giving on behalf of Sudan. This initiative will encourage our government to redouble its efforts for peace in Sudan, and for our government, the Church in Sudan and CRS to be prepared for emergencies that may arise if the peace effort fails. As your bishop, I ask you to join in the days of prayer and action for peace in Sudan as a way of joining in solidarity with our Sudanese brothers and sisters. Our prayers could prevent another genocide in Sudan.

As we complete our celebration of this Christmas season, let us ask the Prince of Peace, the Child Jesus in the manger, to move the hearts of all the people in Sudan to accept the peace that this wonderful child is offering to this country and to all people of the world.

Prayers for peace in Sudan

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

On January 9, 2011, a referendum will be held in the country of Sudan, which will determine if southern Sudan will secede from greater Sudan. The result of this referendum could cause a civil war in Sudan and spread throughout this region of Africa. Already more than 2 million people have lost their lives to war in Sudan, and an additional 4 million have been displaced.

The U.S. Bishops strongly encourage all of our people to pray for the leaders and people of Sudan to work towards peace in Sudan that has already been ravaged by war, poverty and hunger. The Bishops' Conference and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) are working to support the program, Peace in Sudan. This effort aims to help the Bishops' Conference and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to be prepared for emergencies that may arise if the peace effort fails.

The closest that most ancient philosophers ever got to an understanding of God was in their discussions on the human virtues. This should not be surprising. The most that philosophy - human reason - can tell us about God is that he exists. Without God speaking to us, we have no way of reaching him, let alone coming to know him. Yet in the greatest of God's handiworks - human beings - we see some signs of the glory of God. So when philosophers turned their attention to human perfection, they came as close as they could to some small glimpse of God.

Much of the writing of Plato involves the challenge of virtuous living. His dialogues are replete with inquiry about what constitutes true virtue. When Aristotle addressed this same theme, in a more systematic manner, he faced essentially the same questions.

For most of western civilization, education was directed to helping the student identify virtue and then develop a life based on it. Likewise, within our own country, at its beginnings education was seen as an endeavor to form the virtuous citizen. The practical knowledge of how to do this or that was presumed to be secondary to the more important knowledge of why we would do anything in the first place. Perhaps the challenges facing so many of our public schools today reflects how far we have moved from this ancient and time-honored human intuition.

In his work on the beatitudes, Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote that the goal of the virtuous life "is to become like God" (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1803). How do we do this? How can we become more like God through our actions, dispositions, choices and deeds?

The Adult Catechism

Like sport, life takes practice, practice

By Cardinal Donald Wuerl
Archbishop of Washington

Saint Paul, perhaps out of his own youthful experience of sports, describes the struggle for a virtuous life in terms of sporting events, particularly the foot races that were so much a part of athletic competition in his time and that continue to form a significant part of Olympic competition in our day. At the core of virtuous living is practice. The old adage "practice makes perfect" is applicable not only to one's golf stroke, tennis swing or hundred-meter dash, but also to the acquisition of virtue.

Some time ago I was intrigued by an interview after interview of victorious athletes at the Olympic games. One by one they explained how they had set aside everything else in life to concentrate their full energies, attention and prowess on developing their God-given gifts and honing their expertise in a particular area to a precision that would make them the best. Each repeated as if part of a choral refrain: "practice, practice, practice!"

Life is much like that experience. The virtuous life depends on our developing, honing, focusing and orienting our response to God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines human virtues as "firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith" (1804). While it is true that we are born with attitudes and dispositions that lead us to live a virtuous life, these habits of the heart need to be practiced with such regularity that they become our continuous, constant and spontaneous response to life. We define character by the practice of virtue. The strength of our character will reflect the perfection of our virtue.

When addressing virtues, both the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults and the Catechism of the Catholic Church begin with the human virtues and then the three theological virtues. We will follow the same pattern here, mindful that the moral or human virtues are acquired by human effort while the theological virtues are

(Please See WUERL/21)
HANNAN

(From 18)

perhaps, Islam is today."

Archbishop Hannan continued to be the unpublicized Catholic conscience of President Kennedy, and the friendship between them was so close that he flew from Rome to Washington to eulogize the slain president at the funeral. The two chapters he devotes to Kennedy are fascinating in their behind-the-scenes revelations that have, up until now, never been openly discussed.

For game-changing racial politics, Archbishop Hannan is hard to beat. He was assigned to serve as archbishop of New Orleans in 1965 and readers will get a fascinating look into the racial politics of that time and place. His efforts to desegregate the church in New Orleans reveal the worst of human nature. In one photograph from that time, handmade signs protesting an integrated church include: "Hannan, don't tell us, show us church doctrine to integrate" and "God does not recognize Negro priests, bishops." Archbishop Hannan navigates and narrates this difficult era skillfully.

As an individual, Archbishop Hannan is probably not that rare a breed. He is simply a product of the 20th-century Catholic Church, encompassing and embodying some of the best qualities a church leader has to offer the faithful. What is rare is his proximity to power and his tendency to find himself in political, racial and cultural hotspots (the Second Vatican Council; New Orleans after Hurricane Betsy and during Hurricane Katrina) and then writing with such simple honesty and humor ("it's a weird world, in case you didn't know.").

His anecdotes and stories are peppered with the sort of "good faith" that makes a person strive to be better himself. Archbishop Hannan has put his life -- and his back -- into making his Catholic Church one that Jesus himself would recognize: a place where the hungry are fed, the lost are counseled and consoled, where justice is not just talked about but sought after, worked for, and even -- wonder of wonders -- sometimes achieved.

The archbishop recounts with astonishing detail events that unfolded decades ago. It must help that he has scads of photographs and letters documenting just about everything that ever happened to or around him. One can't help but think, looking at dozens upon dozens of personal letters from public figures across the decades, that somewhere out there a collector is skipping over coveting and going straight on to lusting after that obviously valuable collection of memorabilia.

In a sense, Archbishop Hannan is the Catholic Church's very own Forrest Gump, finding himself in all the hot happening places at all the right hot happening times. He also has his finger on the heartbeat of what moves and motivates us all. This heartbeat is found in the last eight words of his memoir: "In the end, all that matters is love." Greater writing hath no man.

SEMINARY

(From 7)

is seminarians do on a daily basis. All of the talks that were given were excellent, each one felt as if they were telling my life story and each stuck with me to this day putting me on a deeper level with my discernment. There was not a moment during that weekend that I did not enjoy and benefit from. I came home with a better understanding of my call and from that I will continue to listen and work towards the life that God has called me to.

From Alex Figueroa:

It was great to be a part of the group of eight that traveled to Conception for the gathering of those discerning their vocations. Along with those joining me from Texas, I met others from around the U.S. Each individual carried a unique quality and personality, but I found the same questions and difficulties we each struggled to overcome empower those willing to dedicate themselves to God’s call. I felt a sense of awe at how they lived their lives and how this society, nestled amongst cornfields and wind generators, strives to transform each and every one of us into priests. They worship in a beautiful Basilica that houses wonderful artwork and a grand organ. Everyday is blessed with the chanting of the Monks that pray there and the peace the students bring together.

From Carlos Garcia, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – youth director:

Just wanted to write to you and tell you about the Encounter weekend to Conception Seminary in Missouri. I was honored to accompany 5 young men on the trip to learn more about the life of the seminarian. We were welcomed with open arms and shown by our local seminarians (Ryan, Adam and Thomas) to our dorms for the weekend. For me the weekend was seeing how seminarians live their daily lives. We began the weekend in prayer with the seminarians and 65 other young men also there for the Encounter weekend. The best part was the praying in the morning, afternoon and evening with the seminarians and also to chant prayers with the monks. It was amazing to see how both the seminarians and monks prayed and cared for each other. We had a social so the young men on the encounter could visit with each other and also other priests. We heard talks from some of the seminarians on their life in the seminary and also heard from Ryan Rojo about his call to the priesthood and about the struggles of the seminary life. We even were treated to a wonderful play put on by seminarians! The morning before we left we attended some of the daily classes the seminarians go to each day, many of these classes where taught by the monks and priests. All in all the life of seminarian is not an easy one; they are away from family, friends and really in an isolated part of Missouri, but I believe the prayers they say everyday and the community they have helps them continue on the call to the priesthood. After seeing the life of a seminarian, I offer more of my daily prayer for our young men (Ryan, Adam and Thomas) and all those young men currently attending Concepcion Seminary and encourage all the churches of the Diocese of San Angelo to keep them and those other young men discerning priesthood in your prayers.

Finally, Fr. Barry I thank you for trusting me to go on this trip, it was a great experience and now I feel I can truly share with any young man interested in the priesthood about what they might expect in the seminary life. Thanks again, and my prayers are with you.

ARCHIVES

(From 7)

helped local Catholics acquire the present property occupied by Sacred Heart Cathedral. The first church building, known as Immaculate Conception Church, was completed in 1884, the year Pairier took up permanent residence in San Angelo.

Fr. Pairier died in 1888 after retiring from the pastorate of the parish.

Gus Clemens, who also gave a brief talk, shared his memories of being a junior high student at Sacred Heart School when the famous brick church (built in 1906) was torn down and replaced by the present Cathedral building. He said the students watched from their classroom, often to the displeasure of the teacher but to the complete fascination of the students.
CCF

(From 7)

percentage of the value of the funds will be granted out each year following guidelines established by Texas law.

Examples of gifts include cash, checks, stocks and bonds, real estate, mineral royalties and life insurance policies or IRA’s that name the foundation as the beneficiary. All gifts made to the foundation are irrevocable gifts. Non-cash gifts will be converted to cash at the earliest convenient time. Donors wishing to make a large gift should consult with their financial advisor and attorney to determine the tax consequences of their gift. All gifts to the foundation must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Many gifts to a foundation are outright gifts by living donors either on a one time or periodic basis. Donors who contribute gifts of $10,000 or more can establish a designated endowment fund in their name or as a memorial endowment fund in memory of a loved one and designate who is to receive the annual grants from the fund. The grant beneficiaries could be the diocese, their home parish, a Catholic school or a cause like seminarian education. Donors could also make the endowment an unrestricted endowment fund allowing the Trustees to approve grants made from the fund to meet future needs within our Diocese. Other gifts could be bequests that will be left to the foundation from donors in their wills knowing that their assets will be preserved and the income generated from their gift will be used to support the Catholic organization of their choice.

The foundation currently has endowments of over $2.2 million including the Seminary Burse Endowment for the Diocese of San Angelo, an Endowment for St. Mary Central Catholic School in Odessa, and several funds established in memory of deceased loved ones by their families.

Honoraria and memorial gifts can be made to the foundation in any amount at any time. A gift to the foundation is a gift that will last forever.

For additional information about the foundation please contact Kathy Webster, president, at 325-698-7206 kjwebster@sbglobal.net Regina Bodiford, secretary/treasurer at 325-651-7500, or reginadosa@yahoo.com, or one of the other trustees.

Eucharist

(From 10)

For the people of Isaiah’s time, and for all of us today who have the privilege of having the fullness of Jesus in the Eucharist and in liturgical celebrations, we must remember that faith in the one, true living God is not only expressed in prayer and worship in church, but must be shown in the compassion for those who suffer injustice.

Isaiah was railing against superficial observance of liturgical prayer and worship. He was reminding people, as we need to be reminded today, isn’t what we do, so much as why we do it. Why do we turn up at our places of worship, be it the first Temple of the Old Testament or the parish church today? These are piercing questions that we need to put to ourselves after reading Isaiah’s words. Our presence at the Eucharist must help us to enter more deeply into the great mysteries of our faith, to place ourselves more firmly in God as the center of our lives.

As we reflect on the words of the great Prophet Isaiah in the call of the Church to full, conscious, active participation in the liturgy in church, and the following service after Mass, we must ask ourselves: Have we been less than attentive to the Liturgy at times in our lives? Humbly and sadly, we all must say in some way—yes.

We must remember that we don’t get points before God for simply warming a pew. If Isaiah were here today, he might ask us to reflect on why we dip our fingers in the holy water upon entering a church, why we bless ourselves, why we do any of the things we routinely do as Catholics? How would we answer him? Above all, he would be almost sure to add that we must live our faith the rest of the week.

MOTC

(From 5)

to MOTC. As a hospital social worker before entering the seminary I always wanted to make a difference in the lives of those in need. I have seen that MOTC makes a huge and important difference. Yet, in the big picture we must realize that this ministry is only one part of the many good and effective ministries in our diocese that are already ministering to the incarcerated. Once there has been a faith that are already ministering to the incarcerated on their faith journey. This can only come from the local programs and the local parishes or the beginning of the renewal may be lost. In San Antonio, many of the MOTC members mentor people on parole to help them develop and grow into a powerful ministry out of St. Gregory the Great Parish in San Antonio. Now that MOTC is in our diocese we are seeking to add members to both the Women’s Inside Team that will give the retreats to women and to the Outside Team that will keep us in prayer during the retreat. We are also beginning to build a Men’s Inside Team.

Requirements for all members of the inside teams are to have attended an ACTS Retreat and undergo a background check and orientation for each facility that we will enter. We do not preach. Rather, we embrace the incarcerated as sisters and brothers in Christ and offer our support and love as they begin their journey of faith anew. The Men’s Team will have two opportunities for ministry once it is developed. We pray that other prison facilities will eventually open their doors to this ministry. Please discern if God is calling you to the Ministry of the Third Cross or to any of the many other Catholic ministries to the incarcerated that are under the guidance of Sr. Estela Tovar, CDP, the Diocesan Director of the Criminal Justice Ministry. To contact Sr. Tovar please call her at St. Stephan Parish in Midland at 432 – 520 – 7394.

When you go for a walk – unescorted, eat out at a restaurant, talk on the phone for more than ten minutes or sleep in late, you are exercising freedoms that the incarcerated have lost. Therefore, they also can easily lose faith, hope, and love. The greatest of these is love. That is something we can give them as we all need it as we are all part of God’s family. For more information about MOTC, please contact Fr. Tom Barley at 325 – 651-7500 or Sandy Seidel at 223-1509 and to join the MOTC Outside Team please contact Eva Thornton at 277-8097. Member of the first DOSA Women’s MOTC Inside Team were Sandy Seidel, Linda V. Gonzales, Olivia Gonzalez, Maria Ocampo Hernandez, Linda Huerta, Jennifer Larimore, Maxine Madrid, Dollie Martin, Angie Serrano, and Sr. Estela Tovar, CDP, and Fr. Tom Barley.
OBISPO

(Para 3)

para todo otro derecho personal, no es defendida con determinación máxima.” (“Christifidelis Laici”)

La destrucción directa e intencional de la vida inocente humana desde el momento de concepción hasta la muerte natural siempre es un mal grave y no solamente es un tema de varios. Es el tema de vida pre-eminentemente. Esto significa que uno no puede hacer otros temas sociales como educación o cuidado de salud moralmente equivalente a la destrucción deliberada de vida humana inocente. El Papa Benedicto ha llamado esto “la llave de [nuestra] entra existencia”.

Algunos quieran promover falsamente y erróneamente que el aborto capacitá a la mujer. No puede. El aborto es un pecado, un mal intrínsecamente, y un pecado espiritual, emocional, mental, y físico esclaviza a su víctima. Despoja a las mujeres de su dignidad y el respeto de sí misma por haber rendido su derecho de nacimiento. Por eso es que las feministas originales eran oponentes ardientes del aborto. Alice Paul, autora de la primera propuesta enmienda de derechos iguales, dijo mejor: “El aborto es la máxima explotación de las mujeres.”

El aborto no da poder, pero sí hay mujeres poderosas. Vienen en muchas formas, tamaños, nacionalidades, colores y credos, mantienen toda clase de trabajos afuera de la casa o ninguna. Un hilo común las une: la buena voluntad de decir “sí” al don de vida de Dios. Son las madres del mundo. Las madres tienen un papel exclusivo en la creación. Dios, el Autor de la Vida, las ha hecho la cuna de la vida. Su derecho de nacimiento es lo de dar vida a la siguiente generación. Ese honor viene con un precio. Las madres, muy seguido, tienen que poner a un lado

FAMILIES

(From 3)

Church? In many ways: By believing in God and God's care in such a way that a family turns to the Lord in times of trouble, and gives God our Father thanks when all goes well. Families carry out the Church's mission also by loving and never ceasing to believe in the value of another person, and by fostering loving intimacy and respect for each one as a child of God.

Families do the work of the Church by professing faith in God, acting in accord with Gospel values and setting an example of Christian living. Families fulfill the Church's mission also by educating. Parents are the primary teachers of their children. They impart knowledge of the faith and help children acquire values necessary for Christian living. Their example is the most effective way to teach.

Families are Church whenever they pray together or serve or help one another.

Families are Church when forgiveness is given, and when they celebrate life at such times as birthdays, weddings, births and deaths, family reunions, holy days and holidays.

Families carry out the church's mission when they welcome the stranger, the lonely one, and the grieving person into their homes; when they feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty, when they acknowledge others' dignity, when they stand against discrimination and racism, and when they work to overcome hunger, poverty, homelessness, and illiteracy.

Families do the work of the Church when they affirm life as a gift of God and oppose whatever destroys life, and when they raise up vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Families carry out the mission of the Church in so many ways. Clearly, the vitality of the church depends on the vitality of the faith, hope, and love of families. The vitality of that faith, hope and love will be maintained in the family when parents heed the advice of our Holy Father and truly transmit the fullness of the faith to their children. May all remember that the great model of family life is the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Pray daily to this Holy Family to help your family be holy.
for having surrendered their birthright. That’s why the original feminists were ardent opponents of abortion. Alice Paul, author of the first proposed equal rights amendment, said it best: “Abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women.”

Abortion doesn’t give power, but there really are power women. They come in all shapes, sizes, nationalities, colors, and creeds, hold all sorts of outside jobs or none at all. A common thread binds them: the willingness to say yes to God’s gift of Life. They are the mothers of the world. Mothers have a unique role in Creation. God, the Author of life, has made them life’s cradle. Their birthright is to bear the next generation. The honor comes with a price.

Mothers must often shelve other plans, sometimes even forever. They must put themselves in last place, their needs falling well behind those of their children. Motherhood is the polar opposite of abortion, and not just physically. For abortion is about self and death.

Motherhood is about the other, and life.

Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty stated many years ago, “The most important person on earth is a mother. She cannot claim the honor of having built Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not. She has built something more magnificent than any cathedral—a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby’s body.”

The woman, the mother who truly empowerment all women, all mothers, to use things gifts and talents to the fullest in love, joy and service is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of us all.

The poor young girl from Nazareth who said “yes” to God’s gift of life raised a Savior, the most powerful one of God to overcome evil, and now sits on a throne next to Him. She didn’t seek power.

Who is the poorest, the most innocent and the most defenseless among us? Who is more susceptible to a violent death than the little child in his mother’s womb? This child needs the protection of a nurturing mother, of loving parents, and of a society that respects the dignity of every child’s life made in the image and likeness of God.

How we care for an unexpected child, a parent suffering from cognitive impairment or an infant with a disability does not reflect the degree of their humanity, but our own. We are as dependent on them as they are on us. There can be no compromise with the standard Jesus set and continually calls us to: The measure of love is to love without measure.

And we will be judged on whether we nurtured, loved and protected the unborn and born child, as individuals and as a society—on whether we saw the unborn as a human being with an inalienable right to life, made in the precious image and likeness of God, or as an inconvenient clump of cells to be disposed of like a thing we pour down a drain, we no longer want to keep.

As I have done on many occasions, I again ask all the people of our diocese to assist me in implementing our Diocese Pro-Life Plan for the Unborn. This plan gives very specific steps that must be taken to overcome the barbaric practice of abortion. The protection of the unborn, overcoming abortion, and reaching out to the parents, especially mothers who struggle with a pregnancy decision, is the number one pastoral concern of our diocese.

The money talk vaunts studies about how ungenerous Catholics are -- minus 3.

The homily is launched with the statement, "I would like to begin today with a humorous story" -- minus 9.

Regardless, a primary rule should apply: Bring the parishioner closer to the Gospel. (Comments are welcome. E-mail Uncle Dan at cnsuncle01@yahoo.com.)
Midland

A crucifix hangs at the new San Miguel de Arcángel Church in south Midland, which was renamed (formerly Our Lady of San Juan) and dedicated Dec. 19 by Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer.

Photo by Karen J. Patterson

Odessa

Fr. Mark Woodruff sits atop a pink tractor won by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton from an American Cancer Society fundraiser in November. Since the parish doesn’t have much land to till and farm, it has opted to sell the tractor and use the proceeds for furnishings for the new youth building. On hand for the presentation of the tractor were representatives from the ACS and Cisco Ford.

Photo by Alan P. Torre.

Midland

Fr. Bernardo Getigan, center in photo above, and inset, celebrated his 25th year as a priest December 10 at his parish, Holy Redeemer, in Odessa.

Odessa

On Priesthood Sunday, October 31, 2010, with extended hands, members of the parish family of St. Joseph, prayed for their pastor, Father Arial Lagunilla, asking God to bless him as he shepherds and leads them in their spiritual lives. Courtesy photo.