Diocese of San Angelo
50th Anniversary Mass
11 a.m., Sunday,
October 16, 2011
San Angelo Coliseum

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From the Bishop’s Desk

‘He is Alive!’ — Message of joy comes alive at Easter

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

“He is alive!”

This is the joyful Easter message which the Church shouts to all the world as we celebrate the greatest event of Christianity, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. These few words inspire all Christians with new joy, confidence, and hope as we celebrate the feast of Easter, and the entire Easter season. Jesus, who died to take away our sins, to bring us new life, manifests that life in its fullness in His Resurrection, which is at the center of the Easter celebration. The new life that Jesus gives us in the Resurrection is not just something we wait for in eternity, but is happening right now where we live — where we are planted. We begin sharing in this wonderful life in Baptism.

“He is alive” is not only about a set of teachings that we accept as His followers, but refers to a person, the God-man, who suffered and died and rose again for our salvation and to give us the fullness of God’s life. Our religion calls us to live creeds and commands, but primarily our Catholic religion focuses on the living Christ. The Lord Jesus is not past history; the Lord Jesus is fully alive in us today.

Resurrection is not just a return to life. It is a transformation of life. It is fulfillment. It is our finally becoming what God first intended us to be.

Easter is about life: a life that gives us new joy, and gives us a new understanding of the primary Christian virtue, which is love. The story of Easter begins with Jesus manifesting His love in His powerful Resurrection, and the message that the risen Christ wants to give us is that our God loves us immensely, that our God invites our love in return, and that our God asks us to reach the fullness of life by loving our God and loving one another. The love of the risen Christ heals, transforms, and she will be available for book signings. This special event is free to the public, and all faiths are welcome.

For more information, please call Lucy Thomas at 325-655-3325.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Worldwide Marriage Encounter is returning to San Angelo’s Christ the King Retreat Center June 10-12, 2011. This marriage encounter weekend is designed to help married couples communicate more intimately than one another in order to deepen and enrich their relationship. The weekend is free from the everyday routines, distractions, and tensions. An atmosphere is created where the couple can concentrate exclusively on each other in a private, confidential environment. A series of presentations that touch on many aspects of marriage is given by three couples and a Catholic priest. After each presentation, the couple has time in private for personal sharing using the communication techniques learned on the weekend. There are no group discussions. The weekend starts at 7:30 p.m. Friday evening and ends around 4:30 p.m. Sunday. All faith expressions are welcome.

2011 Dates: San Angelo — June 10-12, Christ the King Retreat Center; Midland — October 7-9.

You will benefit if …

• You want to enrich your marriage;
• You want to expand and deepen your communications;
• You want to love more deeply.

For more information on the San Angelo retreat, or other upcoming retreats, call: Tom and Susan Williams, 432-697-9904, or email: padanimal@sbcglobal.net, or apply online at: www.mewesttexas.org.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Beginning Experience Weekend

The pain of loss of a loved one through separation, divorce, or death is one of life’s most traumatic experiences. It can result in nearly unbearable feelings of loneliness and grief. Many people who have suffered such a loss feel left out by their church, uneasy around married friends, unsure of themselves and uncertain about their futures.

The next Beginning Experience weekend retreat will be Friday, April 29-Sunday, May 1, at Christ the King Retreat Center, 802 Ford, San Angelo. The cost for the entire weekend is $115, which including room/meals (assigned food for participants with special dietary needs).

The weekend retreat helps grieving, single-again persons move from the darkness of their grief into the light of a new beginning and move into the future with renewed hope. The weekend retreat offers grief resolution presented by trained peer ministers. Participants working through this experience can effectively walk with others from whom the experience is now and hard and the invitation to recover offers an opportunity for transforming ones life, and for freeing individuals to love self, others and God in new and deeper ways.

Applications are available through Christ the King Retreat Center or by contacting Judy Ford at 432-837-5640, Mary Urquidez at 512-990-4738, Romie Rey at 325-651-7500, or Barry Kleypas at 325-277-3113.

Abby Johnson in San Angelo

National pro-life speaker and author Abby Johnson will speak at 1 p.m., Saturday, May 14, at Holy Angels Church, 2304 A&M Ave., about the disturbing truth of abortion during the “Loved into Truth” campaign.

Abby was the director of the Planned Parenthood facility in Bryan/College Station for several years. After assisting with an abortion procedure in 2009, she had a conversion of past history; the Lord Jesus is fully alive in us today.

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Letter from the Bishop

April 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

During this Season of Lent, every Christian thinks of the Holy Land. All of us have a favorite Bible story that brings that ancient land to life. But the reality of the Holy Land today often does not match the scenes in our imagination.

We are called to support Christianity in the Holy Land. Today, schools and parishes are signs of peace and hope. Shrines in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and many other locations welcome Christian pilgrims. The Church in the Holy Land provides housing and food for the poor.

At the recent Synod of Bishops on the Middle East, a special commitment was made to help keep Christianity alive in the Holy Land. Because of the special challenges that Christians face in the Holy Land, many families emigrate in search of a better life.

All Christians are called to assist our brothers and sisters who now live in the land that was sanctified by the Lord’s life, death and resurrection.

Each year, all Catholics are invited to support Christianity in the Holy Land by making a donation to the Good Friday Collection on April 22, 2011. It is a Pontifical Collection that is requested by Pope Benedict XVI. Please be as generous as your abundance allows. Holy Land Christians, along with all the clergy and religious working there, deeply appreciate your help!

Let us pray for peace in the land where the Prince of Peace made His home with us.

May God bless you during this Holy Season!

Your servant in Christ and Mary,
Most Reverend Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo

Dioceese to host Vocations Retreat

The Office of Vocations for the Diocese of San Angelo will host a Vocations Retreat June 28-30 for young men who are high school juniors and older at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo. The retreat will be facilitated by the seminarians for the Diocese of San Angelo and is a 3-day experience of prayer and activities, all revolving around life in the seminary.

This is an excellent time for any young men who are discerning a call to the priesthood to get an idea of the life of a seminarist. If you are interested or know of someone who is interested in this experience, please call Father Barry McLean at (325) 651-7500 or (325) 374-9617.

Pilgrims to attend 2012 Epiphany in Assisi

Sacred Heart Cathedral has announced a Pilgrimage to Italy which will take place from January 4-13, 2012. Led by Monsignor Maurice Voity, Rector of the Cathedral, and a veteran leader of pilgrimages in the diocese, the pilgrims will be visiting Assisi, Florence, Pisa, Rome and the Vatican. Of special interest this year is the fact that the pilgrims will be celebrating the Epiphany in Assisi, where they will spend two nights at a first class hotel in the central piazza next to the Basilica of St. Francis. Epiphany is a Holy Day in Italy, and it is on this day that people exchange their Christmas gifts. Being in Assisi is especially meaningful, since it was St. Francis of Assisi who originated the idea of the Christmas Crib and Manger Scene as a means of helping the people to understand better the circumstances of the Birth of Jesus. In addition to the many tours of churches and points of interest, another highlight of the pilgrimage will be attending the general audience of Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican.

For this pilgrimage departures by air are available from San Angelo, Midland and Dallas. All reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo at 325-658-6657; or e-mail Msgr. Voity at mvoity@hotmail.com.
Discerning God’s call to priesthood, religious life vocations

Fr. Barry McLean
Vocations Director
Diocese of San Angelo

What do we want to hear -- the voice of God or other desires that are not of God? Discernment is a belief that God speaks to us; that Christ speaks to our souls; that Christ speaks to us personally. Christ sees to us; that Christ speaks to our God? Discernment is a belief that God of God or other desires that are not of God. These are the general steps in discernment. This would apply to both men and women whether they are discerning a vocation to marriage, priesthood, religious life or the single life.

One needs to experience the language of God every day - that is, through a daily prayer life. How does one learn a language? You do not learn Spanish by hearing it one time a month, but by being immersed in the language. The same is true of learning the language of God; one has to be immersed in the language of God, in His Presence, by spending time in conversation with God -- both talking to Him, but more importantly, listening to Him. This is best accomplished in a quiet setting, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament.

My advice to anyone who is discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life is to attend daily Mass and to reflect on the Sacred Scriptures of daily Mass, as well as, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

(Please See Vocations/19)

Outrageous decision to abandon marriage act has the potential to bring great sadness

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer

President Obama’s recent decision to abandon the Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA] is outrageous and causes great sadness among all people who believe that a true marriage is designed by God and understood for millennia and across cultures as the union of one man and one woman. The President has instructed the Department of Justice to stop defending the Defense of Marriage Act, a federal law that reiterates the definition of marriage, passed by a Republican Congress and signed by a Democratic President just fifteen years ago. The principal basis for the decision is that the president considers the law a form of impermissible sexual orientation discrimination.

The President’s refusal to defend the Defense of Marriage Act that in 1996 was enacted as a federal statute by overwhelming margins in the Senate (85-14) and House (342-67) and signed into law by President Clinton flies in the face of Justice Department policy and principles of democratic government. More importantly, the President’s position goes against the basic biblical teaching of what a true marriage is: a sacred union of one man and one woman, based on the Book of Genesis and reaffirmed by Christ. The president’s action to abandon the DOMA violates the decision of Congress; he is also taking on an authority that properly belongs to the U.S. Supreme Court.

This decision represents an abdication of the responsibility of the Executive Branch to carry out its constitutional obligation to ensure that the laws of the United States are faithfully executed. It is also a grave affront to the millions of Americans who both reject unjust discrimination and affirm the unique and inestimable value of marriage as between one man and one woman. Support for actual marriage is not bigotry, but instead an eminently reasonable, common judgment affirming the foundational institution of civil society. Any suggestion by the government that such a judgment represents “discrimination” is a serious threat to the religious liberty of marriage supporters nationwide.

After abandoning the DOMA, Obama has lost much of his moral authority, and his outrageous decision must be strongly questioned by Congress and the Supreme Court of our land. It seems the President is wrongly trying to use the power of his office in pursuit of his own political agenda.

Melendez: You can free a man from prison, but not from the grave

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor
The Angelus

ODESSA -- With an impassioned purpose and a goal to end all capital punishment, former death row inmate Juan Roberto Melendez rendered his audiences nearly speechless with his tales of the U.S. prison and justice systems. Melendez spoke to three difference groups in a series of March appearances in Odessa.

From nightmarish stories of rat-filled, roach-infested jail cells to prison officials who purposely let inmates die and turn their heads as hopeless inmates opt for suicide, Melendez successfully made his points particularly as they pertain to capital punishment, a sentence that he called both racist and unjust.

Melendez told the story of how his own defense attorney withheld evidence that would have clearly freed him, evidence that was not introduced because Florida police would have lost a valuable informant — a “snitch” as Melendez called him — had the man responsible for the crime for which Melendez was arrested been imprisoned.

Melendez, who makes numerous appearances on behalf of groups committed to ending the death penalty also lobbies state legislators.

He appeared in South Odessa on behalf of the Odessans For the Abolishment of the Death Penalty, a group directed by Rev. Mark Miller, pastor at St. Joseph and St. Anthony.

“I have a confession to make: I’m still a dreamer,” Melendez told a room of about 50 people.

“I dreamed I prayed to God every day that in my time we can have the death penalty abolished. But this dream can’t come true if all of you don’t get involved. You are part of my dream now.

“The problem with the death penalty is all about details, education, and people need to know

(Please See MELENDEZ/11)
Horror in the Land of the Rising Sun

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The catastrophic earthquake and destructive tsunami in Japan that has left thousands dead and millions struggling to survive and great property destruction raises the question: How could God let all of this happen? Some people even ask: Does God cause such a disaster? To give some type of an answer to these questions, we go back to some basic biblical principles and Judeo-Christian teachings with regard to these and similar disasters that have happened through the ages.

1. No quick answer will suffice to answer these questions and the fundamental question of: Why does evil exist? To understand these disasters in nature in the world in which we live, we go to Divine Providence through which God carries out God’s plan for creation. Divine Providence is the disposition by which God guides all creation to perfection. God, as we know in the Bible, created all things and saw that they were good. We also know that at the very beginning with our first parents in the garden, something terrible happened—that mere creatures through their own free will, turned against God, their creator and Father and this not only affected their relationship with God but their relationship with creation. St. Paul tells us that all creation is groaning and in labor pains (did he mean earthquakes and hurricanes?) to be set free from the slavery of corruption, longing for a new beginning and new life that can only come about through God’s action as God leads creation to its ultimate perfection.

2. Ultimately only Christian faith and trust in God’s providential care can help us understand these calamities in the context of the original goodness of creation, the mystery of sin and its effects on creation, and the disasters in nature and God’s patient love for sinful people and tarnished creation down through the ages.

3. We firmly believe based on the Bible that God is the Master of the whole world, which contains both good and evil and that God’s Providence is leading all of broken creation to its final perfection.

4. The fact that God permits physical and even moral evil is a mystery that God illuminates by His Son Jesus Christ, who died and rose to vanquish evil and to give us new hope and life. Ultimately the Resurrection of Christ will make all things new and restore proper order in creation.

5. How shall we think about these disasters that afflict our world from time to time, like the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan? Does God punish us with evil if it did not cause a good to come from that very evil, by ways that we shall fully know only in eternal life.

6. Perhaps a better approach would be to ask how we should respond when disasters strike. Can we hold fast to our faith in God even in the face of human suffering? And can we find His presence, His grace, and His intimate love, even if we have lost family and our possessions to a flood, or our homes to an earthquake? Disasters call all of us to open our hearts and hands to comfort, to pray and share what we can with those afflicted.

7. Natural calamities happen in our tarnished world, and there is not much that we can do about them. But simply because they are out of our control we should never think that God is the immediate cause of hurricanes, earthquakes or floods. We should never think that God has abandoned us or is exercising His wrath upon us for our sins.

8. God wants to give us unshakeable faith to convince us that nothing can separate us from God’s love and providence, not even the devastation of an earthquake or tsunami. Yes, we will grieve our losses. We will weep and feel pain. Even in the midst of our loss and sorrow, God is with us to comfort us and give us promise of hope and restoration.

9. At the same time, every time there is a great disaster in the world, we are reminded of the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel that one day the world as we know it will be destroyed, will be changed. Are these the last times? Are there worse disasters to come? As we review the history of the earth, and the history of people on planet earth, we see that down through the ages, there have been great catastrophes, some which are natural, and some which are caused by God’s own people. Each one of these is a reminder in some way that everything that surrounds us on planet earth is material and will one day pass away. But if we are faithful to our God, we will not pass away. We will live forever with our God.
Family Life and Marriage

Family Life effort making strides

By Mary Ann Lewis
Director of Family Life and Marriage
Diocese of San Angelo

Families of our day are not just made up of parents and children. Our families are made up of many different combinations of people—from the two-parent and children combination to single-parent families, adoptive families, foster families, families without children, children being raised by grandparents, grandparents, single persons, and the gamut goes on.

This past summer the Family Life & Marriage Ministry was placed in the Office of Education and Formation. Thus far, three family and marriage related programs have been addressed and worked with this year: the marriage preparation programs Engaged Encourager and Sponsor Couples; the couple fertility planning program, Natural Family Planning, and the marriage enrichment program Marriage Encounter. Bishop Pfeifer has encouraged our parishes to implement the strategies listed in Planning for Family Faith Formation based on John Roberto’s teachings. The Family Life Ministry has also used these strategies in planning ways to work to meet the needs of families.

In August 2010, one objective that was set up in the Diocesan Family Life & Marriage Ministry (FLM) office was to obtain contacts for Family Life Ministry at the parishes of the diocese. Thus far, 38 FLM Parish Contacts have been formed in 30 of our 47 parishes. Since the first of the year, meetings of the FLM Parish Contacts were held in the three deaneries with 18 parishes represented by 26 contacts.

Four parishes were represented at the meeting in the Abilene Deanery on January 29 at St. Vincent Church. Those in attendance from Abilene were Michelle Allen from Holy Family; Eduardo & Linda Castillo and Marc Main from St. Francis, and Connie Rodriguez from St. Vincent. Robert & Amelia Martinez from St. Mary Church in Brownwood were also present.

The Midland/Odessa Deanery FLM Parish Contacts met at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland on February 5. Eight parishes were represented. From Odessa those present were Julie Andreopulos from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Marcos Lopez from St. Anthony, Michael and Patricia Garcia from Holy Redeemer, and Hector & Rose Mendez from St. Mary. Present from Midland were Mary Gorski from St. Ann and Juan & Norma Ramos from San Miguel

Del Escritorio del Obispo

¡El esta vivo! -- Este es el mensaje gozoso de Pascua

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

“¡El está vivo!” que la Iglesia grita a todo el mundo al celebrar el evento más grande de toda crisis, la resurrección de Cristo Jesús. Estas pocas palabras inspiran a todos los cristianos con nuevo gozo, confianza, y esperanza al celebrar la fiesta de la Pascua, y toda la temporada de la Pascua. Jesús, quien murió por nuestros pecados, para traernos nueva vida, manifiesta esa vida en su plenitud en Su Resurrección, que está al centro de la celebración de la Pascua. La nueva vida que Jesús nos da en la Resurrección no es solamente algo que esperamos en la eternidad, sino es algo que está sucediendo ahora mismo donde vivimos—dónde estamos plantados. Nosotros comenzamos a compartir en esta maravillosa vida en el Bautismo.

“¡El está vivo!” no se trata de solamente una colección de enseñanzas que aceptamos como sus seguido-

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**The Diocese of San Angelo Celebrates 50 Years**

**Diocese of San Angelo**

50th Anniversary Mass

**11 a.m.,**

**Sunday**

**October 16, 2011**

San Angelo Coliseum
San Angelo

FROM THE ARCHIVES: MAY 22, 1981

**Mertzon’s dedicates new St. Peter’s church**

Editor’s Note: The Angelus is re-publishing historical articles from past issues during its 50th anniversary year. The following article was published in the May 22, 1981 edition of the West Texas Angelus. Coincidentally, on April 8, 2011, St. Peter’s in Mertzon celebrated its anniversary with the dedication of a new church building. Coverage of that event will be provided in the May Angelus.

MERTZON -- Mother’s Day, May 10, 1981, will be remembered for a long time at St. Peter’s Mission, Mertzon. On that day, Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza and members of the congregation celebrated the mission’s 50th anniversary with a special Mass in the afternoon, followed by a parish supper in the local community center and a dance in the evening.

Fr. Joseph Uecker, C.P.P.S., and Fr. Michael Goode, C.P.P.S., of St. Mary’s Parish, San Angelo, who have charge of the Mertzon mission, concelebrated the anniversary Mass, assisted by Father Fred Nawarskas of Sacred Heart Cathedral. Father Nawarskas’s parents, Albert and Adele Nawarskas, are members of the congregation. Father Mark Woodruff, a former pastor, also attended the activities.

It is not known when the first Mass was offered in Mertzon. A Father O’Neill did mission work in Ozona, Sonora, Sherwood (a town one mile from Mertzon) and Eldorado around 1905 or 1906. A Father McGuire from Sweetwater also celebrated Masses in the area in the early 1920s.

When Rev. J.H. Krukkert became pastor of Sacred Heart Church in San Angelo in 1929, he immediately began to expand the number of parishes and missions in the area.

He purchased property and oversaw the construction of the present St. Mary’s in San Angelo and in 1930 purchased property in Mertzon for a mission church. St. Peter’s Church was completed the following year — the event celebrated by parishioners this Mother’s Day.

The mission of Mertzon consists of three small buildings — the church building itself, a small rectory and a parish hall (the old public school which served children in the barrio for many years). Father Woodruff renovated the church and the rectory during his tenure as pastor and currently Father Uecker and Father Goode are overseeing the renovation of the parish hall.

A special guest at the parish celebration was Mrs. Eva Camunez Tucker, the former principal/school teacher of the public school which served the barrio children. Ms. Tucker’s teaching career had its beginnings in Mertzon.

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**DiNardo’s visit 1st by cardinal**

When the Diocese of San Angelo celebrates its Golden Jubilee 50 years to the date it was first established as a Diocese by Pope John XXIII, in attendance will be Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston. Cardinal DiNardo’s appearance in San Angelo will mark the first time a cardinal has ever visited the diocese.

DiNardo is also the first Cardinal ever appointed from the state of Texas.

**One Mass**

Bishop Michael Pfeifer has announced that on Sunday, October 16, the day that marks the 50th anniversary of the diocese’s official establishment, only one Mass will be celebrated throughout the diocese — 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 parishioners of this. 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.” Those unable to attend the anniversary Mass in San Angelo are dispensed of their obligation the weekend of Oct. 15-16.
ALONE WITH GOD

Former missionary priest turns to solitude as new way of working for God

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / The Angelus

MILES -- If you’re going to succeed in today’s business world you have to have a business plan, something that will give you an idea of where you’re headed.

John Kuehner should know that.

As a former division director for the world’s largest advertising agency, Rev. John Kuehner could have probably written the book on five-year plans.

What may be somewhat more surprising (and in fact is somewhat more surprising) is that even heretical priests need a “business” plan. And it should come as no surprise that Fr. John Kuehner has one.

Kuehner is currently in transition to become a full-fledged hermit, but his desire to live mostly in solitude — alone with God — is something he first felt when he was seven years old. So it should actually be somewhat of a surprise that for the last several years of his life, he has been a Redemptorist missionary priest, the same kind that visits parishes for multi-day missions.

It’s not that Kuehner doesn’t like people (he does), or isn’t much into homiletics (he is), it’s just that he feels if he is going to be on this earth, he should give an abundance of his time to God through prayer and devotion.

While he waits for his plan to become a hermit in the diocese come to fruition -- which could possibly take as long as three years -- Kuehner will help fill in, preaching at parishes throughout the diocese as needed, and serving the people of the Miles-Olfen-Rowena cluster.

Currently living in the rectory at St. Thomas in Miles, Kuehner is appreciative that San Angelo Bishop Michael Pfeifer gave him the opportunity to practice his faith in the diocese. Some bishops don’t approve of the hermit lifestyle, but Pfeifer is not one of them.

Originally from St. Louis, Kuehner most recently lived in Chicago, base for the Redemptorist order of which he was a part. Kuehner has rarely settled down, but life as a hermit would change that significantly. Consistency, he points out, is a big part of the life of any religious vocation.

When he first began the discernment process, he felt he wanted to focus on the land as a basis of where he wanted to practice his hermetrical lifestyle. But that focus has shifted to the people.

“As a Christian we are called to be part of the body of Christ and as a diocesan hermit you live alone but you are still connected to community. And as a diocesan hermit, my community is the whole diocese,” Kuehner said.

The three-year length of the application process for Kuehner is due in part to the fact that his commitment to the Redemptorists will not end until 2014. He is currently on a leave of absence from that order.

“In about nine months I can apply for ex-cloistation, but right now I am still a part of the Denver province of the Redemptorists,” he said.

Ultimately, Fr. Kuehner says his dream is to build a hermitage, perhaps in the Midland-Odessa deanery. But he’s also open to the fact that God changes plans, something He has already done to him.

Kuehner is an artist and sculptor and in his rectory he has impressive examples of just how far his talent could take him if he chose that path. Because of his experience as a missionary priest, Kuehner feels now that God is calling him to be a writer and says he has often been approached by those attending his missions and asked if he has written any books.

“I take that as a call from God,” Kuehner said.

(Please See KUEHNER/20)
Church’s social teaching stretched too thin

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

The weeks-long demonstrations at the Wisconsin Capitol by protesting public workers certainly served its purpose to put the question on the national agenda. Internet and television screens were filled with pictures of sign-carrying protesters strongly making their case against legislation that would reduce collective bargaining.

Many weighed in, including those that would apply Catholic social doctrine to the situation.

That raises a concern.

The fabric of the church’s social teaching was stretched much too thin in attempting to cover the situation in Madison as well as in other states considering similar legislation.

The Wisconsin law, which passed, does not affect collective bargaining agreements that are already in place. The law ends collective bargaining for public workers for everything except salary increases no greater than inflation. It requires workers to pay half the cost of their pensions and 12.6 percent of health insurance premiums.

The issues here do not rise to the level to invoke the gravity of the social teaching of the church.

"People have a right to employment," the bishops of the United States stated in the 1987 landmark pastoral "Economic Justice for All." In return for their labor, workers have a right to wages and other benefits to sustain life in dignity, it said. The pastoral then applied this general right to a specific right in saying that the church fully supports the right of workers to form unions or other associations to secure their rights to fair wages and working conditions.

The Catholic Church in the United States has a long and admirable reputation in support of the labor movement in this country. It developed at a time when child labor and the seven-day workweek were not uncommon, when workers were paid far less than what was needed to support their families, and when employers' actions did not respect human dignity.

The early labor movement was meant to give protection to workers, to assist the powerless against the powerful capitalists. But now, those in the public sectors who work for the community are not being denied benefits in order to increase profits for private ownership.

The question involves contractual issues, not an assault on the right of organized labor.

The Wisconsin law is not a denial of the right to organize, which would make it a moral question. Rather, it deals with insurance and pension co-pays, and pay raises linked to the rate of inflation at a time when the state lacks funds to support all that it is called upon to do.

"Workers must use their collective power to contribute to the well-being of the whole community and should avoid pressuring demands whose fulfillment would damage the common good and the rights of the more vulnerable members of society," ("Economic Justice for All," No. 106).

There are many vulnerable people today for whom paying 13 percent of their health premium or half the cost of their pension is far from their greatest concern.

Unions are a means to an end to obtain just working conditions. The goal is justice. The means to reach it are prudential.

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

What purpose does it serve to scapegoat unions, the middle class?

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

There’s a story flitting around the Internet that goes something like this: A union member, a tea partier and a CEO sit down to share a dozen cookies. The CEO promptly takes 11 of them, looks at the tea party guest and says, "Watch that union guy. He probably won't share that cookie with you."

Sometimes a vignette is worth 10,000 words.

In an era of overwhelming corporate and Wall Street greed, we must avoid the tendency to blame our economic woes on our fellow middle class citizens.

Weeks before the great Wisconsin labor debate, my parish held a justice committee meeting where some of the same issues boiled over.

Anchorage has a labor dispute going on between the workers at two downtown hotels and the outside firms that recently acquired them. There’s informational picketing going on, and the union has asked the community to boycott the hotels.

For the most part, the Catholic Church here has joined the boycott. The union members are not asking for more. They want to have reinstated the benefits and working conditions that the new owners yanked out from under them. So far, the National Labor Relations Board has ruled in their favor on most issues, but still the deadlock persists.

Our justice committee invited the union to discuss the issues. We’ve made overtures to hotel management, and one official may come to speak later.

A local right-wing radio talk show host came in halfway through the presentation and clashed swords -- metaphorically of course -- with the burly local AFL-CIO president.

This made for great Catholic drama, as the radio guy sings in the early morning Sunday choir and the AFL-CIO honcho lectors at another Mass, proving again that Catholic congregations are often a micro-cosm of rowdy American democracy.

One question that emerged: So what business is this of the church?

"It’s a good moment in American history to remind Catholics of Pope Leo XIII and the relentless Catholic drumbeat for social justice. In 1891, Pope Leo issued his encyclical "Rerum Novarum," in which he established the right of workers to form unions. Yep, that’s a Catholic value.

Pope Leo also said that workers should be paid fairly, should have decent working conditions, and should be able to save to own their own property.

What prompted this encyclical?

The late 19th century saw a vast movement from an agrarian culture to cities where the Industrial Revolution was transforming lives. Brutal working conditions, child labor and exploitation of laborers were rampant.

In response to this, Karl Marx thought he’d found the answer. However, Pope Leo saw that the Catholic Church had to take a stand: Godless Marxism and collectivization were not the answers, but neither were the horrors of unbridled capital. Somewhow, the working man must join in the prosperity.

Subsequent popes have consistently reiterated these Catholic values.

Do unions make mistakes? Absolutely. Have state and local officials sometimes bargained poorly, accepting union political contributions with one hand and handing out unnecessary benefits with another?

Sometimes. But those same officials receive contributions from wealthy corporations as well.

Almost every day, we hear another story about the decline of the middle class, a class made strong historically in the United States by the union movement.

Unions are now in decline, yet since the recession of 2008, how many Wall Street honchos have received huge bonuses? How much regulatory change has been enacted to ensure against another crisis like the one caused by subprime mortgages?

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Why be Catholic? Here are eight good reasons

By Therese J. Borchard
Catholic News Service

You never really know when you're going to be called on to defend your Catholic faith. I certainly wasn't prepared for it as I sat down at a job interview. However, two minutes after my interviewer reviewed my resume, he looked me squarely in the eyes and said, "Religion is evil."

"Are you a relative of Bill Maher?" I asked him.

The conversation digressed from there, and I had to hear all of the same arguments as I did when I was on the set of Bill Maher's "Politically Incorrect": the sex abuse scandal, the wars, the deaths caused by the Catholic faith. Yada, yada, yada.

I made the mistake of mentioning the book that I co-edited with Michael Leach called "I Like Being Catholic" (my interviewer loved the title), and he asked me what the premise was, why I liked being Catholic.

I would love to report that I had an eloquent response detailing the top five perks of the Catholic faith, but instead I said a lot of "umms."

But I did say this: "Being Catholic is a way of seeing the world. It's in the small things. It's inescapable."

"Yeah, whatever," his grimace clearly communicated as we proceeded with the rest of the interview.

The conversation made me go back and read the book "Why Be Catholic?" by Franciscan Father Richard Rohr with Joseph Martos, so that I am better prepared next time. They list eight grounded reasons to be Catholic:

1. The appreciation of creation. We Catholics are fundamentally sacramental. The Catholic faith uses gifts of creation in its most important rituals: water and oil, bread and wine, human touch.

2. A universal vision. The Catholic Church has a worldwide faith, with many different cultures and customs. We are Christians and Catholics first, and Americans second. Ours is not a national church, which means that, if we are truly Catholic, we need to look at the world from God's perspective and his concern for all human beings.

3. A holistic outlook. I guess this is what I was trying to get at through all of my "umms." To be Catholic means to connect your faith with your life experience.

   Everything is interconnected. Catholic mystics such as Sts. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross articulate this divine arrangement of God or interconnectedness.

4. An invitation to personal holiness. I don't know about you, but I find that the serious Catholics in my circle of friends are pretty darn holy ... much holier than, say, my atheist friends. They aren't concerned so much about happiness, wealth, power and success; just peace and goodness.

5. An experience of community. Father Rohr and Martos wrote: "It is hard to get a sense of God's promise of fulfillment unless we experience that promise being fulfilled in the lives of people around us. It is even harder to do the 'not doing' of personal surrender to the Lord without the guidance of others who have done it."

6. A call to social transformation. I have found that whenever you throw out Mother Teresa's name, people tend to stop their arguments about why they hate the church. They do this because she is just one example of the church's commitment to social transformation.

7. A profound sense of history. Father Rohr and Martos make a good point. The Catholic Church has been around for 20 centuries. That's four to five times the age of the oldest Protestant denominations and 10 times the age of the United States!

8. An optimistic attitude. You know, our belief in an afterlife really does come in handy on a bad day.

Understanding Scripture not always easy

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service

Most of us take our own existence for granted, but Descartes didn't know for sure until his "eureka moment" when he discovered this idea: "I think, therefore I am" ("Cogito ergo sum.")

From then on, he would accept as true only those things that he could prove from reason alone. Therefore, all knowledge based on faith went out the window.

A century later, Immanuel Kant applied Descartes' approach to the interpretation of sacred Scripture. Until then, the reading of Scripture was pretty much a matter of believing what the text said while accepting the guidance of the church in translating the more difficult passages.

We asked: What did the sacred author mean when he wrote this passage; what religious truth was he trying to teach us?

Our individual interpretations may have varied slightly, but Catholics were instructed not to go beyond the parameters of the deposit of faith in their speculations.

According to Kant, however, the reader of Scripture had to reject all knowledge based on faith. This made everyone dependent on the Scripture scholars alone in their efforts to understand the Bible.

The authority of the church was, of course, dismissed out of hand. In its place, a new wave of biblical gurus came on the scene. The problem was that these so-called experts disagreed with one another all the time, which led to much confusion.

Evangelical Christians decided to reject the new scholars, demanding that the entire Bible be taken literally. This approach didn't work because you can't say Herod had four legs and a tail just because Jesus called him a fox.

There are metaphors, parables and figures of speech in the Bible that are not to be taken literally, and if you don't know exactly what the text means, how can it save you, much less guide you.

The Bible has always needed an objective authority for its correct interpretation.

In 1988, when Pope Benedict XVI

(Please See CATOIR/22)
Making Sense of Bioethics

Cancer decisions and drastic measures

By Rev. Tad Pacholczyk

During the 1990’s, scientists discovered two gene mutations in the BRCA family of genes which significantly increase a woman’s chances of developing breast and ovarian cancer. Consequently, as noted in a recent Los Angeles Times article by Anna Gorman, “Many oncologists recommend that women with the mutations consider having their ovaries, fallopian tubes and breasts removed prophylactically [as a precautionary measure] to reduce risk.”

Yet controversy exists regarding this recommendation. Precautionary surgery of this kind has been termed “mutilating” and “extreme” and some question whether it is, in fact, justifiable, given that the organs appear to be healthy (no cancer is yet detectable), and there is a limited probability that the disease may one day appear. Some medical professionals instead encourage frequent monitoring and screening of patients with the BRCA mutation, so that if cancer appears, and as soon as it appears, aggressive surgery could then be pursued.

On one side, then, are those who stress that the integrity and order of the human body should be respected and not unduly violated (the “Principle of Integrity”), while on the other are those who stress that an individual organ or a part of the human body may be sacrificed if that sacrifice means continued survival for the whole person (the “Principle of Totality”). The solution to the dilemma of preventative surgery will lie somewhere in the middle, with emphasis being placed upon the weightier Principle of Totality. The decision to undergo preventative surgery will thus be ethically justifiable and reasonable in certain cases.

Nevertheless, even the scientist who discovered the BRCA mutation, Mary-Claire King, Ph.D., has acknowledged the incredible challenge raised by her discovery: “It is a very difficult thing to recommend prophylactic oophorectomy [removal of the ovaries] when it is healthy women you are talking about. It is a radical thing to consider in a feminist age.” When it comes to a bilateral mastectomy (removal of both breasts), the difficulty is only compounded. As another researcher observed, “In western society at least, there is no organ as connected to femininity, sensuality, sexuality, adulthood and motherhood as the breast.”

Anna Gorman, the LA Times staff writer who tested positive for the BRCA mutation and ended up opting to have her ovaries removed, described how she could not quite bring herself to have her breasts removed as well, even though her father, grandmother, and aunt had all died at an early age from cancer: “I was still getting used to the idea of losing my ovaries. I had always viewed a preventive mastectomy as a drastic measure. It seemed I risked losing nearly everything - at least physically - that defined me as a woman.”

The real costs of this kind of surgery remind us of the importance of making a right and ethical decision for our circumstances. Although there is a heightened probability of disease, there is never any guarantee that a particular woman with the BRCA mutation will develop cancer. Some women will go on to develop cancer; others will not. So while the surgical removal of ovaries and/or breasts will prevent the disease from developing in some women, in others, it will make no difference, since they were never going to get the disease in the first place. In that situation, healthy organs (which secrete important hormones for the overall health of the person) would have been removed unnecessarily. As one researcher noted, “Many women who undergo prophylactic mastectomy will undoubtedly benefit from it, but nobody will ever know which ones.”

Given this strict inability to know who will develop cancer and who will not, other risk factors besides the BRCA mutation should be carefully considered before choosing to undergo preventative surgery. A strong family history of breast cancer at an early age, the absence of a full term pregnancy, an abortion or miscarriage of the first pregnancy, or a male relative who develops breast cancer are among the factors known to increase a woman’s risk of developing breast cancer. In the end, after careful weighing and reflection, a woman should personally be convinced that she will develop cancer in the future in order to justify undergoing this radical kind of surgery.

Even in the face of several known risk factors, however, a woman may still wish to delay such preventative surgery until she has had the opportunity to have children, or she may freely choose against it altogether.

To sum up then, even though a woman with multiple risk factors can never categorically prove that she will develop cancer in the future, she may nevertheless arrive at prudential certitude that she will develop the disease after carefully assessing the various risk factors. Insofar as she achieves that prudential certitude within herself, she not only may, but ought to consider seriously the possibility of undergoing risk-reduction surgery.

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

Freedom of conscience in the doctor’s purview

By John Garvey
Catholic News Service

Dr. Oscar Biscet ran afoul of Cuba’s communist regime in 1998 when he spoke out against the barbaric abortion practices at his hospital in Havana, which included even the killing of born-alive infants.

In retaliation, he was suspended from practicing medicine, he and his wife (a nurse) were both fired, and they were evicted from their family home. Biscet was subsequently and repeatedly harassed by the police and by mobs of Castro lackeys, arrested 27 times (some of them for protesting the regime that had ruined him personally), and given two substantial prison terms.

This month, Biscet was finally released after serving nearly a decade of a 25-year sentence for counterrevolutionary activities. A devout Christian living in a country where an estimated six in 10 pregnancies end in abortion, he felt an obligation of conscience to do something. He paid a huge price for having a conscience, because Cuba is not free in the important sense identified by another man who lived under Communism, Pope John Paul II:

"Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."

One mark of a free society is that its government does not criminalize virtue or compel formal cooperation in evil. Our medical professionals in the United States are mercifully protected from most compulsion where abortion is concerned. Hospitals and clinics that receive federal money -- and that is nearly all of them -- cannot compel medical professionals to perform or participate in abortions, nor even to refer for them.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration just last month overturned an attempt to strengthen these legal protections through a Department of Health and Human Services regulation, despite public comments that ran two-to-one in favor of the regulation.

The clearest consequence is in the area of “informed consent,” the medical advice doctors can or must give patients. In 2008, the Bush administration had issued a rule that would have protected doctors and hospitals that counsel pregnant women from being sued for not presenting abortion as a medical alternative.

The Bush administration had seen a need to clarify these protections after the ethics committee of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists issued an opinion in late 2007, indicating its dim view of conscientious refusals -- they "create or reinforce racial or socio-economic inequalities in society."

The committee essentially demanded that, in any context where it might matter, doctors set their morals aside. With this opinion as the professional standard, and absent explicit regulatory conscience protections, professional bodies could destroy the livelihood of conscientious physicians by withholding or even revoking their board certification.

The opinion could also help build a legal malpractice case against any doctor who won't suggest abortion as an alternative.

It would be nice if conscience protection rules were inspired by mere paranoia, but this is not so. Last year, the American Civil Liberties Union wrote two letters to the administrator of Medicaid, demanding that "religiously affiliated hospitals" be required to perform direct abortions in certain emergency situations -- something the Catholic Church teaches is never justifiable. The ACLU asserted that Catholic hospitals
This year’s Lady in Blue Mass to be celebrated on June 18

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

This is a reminder for all the people of the Diocese of San Angelo that two years ago, I issued a special Decree proclaiming every June 20 to be the Lady in Blue Day for the Diocese of San Angelo. This year, June 20 will fall on a Monday, and to remember this special day, I will offer a Mass on the banks of the Concho River on Concho Avenue near Bell Street at 10:30 am on Saturday, June 18 when more people will be able to attend. It was in San Angelo where the Lady in Blue brought together the native people, the Jumanos, with the Franciscan missionaries and laid the foundation for the beginning of the Gospel, the Good News of Christ, in this area of West Texas and beyond, from 1620 to approximately 1631.

This wonderful Lady dressed in blue as records indicate appeared more than 500 times to the Jumanos in West Texas. She brought to these humble people a message about the one true God, who gave Jesus to be our Savior and who asked His followers to baptize people in His name.

Who was this “Lady in Blue”? After much intense study and reflections, all signs seem to indicate that Sor Maria de Jesus de Agreda, who lived in Spain, to be the “Lady in Blue” as the natives named her. She apparently had the gift of bi-location.

On June 20, 2009, as many people of San Angelo gathered with the Jumano Indians for a historical meeting, I proclaimed that every June 20 in the future would be the Lady in Blue Day for the city of San Angelo and for the entire Catholic Diocese that makes up 29 counties in West Texas. That historic encounter with the Jumanos—to whom the Lady in Blue appeared many times in the 16th century—with the people of San Angelo—took place in an ecumenical prayer service on the banks of the Concho River near Bell Street in San Angelo. The Chieftain of the Jumano Tribe, Gabriel Carrasco, along with many members of the Jumano community, took part in this event.

A young girl carries a cross during the Lady in Blue Day celebration in 2010. (File photo/Jimmy Patterson)

Earth Day: We are caretakers of the Creator’s Garden

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo

Earth Day reminds us that the earth is our home and the garden where our creator has placed us to live out our destiny here on earth as we prepare for our eternal destiny. This day is a reminder that we are caretakers and tenders of the creator’s garden. Our life in our creator’s garden inspires us to have a new concern for ecology.

Ecology comes from the Greek ‘oikos’, which means “home” and shares the same root with ecology and economy. Ecological living invites us to care for our home, the earth, through appropriate economy and use of resources of energy, soil, water and food. We must have a new respect for the connection between human life and all other life in our Creator’s garden. The great mystic Meister Eckhart tells us, “Every creature is full of God and is a book about God.” Each day we must strive to see the presence of God in each person and in all of creation that surrounds us and read carefully the daily messages of life.

A model and an example of how we are to see God’s presence in every creature, and respect all of creation, is the great St. Francis of Assisi. Francis realized that there was an intimate connection in the web of life that holds all creation together. His great concern for creation and the universe inspired him to write his beautiful Canticle of Brother Son. There, Francis addresses the elements as brothers and sisters, as he saw the beauty and goodness of God in all. Francis is called the patron of ecology and of animals that he loved dearly.

As we celebrate Earth Day, more and more religious leaders and scientists are calling us to take action on the crisis of global climate change. This moment of crisis, is at the same time a moment of grace; an opportunity for all people from all walks of life to be engaged and united in caring for Planet Earth.

In dealing with this situation, ethics and morality take on greater importance as the human family deals with the effects of climate change, global warming, and pollution of the environment and how all this affects water, food and energy, and all life in the creator’s garden.

The challenge of this generation is to build a new social-economic system powered by renewable sources of energy with a diversified transportation system that conserves, reuses and recycles everything.
Pfeifer recounts memories of saint with whom he shared a birthday

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer
Bishop of San Angelo

Stanto Subito! — A Saint now!
This was the cry and shout of the Italians and thousands of other people at the funeral Mass of dear Pope John Paul II.
The people recognized Pope John Paul as a man who was a great pastor and spiritual leader, and a man who was truly holy.
The people saw in him the face of Christ, and they knew that he always tried to see the face of Christ in each one he met.
I have many precious and dear memories of Pope John Paul II, who was one of the greatest popes in history, and my estimation was the greatest person in the last century.
It pleased me to know that the holiness of this great man is being recognized by a speedy process in creating his life of holiness and his worldwide service leading to his beatification.

Could it be that this pope had a big heart, and the Church can be pleased with the Holy Father's holiness and his immense service to the worldwide Church?

At the center of this archbishop's statement, distributed in six different languages, said he had been "informed of the veneration 'will continue until the flow of faithful ends,' it said.

The Catholic Church has published 300 events for the beatification of Pope John Paul II, and warned people about buying counterfeit tickets to the beatification liturgy, which will take place on May 1, the event is being described as "the biggest group at the beatification, for a very good reason: Romans, in fact, may represent up to 30 percent of the crowd over when he gave his first speech in Italian and invited people to correct him if he made any linguistic mistakes.

The pope worked hard to build a bridge in Rome, carrying on with the past work that he had enjoyed so much as archbishop of Krakow. In an effort to better know his flock, he visited more than 300 of Rome's 334 parishes, providing every Roman with moments of celebration and expression.

Those visits were not just to a papal Mass. Typically, the pope met with parish groups, chatted with young people and toured the facilities Romans had the sense that this pope had come to learn about them as well as preach to them. Pope John Paul met routinely with Rome city officials, and he did not hesitate to weigh in on social and moral problems.

He often did so from places that rarely, if ever, saw a pope, a Rome prison, for example, where prisoners served at the Vatican and, more than once, personally swept the streets and garbage collectors near the Vatican never made headlines, but always had a sense of "the little people."
Nation

Fr. Corapi’s company: action against priest violates canon law

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- A representative of the media company owned by Father John Corapi challenged the action to place the popular speaker on administrative leave from priestly ministry, saying that it was illicit under "several points of canon law."

Bobbi Ruffatto, vice president of operations at Santa Cruz Media, Inc., in Kalispell, Mont., charged in a posting on Father Corapi’s Facebook page March 25 that Bishop William M. Mulvey of Corpus Christi, Texas, acted improperly, according to canon lawyers consulted by the company.

The statement offered no specific citations of canon law.

However, Marty Wind, director of communications for the Diocese of Corpus Christi, disputed Ruffatto’s claim that Bishop Mulvey placed Father Corapi on leave. He said the action was taken by officials of the priest’s order, the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity in Robstown, Texas.

"We have been clear from the beginning that the bishop of Corpus Christi was notified by the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity that the administrative leave was imposed by the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, not the bishop of the diocese," Wind told Catholic News Service March 25.

Father Corapi was placed on administrative leave following an accusation of misconduct by a former Santa Cruz Media employee.

The priest denied any wrongdoing in a statement on his website March 18. He gave little information about the accusation except to say a former employee had "sent a three-page letter to several bishops accusing me of everything from drug addiction to multiple sexual exploits with her and several adult women."

Father Gerard Sheehan, regional priest servant for the society, said March 28 he had not yet seen Ruffatto’s posting and that no formal discussion within the order about it had occurred.

The investigation into the former Santa Fe Media employee’s claim has yet to begin, Father Sheehan added, because the two priests who

(Please See CORAPI/22)

Bishops using Lenten messages to prompt greater use of penance

LOS ANGELES (CNS) -- The new archbishop of Los Angeles, in his first written message to Catholics since taking over stewardship of the nation’s largest diocese, urged Catholics to go to confession during Lent.

"I encourage you to make a good confession before Easter, even if it has been a long time," said Archbishop Jose H. Gomez in a Lenten message released March 8, the day before Ash Wednesday.

"In the early church, they called confession the ‘second conversion in tears.’ St. Peter wept in sorrow after denying Jesus, and in his mercy Christ spoke to him the tender words of his pardon and peace. In the sacrament, we too can hear these words of compassion for our sins," Archbishop Gomez said.

The archbishop, who succeeded Cardinal Roger M. Mahony March 1, said the parable of the prodigal son was "one of my favorite Scriptures. ... I love this story for its drama and emotion, and because it rings true."

Archbishop Gomez added, 'It is God who rejoices in the parable: 'My son was dead and is alive again.' When he gives his son a new robe, it signifies the white garment we are clothed with in Baptism. When he orders a feast of thanksgiving, it signifies the Eucharist. My sisters and brothers, the pilgrimage of the prodigal son is the story of our lives!"

"This Lent, let us seek to deepen our awareness of our baptismal identity."

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. bishops, urged Catholics to return to the confessional in a St. Patrick’s Day message.

"My fervent prayer for the Catholics of the Archdiocese of New York is that they will hear in the impetus to jump starting massive research in other energy technologies, such as solar and wind power, according to William French, director of the Center for Ethics at Loyola University in Chicago.

As Japanese technicians struggled to control damage at four of the Fukushima Dai-ichi’s six reactors, Switzerland said it was halting plans for new reactors, while other countries, including the United States, announced reviews of plants.

Still others, however, said they would forge ahead with nuclear energy plans. On March 18, just before U.S. President Barack Obama arrived for a one-day visit, Chile signed an agreement with the United States to promote nuclear energy in the South American country.

(Please See PENANCE/21)

(Please See ENERGY/21)
Our Faith

How long was Jesus on the cross?

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service

Q. I'm reminded each Lent of a question about Jesus' death. According to St. Mark's account of the passion, Jesus was crucified at 9 in the morning (the third hour) and died at the ninth hour. This means he hung on the cross for six hours, rather than the three hours we usually assume and the other Gospels say. How is this explained? (New York)

A. Some differences in the Gospels' chronology of Good Friday are traceable to the various themes and theologies of the evangelists who wrote them. But the problem you raise isn't that complicated.

All three synoptic Gospels note the "darkness" over the land from noon to the ninth hour, 3 in the afternoon, after which Jesus died. Neither Matthew nor Luke indicates a time for the crucifixion, but they describe several events after the crucifixion but before the darkness, implying that the time on the cross was somewhat more than three hours.

As he does so often, John makes the whole picture much less neat. The core of Hebrew faith through the centuries had been that God is their only king, a belief reaffirmed every Passover. Significantly, then, John tells us (19:14-15) that, at the sixth hour, when Pilate presents Jesus to the Jewish leaders as king, the "chief priests" reject the ancient adherence to God as their only king by declaring, "We have no king but Caesar."

There seems little question that this chronology was adopted by John to connect that rejection of God and Jesus to the sixth hour, the hour when Passover regulations went into effect for the Jews.

John's timing of the crucifixion and death of Jesus would thus be quite different than in the synoptics, but he makes no attempt to provide any further chronology.

In any case, of course, Jesus would have remained on the cross a considerable time after his death while Joseph of Arimathea made arrangements with the authorities to assume responsibility for his body.

Q. When does Lent officially end now? In preparing our Holy Week programs, we are told Holy Thursday, not Holy Saturday, is the last day of Lent. Is that true? (Texas)

A. Yes. Lent concludes on Holy Thursday. Those of us who are older will recall that for a long time Lent ended at noon on Holy Saturday. This happened because the great liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday were all twisted out of shape and were "celebrated" in relatively brief and informal ceremonies on the morning of those days.

The earlier, long tradition of the church, however, was that the sacred triduum (literally the sacred three days) formed a separate holy time between Lent and the beginning of the Easter season.

Now, therefore, the Mass celebrating the institution of the Eucharist again takes place on Holy Thursday night, and the Easter Vigil liturgy is back where it traditionally belongs, during the night between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1969, states, "Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday to the Mass of the Lord's Supper exclusive" (28).

In other words, Lent ends before the Mass on Holy Thursday evening. The triduum itself begins with the evening Mass on Holy Thursday and reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, which begins the Easter season.

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Our Holy Father’s
Monthly Intentions
2011

MAY

General Intention: That those who work in the media may always respect truth, solidarity and the dignity of each person.

Missionary Intention: That the Lord may grant the Church in China the capacity to persevere in fidelity to the Gospel and to grow in unity.

Daily Offering Prayer
Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.
JUST 4 KIDS

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

Luke 19
Q&A

1. What did Jesus tell his apostles to do in the village?
2. Why was Jesus angry when he reached the temple?

BIBLE ACCENT

The Bible is divided into two main sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament tells us about the lives of the men and women who lived before Jesus, and the New Testament includes narratives of the life of Christ in the Gospels, stories of the lives of the early Christians and the writings of important men in our church history such as Peter and Paul.

In order to make studying the Bible easier, over the years scholars have divided the books of the Bible into numbered chapters and verses. If we read Luke 19:28, we know that would mean to find the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 19, Verse 28.

Let's be sure to read our Bible every day.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAINTS
St. Guy of Pomposa

When he was a young man, Guy of Pomposa had a very high opinion of himself and always dressed very well. During a celebration of the Feast of St. Apollinaris in Italy, he realized that he should change his attitude toward himself in order to improve his life spiritually. He gave his fine clothing to the poor and began to wear the clothes of a poor man. He then spent three years with a hermit, and he became a member and later abbot of a monastery that was under the direction of the hermit.

He spent many hours a day praying and fasting, and his life became such an inspiring example that many men joined the monastery. His guidance was sought by many important people over the years.

We honor him on March 31.

BIBLE TRIVIA

Which book of the New Testament tells us what happened to the early Christians after Jesus returned to heaven?


PUZZLE

Which of the following people might you expect to see participating at Mass on Sunday?

1. Ushers
2. Scribes
3. Deacons
4. Cantors
5. Jurors
6. Corporals
7. Priests
8. Bailiffs

(Answers, Pg. 17)

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a colt

By Joe Sarnicola

Jesus was traveling with his apostles toward Jerusalem. When they were near Bethphage and Bethany, which are near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his apostles on an important errand. "Go into the village opposite you," he told them, "and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here."

Jesus could tell his apostles were concerned about taking the colt of someone they did not even know, so he said, "And if anyone should ask you, 'Why are you untying it?' you will answer, 'The Master has need of it.'"

The apostles immediately left to look for the colt that Jesus had told them about. Everything he had told them had come true. They found the colt and men asked them what they were doing. When they told the men why they were taking the colt, the men did not stop them, and they brought the colt to Jesus. The apostles threw their cloaks across the back of the colt, and they helped Jesus to mount it.

As Jesus rode the colt, people along the way began to throw their own cloaks on the path in front of him. By the time he reached the Mount of Olives a multitude of people had gathered to watch Jesus. They rejoiced as he passed them and they chanted, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

In the crowd along with the happy people were Pharisees, who said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." They did not want to hear them declaring that Jesus was a king.

Jesus replied to them, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!"

But as Jesus reached Jerusalem, he did not rejoice. Instead he cried and said, "If this day you only knew what makes for peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes."

Jesus entered the city and went to the temple area. He was angry to find people selling things there. He drove them all out saying, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.'"

From that time, the chief priests, the scribes and other leaders waited for an opportunity to stop Jesus, even if it meant having him sentenced to death.
By Jimmy Patterson / Editor

It’s been since I saw “Animal House” 11 times in the theater (many, many years ago) that I have paid to see a film more than once in the theaters. But then, this year along came “The King’s Speech,” at least 11 times better than “Animal House,” both in quality and probably ticket price.

“The King’s Speech” earned every award it received, and it even earned one it didn’t get: Best Supporting Actor for Geoffrey Rush’s portrayal of King George VI’s friend, Lionel Logue.

The movie is about so much more than a wartime king leading his people through World War II England after he is taught to overcome a stammer he has had since childhood. It addresses so much more on so many levels, but the two that come to mind above all are friendship and forgiveness.

As compelling as the movie was in any number of scenes, there are two moments that stand out to Christian filmgoers: when King George VI, played so wonderfully by Colin Firth, appears at Lionel’s doorstep and says, “When one is waiting for a King to apologize, one must be prepared to wait a long wait.” Moments later, therapist and patient sit in Logue’s exam room and with no music, no background, nothing, the camera turns full on to Logue, who returns his own apology to the king. You don’t often find that kind of sincere contrition in today’s rock ‘em, sock ‘em Hollywood lineup of sex and violence. The two masterful moments capitalize the movie and convey to viewers that it is in fact a film about more than overcoming a speech challenge.

Save for a couple scenes of rough language, which earned the movie its R rating, it is suitable for all. And I would recommend that all see it.

The subject of friendship seems to be speaking to me more so than normal lately, for whatever reason. My wife taught me that when experiencing the Stations of the Cross, if you can’t shut out all around you for the entire 14 stations, try to focus in on one message conveyed in the stations each week. And so I did. Which one? The one where Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. The accompanying Scripture from Sirach conveys even more the power of someone who will stand beside you through good and bad — “A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he who finds one finds a treasure!” A faithful friend is beyond price, no sun can balance his worth/A faithful friend is a life-saving remedy, such as he who fears God finds: For he who fears God behaves accordingly, and his friend will be like himself.”

In his book, “Longing for the Holy,” Fr. Ronald Rohrheiser talks about the absolute necessity to love others — those imperfect souls who sit next to us in the pews — before we can expect to have a real, lasting, meaningful relationship with a God who we talk about loving but cannot see in the most literal sense.

It’s not easy to love those imperfect ones around us when it is so much easier to gossip about them. But it’s worth giving it a try.

The superb Protestant apologist Philip Yancey recently published what may be his best work yet, a collection of his speeches called “What Good is God?” In the penultimate chapter, he features a talk he gave to an AA convention in Chicago.

“(My alcoholic friend) George ... told me that when he first stumbled into an AA meeting 20 years ago, a group of total strangers welcomed him with open arms and told him to ‘keep coming back.’ George had hit bottom, his life was a mess, and since nobody else was telling him that in those days, he accepted their invitation. George...

(Please See PATTERSON/20)
Pope Benedict XVI: ‘Jesus of Nazareth

Christ must be known as Son of God, pope says in new book

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- In his new book, "Jesus of Nazareth," Pope Benedict XVI said Christ must be understood as the Son of God on a divine mission, not as a mere moralist or social reformer.

Re-emphasizing Christ's divine nature is especially important in a world that tends to ridicule religious faith and that is experiencing a "global poisoning of the spiritual climate," the pope said.

While Christ did not bring a blueprint for social progress, he did bring a new vision based on love that challenges the evils of today's world -- from the brutality of totalitarian regimes to the "cruelty of capitalism," he said.

The 448-page book was presented in its Italian, German and Polish editions at the Vatican April 13. It was to go on sale April 16, the pope's 80th birthday, with subsequent editions in English and 18 other languages.

The book, the first of two planned volumes on Christ's life, covers the public acts of Jesus from his baptism in the Jordan River to the transfiguration before his disciples. Its 10 chapters analyze Scriptural passages, but also explore commentary from early church fathers and modern scholars.

In a preface, the pope makes an unusual disclaimer, saying the book should not be read as an expression of official church teaching, but as the fruits of his personal research.

"Therefore, anyone is free to contradict me," he said.

Throughout the text, the pope cites Old and New Testament passages to show that to understand Christ one must understand his "union with God the Father."

Even at his baptism, Jesus appears as the divine savior, not as an ordinary man who perhaps had a vocational or psychological crisis that led him to the Jordan River, he said.

Likewise, the pope said, Christ's radically different teaching does not come from any human school but from direct contact with God. That is seen clearly in the Sermon on the Mount, where Christ summarized Christian virtues in the Eight Beatitudes, he said.

The idea that the meek or the poor are particularly blessed has struck some -- including the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche -- as a resentful complaint against the world's more fortunate or successful people, the pope said.

But recent decades have demonstrated the lasting value of this Christian vision, he said.

After witnessing the way totalitarian regimes of the modern era have trampled human dignity and beaten the weak, "we understand once again those who have hunger and thirst for justice," he said.

"Faced with the abuse of economic power, faced with the cruelty of capitalism that downgrades man to a commodity, we have begun to see more clearly the danger of wealth and understand in a new way what Jesus meant when he warned against wealth," he said.

The pope said the widespread modern expectation that religion should act as a technical solution on populations, ignoring their religious beliefs, he said.

"Africa in particular has been 'robbed and looted,'" he said, and like the man on the roadside in Christ's parable, is in need of good Samaritans.

Instead of giving these populations God, he said, "we have brought them the cynicism of a world without God, in which the

After saints, most-quoted author in pope's new book is a U.S. rabbi

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- After the Gospel writers and the apostle Paul, the author most quoted in Pope Benedict XVI's new book is Rabbi Jacob Neusner, a U.S. professor of religion and theology.

In his book, "Jesus of Nazareth," released April 16 in Italian, German and Polish, Pope Benedict joined the literary dialogue that Rabbi Neusner invented for himself in his 1993 book, "A Rabbi Talks With Jesus."

The pope said that Rabbi Neusner's "profound respect for the Christian faith and his faithfulness to Judaism led him to seek a dialogue with Jesus."

"By imagining himself amid the crowd gathered on a Galilean hillside when Jesus gave his Sermon on the Mount, Rabbi Neusner "listens, confronts and speaks with Jesus himself," the pope wrote.

"In the end, he decides not to follow Jesus," the pope wrote. "He remains faithful to that which he calls the 'eternal Israel.'"

Pope Benedict said Rabbi Neusner makes painfully clear the differences between Christianity and Judaism, but "in a climate of great love: The rabbi accepts the otherness of the message of Jesus and takes his leave with a detachment that knows no hatred."

The pope praised Rabbi Neusner for taking the Gospel of Jesus seriously and, in fact, more seriously than many modern Christian scholars do.

Jesus is the Son of God, the unique savior, and not simply a social reformer, a liberal rabbi or the teacher of a new morality, the pope said.

Pope Benedict wrote that in trying to understand who Jesus was and his relationship with his Jewish faith and with the Torah, the law given to Moses, Rabbi Neusner's book "was of great help."

Rabbi Neusner, a prolific author and professor at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y., told Catholic News Service in Rome that he did not want to talk about the pope's book until he had seen it. The English edition is scheduled for a May release.

In the introduction to the revised and expanded 2000 edition of his book, Rabbi Neusner wrote, "If I had been in the land of Israel in the first century, I would not have joined the circle of Jesus' disciples. ... If I heard what he said in the Sermon on the Mount, for good and substantive reasons I would not have followed him."

"Where Jesus diverges from the revelation by God to Moses at Mount Sinai, he is wrong and Moses is right," Rabbi Neusner wrote.

In Pope Benedict's treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, 18 of the 25 pages (Please See RABBI/20)
Vocations

(From 3)

Pope Benedict XVI says that “discerning a vocation begins with an encounter with Christ. The encounter must be regular and consistent so that I become aware when I am being stirred by God. I come to know what attracted me and what my heart is pointed toward?"

In that moment, God’s own will and our will desire to become one. Any vocation is about coming to God. A vocation is a friendship and union with Christ so that the heart of waking to discover one’s vocation wants to discover Christ, wanting to be close to Him, to live for Him. Therefore, personal and deep prayer is the primary way one discovers one’s vocation. Once again, becoming aware of how God is affecting me in a conscious way.

If you are interested in talking more about your vocation, please feel free to contact the Diocesan Vocations Office at (325) 651-7500 or you can email frbarrymclean@aol.com.

The Adult Catechism

Pope John Paul II and the gift of the Eucharist

By Cardinal Donald Wuerl
Archbishop of Washington

"The Church draws her life from the Eucharist." This is the opening sentence of Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter, Ecclesia de Eucharistia, on the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, issued during Holy Week 2003. As we make our way through Lent and as we continue our reflections on the Mass and its meaning in our life, particularly as we prepare for the introduction of the new English translation of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal, it seems a fitting time to meditate on the teaching of the soon-to-be beatified Venerable John Paul II.

It is Christ who is at the very core of the sacraments and, particularly, the Eucharist. The Pope reminds us that it was Jesus who instituted the Eucharist, which is the memorial of the Lord's death and Resurrection, and that each time the church celebrates the Eucharistic liturgy, the central event of our salvation becomes sacramentally but really present (cf. 11, 15).

The faith of the Church in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist goes back to the words of Jesus himself as recorded in the Gospel of Saint John. In the Eucharistic discourse after the multiplication of the loaves, our Lord contrasted ordinary bread with a bread that is not of this world, but which contains eternal life for those who eat it. He said, "I am the bread of life...I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:48, 51).

The one great sacrifice was accomplished by Jesus, the priest and victim, who offered himself on the altar of the cross for our redemption. This sacrifice not only need not be repeated, but cannot be repeated. However it can be re-presented so that today, in our moment in history, we are able sacramentally and spiritually to enter the Paschal Mystery and draw spiritual nourishment from it. Pope John Paul returns over and over again to this theme throughout each chapter of Ecclesia de Eucharistia.

John Paul reminds us that in the earliest chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, which describe the life of the ancient and fledgling Church, we find the description of the faithful coming together in order that they might devote themselves "to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (2:42). The breaking of the bread refers to the Eucharist. Two thousand years later, we continue to relive that primordial image of the Church.

The Church shares in the very life of the risen Lord. Its members, through baptism into the Church, form a body with Christ as its head. By way of pastoral application, Pope John Paul stresses that Eucharistic communion "confirms the Church in her unity as the body of Christ" (23.1). It is through this Church that women and men are saved by coming to know Jesus Christ, and through him they are united in grace to the Father through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As Pope John Paul makes clear, the mystery of the faith involves the mystery of the Eucharist and the Church.

To participate fully in the Paschal Mystery re-presented in the Eucharist, we should examine our conscience concerning our worthiness to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults tells us, "This examination includes fidelity to the moral teaching of the Church in personal and public life."

We are also reminded that those who are not in full communion with the Church, however, are not permitted to participate at the Table of the Lord, as if they were full members, sharers in the full sacramental life of the Church. The reason is simple. Reception of Holy Communion proclaims publicly that the one receiving the Lord is a member of the Catholic Church. To do so while not being Catholic is to be a witness to something that is not true.

All of us who are privileged as members of the Church to receive the Lord should thank God that such an overwhelmingly generous gift has been given to us.

In his encyclical letter Ecclesia de Eucharistia, Pope John Paul celebrates the mystery of our faith so beautifully proclaimed at every Eucharistic liturgy. Jesus continues to be with us. His Eucharistic presence is the foundation of the Church and our pledge of life everlasting. How blessed we are with the gift of faith and in that faith, the gift of the Eucharist!
said he sometimes gets a different response from his church friends. "Aren't you done with all this talk about alcoholism?" they ask. And this is what George says: "I realize that for the rest of my life, I can go to AA meetings and nobody will ask me, 'Aren't you finished with all this talk about alcoholism?' They will just say 'Keep coming back.' "

Yancey goes on to say that if the secular world saw the church as a place that welcomes broken people for healing, it might have a greater impact than all of our sophisticated outreach programs put together.

But it will take all of us. And it will take all of us every time we extend the sign of peace. And it will take the realization that on the other end of the hand I am clasping is a broken, imperfect soul. Just like a common man or a king. Just like me. Someone in need of friendship and forgiveness, understanding and healing.

"Rabbi Neusner is so important for the rabbinic dialogue -- to recognize differences and extraordinary claims of Jesus: He is not just a rabbi teaching the golden rule." Both Rabbi Neusner and Pope Benedict, Father Sievers said, "have a high Christology," emphasizing the divinity of Christ even if Rabbi Neusner cannot accept Christ's claim.

"(Rabbi) Neusner, even when he spoke here, did not try to find easy solutions or to bridge gaps" between Christians and Jews, Father Sievers said.

In his book, Rabbi Neusner said he hoped to contribute to Christian-Jewish dialogue by taking Christian teaching and Jewish teaching seriously.

"It is one model for a starting point for dialogue -- to recognize differences and not try to make them disappear or to hide them," Father Sievers said.

"Basically, he loves a good discussion and so does (Rabbi) Neusner," he said.

only things that count are power and profit."

The pope warned that some of the "reconstructions" of Jesus offered by biblical scholars have also diminished his divinity and end up depicting Christ as simply one among many founders of religions. In this sense, he said, "the interpretation of the Bible can effectively become an instrument of the Antichrist," by denying that God acts in human history.

The Christian faithful need to know that the New Testament is more than a collection of symbolic or allegorical stories, and that this is not just another myth of death and rebirth, he said.

"Yes, it really happened. Jesus is not a myth, he is a man of flesh and blood, a real presence in history. ... He died and rose again," he said.

In one chapter, the pope focused on the importance of prayer as taught by Jesus in the Our Father. He posed the question: "Isn't God also mother?"

While there are expressions of God's maternal love in the Bible, and while God cannot be said to be either male or female, the pope concluded that the image of the father was appropriate at that time to express the transcendent "otherness" of the creator.

For Christians today, that language remains the norm, he said.

"Mother is not a title of God nor a name with which one prays to God," he said.

"We pray as Jesus did ... not as it occurs to us or how it pleases us."

The pope said that when Christ's followers prayed "deliver us from evil," they sometimes had a concrete danger in mind: the Roman political power that threatened to swallow them.

But the phrase has lost none of its relevance today, he said.

"Today, too, there are on one hand the powers of the market, of arms trafficking, of drugs and men -- powers that oppress the world and drag humanity in chains that are impossible to escape," he said.

"On the other hand, there is also today the ideology of success, of well-being, that tells us: God is only a fiction, he's only a waste of time and he robs us of the desire to live," he said.

The pope explained in his preface that the book was the product of a "long inner journey," and that he had begun writing it in 2003. He said he was concerned that the figure of Jesus was becoming increasingly unclear, even for believers.

He decided that he could offer a portrait of the "historical Jesus" that was "more logical and understandable than reconstructions we have seen in recent decades."

Naturally, he said, to believe that Christ was God and that he revealed this in his public life goes beyond the possibilities of the historical method. In this sense, he said, the Scriptures should be read in the light of faith.

At the Vatican presentation, Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna said the pope's book should act as a corrective to the "innumerable fanciful images of Jesus as a revolutionary, as a meek social reformer, as the secret lover of Mary Magdalene," which have appeared recently in the mass media.

Doubleday, the U.S. publisher of the pope's book, plans to release the volume in English in May.
PENANCE

(From 14)

next weeks the beautiful, profound words of absolution pronounced in the confessional," Archbishop Dolan said March 17.

"We have to be frank, though. Those words are not heard as often as they should be in the church in New York," he added. "We can't imagine Catholic life without the words of consecration -- This is my body! This is my blood! Likewise Catholic life cannot be lived properly without the sacrament of penance. We need the grace of this sacrament to grow in virtue."

Archbishop Dolan related that one priest told him that "after six months in his new parish, he announced to the people that he was asking the bishop for a transfer. 'You don't need me. I've sat in the confessional for half a year, and nobody has come. You must all be saints. I want to serve sinners.'"

"I exhort the entire Archdiocese of New York: Experience the joy of forgiveness!" Archbishop Dolan said.

"Experience liberation from sin! Keep those confessional busy! Keep your priests busy about the great work of dispensing the Lord's mercy! Keep the Sacrament of Penance at the heart of Catholic life!"

"Lent is perhaps the only religious season yet to find a secular parallel," said Bishop Paul D. Sirba of Duluth, Minn., in a Lenten message published in the March issue of The Northern Cross, diocesan newspaper. "Why? Why don't we see stores trying to sell little bottles of ashes or come up with slogans and jingles based on 'Remember man that you are dust and unto dust you shall return?"

"In truth, it is a little more difficult to package our mortality, repentance, conversion and penance for our sins in the context of a celebratory consumer season," Bishop Sirba said. "Yet on ash Wednesday, even though it is not a holy day of obligation, more Catholics return to church to receive those ashes on the forehead perhaps on any other day except Christmas and Easter. Refreshing it, isn't it?"

Lent, he added, "speaks to a truth about God in relation to man that we can spend a lifetime trying to understand - that God loves us even in our sinfulness."

"To fully appreciate God's mercy, we are invited to contemplate our sinfulness and do something about it. 'Repent and believe the good news!'" the bishop said. "If we regard sin as a scratch, then redemption is just a Band-Aid. But if it is a mortal wound, then redemption is the ultimate unexpected rescue."

Bishop Sirba said, "Every Catholic of the age of reason should take advantage of the sacrament of penance this Lent. It is the sacrament of God's mercy."

During a lunch-hour Mass on Ash Wednesday, March 9, at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul in Providence, R.I., Bishop Thomas J. Tobin of Providence, told his congregation made up largely of Catholic school students that, while they have become experts in the use of modern technology -- using iPods, Facebook, the Internet and email -- they should not let these forms of communication take over their lives and create an addiction.

"Lent is an important time of communication, of renewed communication, with God," Bishop Tobin said, urging those gathered to spend time in silent prayer or to perform works of charity. "It would give us time to get closer to God," he added.

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Contributing to this story was Brian J. Lowney in Providence.

ENERGY

(From 14)

Questions about the safety, cost-effectiveness and long-term prospects for nuclear power are familiar to Bob McKeon, associate director of the Office for Social Justice of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, Alberta.

Less than two years ago, the bishops of Alberta wrote a pastoral letter urging "serious discussion and ethical reflection" about a nuclear power plant that Bruce Power proposed building beside the Peace River in northern Alberta.

The bishops asked if there was enough water available for the plant, if nuclear energy was the best way to decrease Alberta's greenhouse gas emissions, if the safety of future generations was being considered, if the plant should be built before Canada had a nuclear waste storage plan, and if subsidizing nuclear energy was the best use of government funds. They also called for honest consultation of people living near the proposed site.

The disaster in Japan shows that "the questions are still there," McKeon told Catholic News Service.

Accidents at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in 1979 and Chernobyl, in what is now Ukraine, in 1986 triggered "deep fear" about nuclear energy in many countries, French said.

In recent years, however, concern about climate change and calls to reduce the use of fossil fuels like oil and coal, which emit greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, led some policy makers to take another look at nuclear energy.

"It's not a black-and-white issue," Jesuit Father Thomas Reese, a senior fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, Washington, told CNS. "Like most really tough ethical (issues), you've got lots of questions to consider, and there are lots of uncertainties."

While nuclear energy could be "part of the solution" to climate change because radioactive fuel does not release greenhouse gases, "if something goes wrong, thousands of people could be killed and land could be unusable for centuries," Father Reese said.

Critics, however, say that painting nuclear power as free of greenhouse gas emissions is misleading, because it considers only plant operation. If the entire fuel cycle, from mining through processing, is considered, nuclear energy's carbon footprint increases significantly.

So does the cost. A single plant can cost more than $5 billion. Since the commercial nuclear energy industry rose from the ashes of the atom bomb in the 1950s, research and development and plant construction have received hefty government subsidies.

Nuclear energy companies receive tax breaks, loan guarantees, limits on liability and other subsidies that sometimes add up to more than the power the plants produce, said a 2011 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office reports that between 2002 and 2007, nuclear programs in the United States received $6.2 billion in government funding for electricity-related research and development, compared to $3.1 billion for fossil fuels and $1.4 billion for renewable energy, especially solar.

If subsidies are not counted, electricity from natural gas is cheapest, followed by hydroelectricity, conventional coal technology, wind, geothermal, biomass, nuclear and solar energy, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Some experts say that if renewable energy sources received the same subsidies as nuclear power, they would quickly become more competitive. Although wind turbines and solar panels are made of materials that cause pollution during mining and manufacturing, proponents say they do not raise long-term safety concerns like those surrounding nuclear waste storage or reactor safety.

Nevertheless, Edward McAssey, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, told CNS he believes nuclear energy is an option for reducing fossil fuel use.

Public reaction to the accident in Japan "is going to be a big hurdle to get over -- it's an emotional reaction," he said, but he believes plants can operate safely as long as countries take proper precautions.

The Japanese plant was crippled not by direct damage from the earthquake or tsunami, but from of loss of electricity for the system that cooled fuel rods in the six reactors and seven pools holding spent fuel. Diesel fuel for backup generators was stored in above-ground tanks that were swept away by the tsunami -- a design flaw not repeated in the United States, where tanks are underground, McAssey said.

But a second, battery-powered backup system was designed to operate for only eight hours -- not long enough to restore electricity to the plant. And the backup systems did not power the spent fuel pools, where fuel rods overheated and may have partly melted.

Increasingly complicated technology can multiply risks, said Adam Briggle, assistant professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas.

"The danger is to pretend that we can tame this complex technical beast by making it even more complex," he told CNS.

"One solution is to reduce energy consumption," he said, which means recognizing that "our individual lifestyle choices have public ramifications."

French and Father Reese called for taxes or restructuring of energy prices to reflect all costs -- including environmental damage and the cost of military operation to protect foreign oil fields -- instead of only production costs.
CORAPI
(From 14)
will conduct the probe had not yet been named. Bishop Mulvey instructed the religious community to ask two priests who are not diocesan clergy and who are not members of the order to investigate the allegations.

Father Sheehan said he was waiting for clarification from the diocese before choosing the priest investigators.

Wind said that although Father Corapi was placed on leave, "it's been the position of the Diocese of Corpus Christi from the outset that the presumption of innocence until proven otherwise is of the highest importance."

Calls and emails from Catholic News Service to Santa Cruz Media requesting comment from Father Corapi and Ruffatto were not returned.

Online records with the Montana secretary of state list John Corapi as the registered agent for the company. A company with the same name also is registered in Nevada and online records in the secretary of state's office there indicated John A. Corapi holds the office of president, treasurer, secretary and director.

Ruffatto's six-paragraph statement referenced the U.S. bishops' zero-tolerance policy as outlined by the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" and called for it to be changed "because of false accusations like this."

Father Corapi has been an outspoken critic of the charter.

"There is no evidence at this time that Father Corapi did anything wrong, only the unsubstantiated rant of a former employee, who, after losing her job with this office, physically assaulted me and another employee and promised to destroy Father Corapi," Ruffatto said.

"We all continue to pray for this person and we ask you to do the same," the Santa Cruz executive added.

Ruffatto said the company would continue selling the books, DVDs, and other video and audio recordings of its owner as the investigation unfolds. Ruffatto said the purchases of customers would allow Father Corapi to continue his work as well as pay for legal expenses to fight the allegation.

"We are a secular corporation and not affiliated with the Catholic Church in any way," the company official said. "As such, we are not under the jurisdiction of any bishop or other official in the Catholic Church, although we have the utmost respect for church authority."

After the 63-year-old priest was placed on leave, EWTN suspended broadcasts of his widely viewed television program. In an unsigned statement on its website, the Catholic broadcast network said officials took the step "with much prayer and careful discernment."

"In EWTN's 30 years of existence the network has never knowingly aired programming featuring any priest whose priestly faculties have been suspended," the statement said. "The network has always responded consistently and immediately in such situations by removing such programs from the air. We are obliged to do so in obedience to the discipline of the church."

SAINT
(From 12)
John Paul II's life was Christ and a strong deep devotion to our Blessed Mother. He was a man of constant and daily prayer and a man of unique integrity.

Pope John Paul II and I shared the same birthday—May 18th. It so happened that for his last birthday on this earth I was scheduled to be in Rome for an official ad limina visit with the bishops of Texas. That year, May 18, fell on a Tuesday, and we bishops knew that sometime during the week we would have the privilege of having a personal private visit with our Holy Father. In advance of my trip to Rome I requested that I be given the privilege of having a meeting with him on the day of our birthday, and I received back an impressive letter in Latin inviting me to be with him at 11:00 that morning. I will never forget that visit. A couple of Polish friends taught me how to give him a birthday greeting in Polish—Stolat, and when I used this greeting he smiled and then we greeted each other in English and Spanish wishing each other a happy birthday. I told him what a privilege it was to be with him on this special day. I will never forget that visit. At that time the Pope was in ill health, but he still kept up a very tough daily schedule and kept reaching out to people until the very end. It was during that visit to Rome that he gave me the cross that I wear each day.

I have many good remembrances of Pope John Paul II, the personal visits I had with him for ad limina visits, the times when he would invite the bishops of the ad limina visits to either have lunch or dinner with him—when we would have a couple of hours just to chat and share about many things. He was a great teacher and a very cordial host. It was Pope John Paul II who named me a bishop in 1985 and I will always remember the trust he placed in me. He was indeed for me a great spiritual mentor and a true spiritual father. He always gave me words of encouragement—and he had a good sense of humor. On one of my ad limina visits with him, when I walked into the room to sit at a table across from him he was standing and I noticed he had a map on the desk—which was the map of Texas. As I greeted him he said, "Ah, San Angelo, Texas." Instead of first asking me about the good people of the diocese or ecumenical efforts, or many other important topics, he asked me with a smile, "Do you still have cowboys in Texas?" I was taken aback, and said, "Holy Father, we still have many cowboys but a lot of them today ride in pickups." While he spoke English very well, at first this common word we use to describe this vehicle did not register with him. I told him that we often used trucks today. Then he laughed.

Pope John Paul II in my mind and in the minds of millions of people throughout the world is indeed a saint and already God has given us the privilege of seeing signs that he is with our God forever in heaven. What a joyful day it will be when he is proclaimed blessed by our Catholic Church, and it will happen on the Sunday that Pope John Paul proclaimed as Divine Mercy Sunday which this year is May 1.

SCHEDULE
(From 12)
existence of unauthorized offers by some tour operators, especially on the Internet," claiming that for a fee they could help people get tickets to papal events, particularly the beatification Mass.

"For the beatification Mass of Pope John Paul II, as made clear from the outset, no tickets are required," the statement said.

And for events that require tickets, such as the pope's weekly general audience, the tickets are always issued free of charge and no person or organization can request any kind of payment," it said.

CATOIR
(From 9)
was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he gave a talk entitled "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis." He asserted that the Kantian method of interpretation undermines the very possibility "for the Bible to be itself."

He also said that we can never interpret the Bible correctly without the church to guide us. Ultimately, it comes down to belief in the divinity of Christ.

The faith is a precious gift from God, passed down to us over the centuries through the ministry of the church. Because of the divinity of Jesus Christ, we have been given the Holy Spirit to guide us in a darkened world.

The divine element of the church sustains us, not the human; however, the human element makes Jesus visible. We belong to the mystical body of Christ on earth.

We love the church.

DOCTOR
(From 10)
in particular "cannot invoke their religious status to jeopardize the health and lives of pregnant women seeking medical care."

Of course, the church has no quarrel with any life-saving treatment for a pregnant woman, even if it regretfully causes the death of an unborn child as a foreseen but unintended consequence. But this is not good enough for the ACLU, whose logic strongly resembles that which justified the Cuban government's persecution of Biscet.

Ironically, the pagan father of medicine would have objected to the ACLU's active persecution of those seeking to live according to their consciences, and even to the "ethics" standards of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.
BLUE

(From 11)

beautiful ecumenical service. That historic encounter remembered how the Lady in Blue brought Christianity to this part of West Texas through the special visits of the Lady in Blue, who apparently had the gift of bilocation. Also, it is a time when we can reflect on how we can deepen our understanding of the Gospel of Christ and live it in our daily lives by the love and respect we show all people. It is a day to reflect on the gift of Baptism and how we are called today to be “People in Blue” who share the thanksgiving to our God for bringing Christianity to this part of West Texas through the special visits of the Lady in Blue and beyond in the 1600s.

How can we remember this day—the Lady in Blue Day—on June 20, 2011? First, by taking part in the Mass on June 18th on the side of the Concho River near Bell Street, and then by offering prayers of Good News of the Gospel with others. It is also a day to study our history and especially to help the young people of our communities come to understand this beautiful, historical, spiritual, pastoral dimension of the Church in West Texas. May this be a day to reflect on how Christianity began in West Texas and beyond as two civilizations blended together influencing our way of life even today.

I ask our priests and pastoral leaders to share this message of the Lady in Blue Day with the people of our parishes, encouraging them to become more familiar with this unique dimension of the history and heritage of the bringing of Christianity to this part of West Texas. Hopefully many people will join with me for the joyful celebration of Mass on Saturday, June 18th, on the side of the Concho River, near where we believe the Lady in Blue appeared centuries ago.

MARRIAGE

(From 5)

Archangel. Also present were Lupe Rivas from St. Francis in Iraan and Jeri Mendez from St. Thomas, Rankin.

The last deanery meeting of FLM Contacts took place in the San Angelo Deanery on Saturday, February 19 at the Chancery Office, in San Angelo with eight in attendance from six different parishes. Those present from San Angelo were Lori Hines from Holy Angels and Elizabeth Mata and Tereza Rico from St. Mary’s. Others present were Rose Mary Pena from St. Margaret’s in Big Lake; Nelda Tobias and Belia Fay from St. Ann’s in Sonora; Deacon Victor Belman from Our Lady of Guadalupe in Eldorado and Deacon David Workman from St. Mary’s in Ballinger.

As part of family life in the parish, we discussed the role they will play as FLM Parish Contacts. In the parish their role is to:

• Work collaboratively with pastor and other parish leaders, e.g. CYM, CRE, etc., to promote family life;
• Affirm and support opportunities for family life promotion and seek to involve whole families in parish life so that lived faith is modeled by the whole faith community;
• Maintain contact with the Office of Education & Formation--Family Life & Marriage Ministry; and
• Attend workshops provided by the Office of Education & Formation--Family Life & Marriage Ministry and local resource agencies in order to better implement up-to-date practices within the parish family.

We looked at family life in the church, in the diocese and in the parish and discussed the various church documents that are the basis and foundation of our ministry for family life and marriage. The contacts received a listing of resources used by the Family Life office and recommended for their parishes.

At the deanery meetings over the past year, the pastors have discussed how they have addressed the strategies listed in John Roberto’s strategies in their individual parishes. Those attending also received a copy of the strategies and a summary of the various deanery minutes was used to discuss what various churches are doing to address families and the strategies.

OBISPO

(Para 5)

nuestro Dios y amar el uno al otro. El amor de Cristo Resucitado sana, transforma, libera y da poder a los seres humanos a llegar ser íntegros y sanos y a vivir una vida en abundancia. Jesús nos dice en el Evangelio de Juan: “He venido para que tengas vida, y para que la tengan en abundancia.”

La Pascua nos ilustra el poder de ir la distancia máxima para mostrar una clase de amor que puede cambiar el mundo. La Pascua se trata de amor que es feroz y fuerte y fiel siempre hasta el final. La Pascua no se trata de un amor sentimental; está lleno de valor y audacia. Por medio de compartir en la vida y amor del Cristo Resucitado, entonces la Pascua nos dice acerca del triunfo del amor sobre el odio, valor sobre la cobardía, autenticidad sobre hipocresía, y fe sobre duda.

“¡Él está vivo!” Sí, para nosotros Cristo está vivo en nuestro mundo, Él está vivo en nosotros, y el Cristo Resucitado nos invita a compartir en su amor en su plenitud, especialmente al celebrar la Eucaristía, y al crecer cada día en amor con el uno al otro. El Cristo Resucitado está presente para fortalecernos cada día en nuestras vidas y para enseñarnos como debemos vivir nuestras vidas en amor. ¡Que todos tengan una bendita y feliz Pascua con el Cristo Resucitado!

BISHOP

(From 2)

forms, liberates and empowers human beings to become whole and healthy and to live an abundant life. Jesus tells us in John’s Gospel, “I came so that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.”

Easter illustrates for us the power of going the ultimate distance to reveal a kind of love that can change the world. Easter is about a love that is fierce and strong and faithful all the way to the end. Easter isn’t about a sentimental love; it is filled with courage and boldness. By sharing in the life and love of the risen Christ, then Easter tells us about the triumph of love over hate, courage over cowardice, authenticity over hypocrisy, and faith over doubt.

“He is alive!” Yes, for us Christ is alive in our world, He is alive in us, and the risen Christ invites us to share in His love in its fullness, especially as we celebrate the Eucharist, and as we grow each day in love for one another. The risen Christ is there to strengthen us each day of our lives and to teach us how we should live our lives in love. May all of you have a blessed and joyful Easter with the risen Christ!

Daly

(From 15)

or a "peacemaker."

These 10 sentences are a school of the spirituality of Jesus. If we really mean it when we say that he is our Lord, we ought to want to know his approach to the spiritual life.

At the end of this meditation, we come away with a picture of what a spirit-filled Christian will really look like. We should be detached from material things and sensitive to sorrows of others. We should not be arrogant. We will have a passion for justice and mercy, which are two sides of the coin of righteousness. We will be pure of heart and clean of mind. We will seek peace in our relationships and our world. We will seek a right relationship with God. We will not mind it if we suffer for his sake.

This is a great deal of spiritual wisdom, distilled down to 10 little sentences.

I hope by the end of Lent it is part of my memory bank and my soul.
MOTC retreatants hold reunion in Brownwood

By Fr. Tom Barley

BROWNWOOD -- On February 26, members of the San Angelo Women’s Ministry of the Third Cross Team met with the San Antonio Team at the Ron Jackson TYC Unit in Brownwood for an MOTC Reunion with girls who had attended the MOTC Retreats over the past three years. There was music, laughter, and tears. Team members commented that it was great to see how the girls had grown in maturity and spirituality. We also commented on how this ministry with the girls had changed us. The Reunion was a time for the team and the girls to visit, share stories, pray, and say goodbyes as some of the girls will be released before the team returns and the San Antonio Team was relinquishing this ministry to the San Angelo Team. The San Antonio Team received Angel statues as a thank you from the San Angelo Team for bringing this ministry to the Diocese of San Angelo. When we finally left the facility we prayed for the girls and for one another.

Attending the reunion for San Angelo were Sandy Seidel, Linda Huerta, Linda Gonzales, Lupe Gonzalez, Maria Ocampo, Jennifer Larimore, and Fr. Tom Barley.

At a visioning meeting of the MOTC Team, the Men’s Team was started. If people are interested in joining this ministry, they must be 18 years old or older, have attended an ACTS Retreat, and be active in the Church. If you are interested, please call Chuck Rood (325) 227-8407, Deacon Andy Gonzalez (325) 651-7182 or Fr. Tom Barley (325) 656-3559. Our next retreats at TYC are scheduled for November 2011. The Women’s Team is still accepting new members. If you are interested, please contact Sandy Seidel (325) 656-5550, Fr. Tom or any of the Team members.