‘We have to change our reactions to pregnancies’

By Jimmy Patterson

SAN ANGELO — Vicki Thorn described a hypothetical conversation that recently occurred at her house to a group of almost 200 attending the Gospel of Life Conference in San Angelo, March 24.

“My husband walked in and our daughter, who had been talking to me about a friend who was pregnant, looked at her father and said, ‘Dad, if I was pregnant, what would you do?’” Thorn recalled.

Without missing a beat, Thorn said her husband told their daughter, “Well, first thing, we’d call Sister Martha to see about you staying in school, and then we’d go to the doctor to make sure everything is OK.”

It is that kind of parental reaction, Thorn said, that we need to see more of if we ever hope to begin making a dent in reversing abortion numbers.

(Please See GOSPEL/21

Vicki Thorn, founder of Project Rachel, speaks to a crowd of Pro-Life supporters at Angelo Catholic School March 24.
Reflections on the sacrament of penance, reconciliation

“Be reconciled to God” — 2 Cor. 5:20

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

On Ash Wednesday, the Apostle Paul exhorted us to “Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20). The whole season of Lent is a time of reconciliation, to humbly and sincerely look at our relationship of love with our loving God, and with one another. To forgive our sins and bring us God’s mercy, Christ has given the Church the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation - Penance. I share with you some reflections on the Sacrament of Penance, Reconciliation for the forgiveness of sins to help us grow in God’s love in the spiritual life. This Sacrament is one of the two Sacraments of healing that Christ has given to our beautiful Catholic Church. As there is much misunderstanding of this Sacrament, and as many Catholics today do not fully appreciate the meaning of this wonderful Sacrament of God’s mercy, it is important that we go back to the basics to have a fuller appreciation of this Sacrament which is vitally important to live as good Catholics.

To help us understand this beautiful Sacrament, I am featuring here some of the teachings that are given to us by the Catholic Catechism, which hopefully will lead to a better understanding of this Sacrament of God’s forgiveness and pardon:

1421 The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the para-

From the Bishop’s Desk

Web site changes

Parish information on the diocesan web site can only be accurate with your help. When you see changes that need to be made as they pertain to your parish on the diocesan web site (http://www.sanangelodiocese.org), please send those changes to JimmyLeePatterson@gmail.com.

Priest changes

The following clergy changes are effective April 13, 2012:

› Fr. Serafin Avenido will become the pastor at St. Joseph and St. Agnes in Ft. Stockton and St. James in Sanderson.
› Fr. Joe Uecker will become temporary administrator of St. Joseph and St. Anthony in Odessa along with Mission San Martin de Porras.

Catholic Charities

Banquet of Hope

ODessa -- Catholic Charities of Odessa, announces its annual “Banquet of Hope,” from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 26, at the Odessa Country Club. Retired Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, former Bishop of San Angelo, will be the keynote speaker. He will discuss Catholic efforts and challenges to overcoming poverty in America. In addition to the Archbishop’s address, the first annual presentation of the Sister Mary Thomas McNeela Award will be presented to Msgr. James Bridges, a former Odessa pastor. Fr. Bridges was one of the principal organizers of the organization in 1987. Catholic Charities is one of the principal ector Country charitable organizations. It serves needy individuals and families regardless of religious affiliation. It is funded by the Catholic people of Odessa, along with several other local Christian congregations. It is a United Way agency, and also receives grants from a number of charitable foundations as well as the US government. Through its Cory Learning Center, it offers GEDs for people needing a high school diploma. Its food pantry serves forty to sixty families daily. It offers tax and immigration services, and helps with rent, utilities and medical bills when funds are available. The organization also operates the Family Thrift Store at its location across from Odessa College. Banquet tables of eight are available for $500, and individual tickets can be purchased for $75 per person. For more information, contact Fr. Mark Woodruff at 432.367.4657.

Pro-Life Rosary in Midland

MIDLAND — Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer will preside over a pro-life Rosary in front of the Midland Planned Parenthood at 9:30 a.m., Friday, June 8, 2012, a day when abortions are done at Planned Parenthood. The date also closely coincides with the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is Sunday, June 10.

“The beautiful Feast of Corpus Christi, which has a long tradition in our Church, reminds us of the greatest gift Christ has left His Church, which is His own Body and Blood, and that by receiving His Body and Blood, we enrich our membership in the precious Body of Christ, linking us to all who are members of the Body of Christ, even to the precious little ones in the wombs of their mothers who are part of the sacred Body of Christ.”

Deacon to speak in Midland

Greg Hall, a deacon in the Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and an engineering technology graduate of Texas A&M, is this year’s featured presenter at the, “An Evening With ...” fundraiser series, July 20, 2012, at the Midland County Horseshoe. The event will benefit the Midland non-profit, Centers for Children and Families.

Hall’s drilling technique was instrumental in the October 2010 rescue of 33 Chilean miners who had been trapped underground for more than two months.

Hall received a diploma in pastoral studies from St. Mary’s Seminary in December 2010 and was ordained a permanent deacon in February 2011.

Watch for additional details in upcoming issues of the Angelus.

Scheduled Executions

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

Offender/Scheduled Execution Day
Benuka Adams / April 26
Anthony Bartee / May 2
Steven Staley / May 16
Bobby Hines / June 6
Marcus Druey / August 1

Beginning Experience to host weekend, April 27-29

By Judy Ford

Our journey through life includes many proverbial hills and valleys. The hills lead us onto higher highs, making us feel happy and alive. The valleys catch us off guard, leading us sometimes to be sad and lonely. One of the valleys many married people have endured is the loss of a spouse. This loss can be the result of death or separation or divorce.

Our Church wants to walk with people (Catholic and non-Catholic) through these valleys. One way the Church does this is with the Beginning Experience weekend. It is a spiritual weekend designed to help people in throes of great loss to move through the stages of grief. If, while reading this, you are experiencing a “valley” in your life, please consider coming to our next Beginning Experience weekend.

A recent comment from a participant who thought she had resolved all her issues after her divorce might be worth mentioning. She shared, “My husband left me in late 1998, but our divorce was not finalized until 2000. I did not think I needed this retreat. I was OK. I was going for a friend who had been a widow for 5 years, she definitely needed this retreat. I realized by Saturday that I did need to be here. The Beginning Experience forever changed my life for the better. I have since grown and blossomed into a more self-assured woman.”

The next opportunity to attend a Beginnings Experience weekend is April 27-29 at Christ the King Retreat Center, in San Angelo. This weekend experience begins on Friday at 8 p.m. and ends on Sunday at 4 p.m. For $115, each participant has his/her own room at the Midland Country Club. Banquet tables of eight are available for $500, and individual tickets can be purchased for $75 per person. For more information, contact Fr. Mark Woodruff at 432.367.4657.

The Beginning Experience Team is committed to serve you in an effort bring about the healing grace of Christ in your life and the lives of your families.
**DIOCESAN DATES**

**Bishop’s Calendar**

APRIL
14 — SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels – 3:00 p.m. Mass for Criminal Justice Retreat
15 — OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation, 11 a.m.
20 — ODESSA, Holy Redeemer Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
21 — ODESSA, St. Elizabeth – Dicaconal Ordination of Francis Onyekozuru
22 — WALL, St. Ambrose – Confirmation at 9:00 a.m.
22-24 — AUSTIN, Meeting of Texas Bishops and Banquet of St. Vincent – Confirmation at 11:00 a.m.
25 — MIDLAND, St. Ann – Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.
26 — ROWENA, St. Joseph – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
27 — SAN ANGELO, CCD Awards Banquet at 6:30 p.m.
28 — MIDLAND, St. Ann – Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.
29 — BROWNWOOD, St. Ann Confirmation, 11:00 a.m.

MAY
1-2 — HOUSTON, Episcopal Ordination of Bishop George Sheltz
3 — BALLINGER, St. Mary – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
4 — ABILENE, Sacred Heart – Dicaconal Ordination of Lorenzo Hatch at 6:30 p.m.
5 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart – Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.
6 — SONORA, St. Ann – Confirmation at 10:30 a.m.
7-8 — HOUSTON, Kenedy Board Meeting
9 — MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
10 — ABILENE, Holy Family – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
11 — ODESSA, St. Elizabeth – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
12-13 — SAN ANTONIO, Premiere of Fr. Ted Pfeifer’s documentary
14 — OLFÉN, St. Boniface – Diaconal Ordination Sam Matthiesen at 6:30 p.m.
15 — ABILENE, St. Vincent – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
16 — BIG LAKE, St. Margaret – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
17 — ABILENE, Holy Family – Diaconal Ordination of Innocent Ezefule at 6:30 p.m.
19 — ODESSA, St. Joseph – Confirmation at 7:00 p.m.
20 — ANDREWS, O.L. of Lourdes – Confirmation at 10:30 a.m.
21 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Staff Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Staff meeting at 11:00 a.m.
22 — STANTON, St. Joseph – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
23 — MERTZON, St. Peter – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
24 — COLEMAN, Sacred Heart – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
25 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Priestly Ordination of Brother Martin Mary Hubbs, O.Carm. at 11:00 a.m.
26 — MIDLAND, O.L. Guadalupe – Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.
27 — ROWENA, St. Joseph – Mass for 50th Priestly Anniversary of Monsignor Bernard Gully at 9:30 a.m.
28 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Memorial Day Mass at 9:00 a.m.
29 — June 1, SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center – Priests Retreat

**Christ the King Retreat Center**

MAY
1 — Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
4-6 — Encounter the Cross Retreat
7 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
8 — Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
11-12 — First Methodist Church of Midland
14 — DRE, CRE Reflection Day
14 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15-18 — DOSA Good Leaders, Good Shepherds
18-20 — Engaged Encounter Weekend
20 — Natural Family Planning Class
21 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Grp
22 — Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
28 — Memorial Day Holiday – CKRC Office Closed
29 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Grp
29-31 — DOSA Priests Retreat

**Ethics Workshops**

None currently scheduled

**NECROLOGY JUNE**

8 — Rev. Felix Cubelos (2013)
28 — Bishop Stephen A. Leven (1983)

**From the Editor**

**The boy in the Seattle Mariners jersey**

By Jimmy Patterson / Editor

PEORIA, Ariz. — This space is often reserved for matters Catholic, or family or spiritual thoughts. Not this month. Although this story could easily fall under the universal topic of life’s goodness.

The scene was probably not all that unusual for spring training baseball. Maybe baseball, period. If it does happen often, it bears repeating. If it doesn’t, it needs to be told. What happened on a March Wednesday night in Peoria, Ariz., at the spring training complex home to the Seattle Mariners touched my heart and reminded me again why I love this game.

The kid was five, maybe six. He had over-the-ears length strawberry blonde hair with bangs that fell to his eyebrows. His cheeks were pudgy and his legs short, and he had eyes that danced when his team took the field. The Seattle Mariners’ jersey he wore came down to his knees. He sat with his dad on the top row of a section down the left field line, 275 feet from home plate.

My son, his two good friends and I pulled up a seat one section closer to home plate than the little boy and watched the game. It was one of those magical nights that embodies the allure of the game. Perfect temperature, maybe a shade cool; people everywhere but not too many. Kids with gloves hoping for that one shot at a foul ball. The sound of laughter and friendship filled the air.

Baseball at times seemed almost secondary. This was the sound of life at its richest.

Carlos Peguero, a second-year leftfielder for the Mariners, took the field every half inning and tossed the ball effortlessly to an unseen catching partner on the foul side of the line. As warm-up time ended before each new opposing batter stepped into the batter’s box, the little boy in the Mariners jersey made his way down the steps of the section to the front row and gently yelled out the outfielder’s name.

“Carlos! Carlos! Can you throw me the ball? Carlos? Could I have the ball?” I glanced at the boy’s father who sat and watched his boy try and talk a grown athlete out of a five-dollar baseball. He loved his kid, it was obvious. He said nothing to try and stop him,

(Please See Patterson/23)

**Del Escritorio del Obispo**

**Reflexiones sobre el sacramento de penitencia y reconciliacion**

“Pónganse en paz con Dios” 2 Cor. 5:20

por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

Para perdonar nuestros pecados y traernos a la misericordia de Dios, Cristo le ha dado a la Iglesia el hermoso Sacramento de Reconciliación—Penitencia. Comparto con ustedes algunas reflexiones sobre el Sacramento de Penitencia, Reconciliación para el perdón de nuestros pecados para ayudarnos a crecer en el amor de Dios en la vida espiritual. Este Sacramento es uno de los dos Sacramentos de sanación que Cristo ha dado a nuestra preciosa Iglesia Católica. Como hay mucho malaentendimiento sobre la eficacia e importancia de este Sacramento, y que hasta muchos católicos han abandonado la práctica de confesarse, es importante que regresemos a lo básico para tener un nuevo aprecio de este Sacramento que es sumamente importante para vivir como buenos católicos.

Les presento aquí unas de las enseñanzas que son dadas para nosotros por el Catecismo Católico. 1421 El Señor Jesucristo, médico de nuestras almas y de nuestros cuerpos, que perdonó los pecados al paralítico y le devolvió la salud del cuerpo, quiso que su Iglesia continuase, con la fuerza del Espíritu Santo, su obra de curación y de salvación, incluso en sus propios miembros. Esta es la finalidad de los dos sacramentos de curación: del sacramento de la Penitencia y de la Unición de los enfermos.

**EL SACRAMENTO DE LA PENITENCIA Y DE LA RECONCILIACION**

1422 “Los que se acercan al sacramento de la Penitencia obtienen de la misericordia de Dios el perdón de los pecados cometidos contra El y, al mismo tiempo, se reconcilian con la Iglesia, a la que ofrendaron con sus pecados. Ella les mueve a conversión con su amor, su ejemplo y sus oraciones.”

**EL NOMBRE DE ESTE SACRAMENTO**

1423 Se le denomina sacramento de conversión porque realiza sacramentalmente la llamada de Jesús...
God loves humans from the moment of their conception

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

It is our strong Catholic belief that at the moment of conception, a new, precious human life comes into being in the mother's womb. Modern medical research and technology each day more and more confirm this belief that all human life, even in its earliest stages, has a special dignity and sacredness because it contains the very image and likeness of God.

In his address to the Congress on Embryo, Pope Benedict XVI confirmed in a very clear and strong manner that God loves humans from the very moment of their conceptions. I share with you some of the reflections of Pope Benedict, which have been taken from a recent edition of Zenit.

Benedict XVI says that God's love for people does not depend on their age, which is why the Church defends their inviolable character from conception.

"The love of God does not distinguish between the newly conceived infant still in its mother's womb, the baby, the youth, the grown adult or the elderly, because in each of them he sees the sign of his own image and likeness," the Pope said as he addressed participants in a congress on the topic, "The Human Embryo before Implantation."

"About 350 scientists, doctors, bioethicists and theologians heard the Holy Father's words at the congress organized by the Pontifical Academy for Life. The two-day congress at the Vatican ends Tuesday.

"This unbounded and almost incomprehensible love of God for man shows to what point the human person is worthy of being loved for himself, regardless of any other consideration -- intelligence, beauty, health, youth, integrity, etc." Benedict XVI said.

"In short, human life is always a good, as it is a manifestation of God in the world, sign of his presence, radiance of his glory," the Pope told the gathering.

"To man, in fact, a very high dignity is given, which has its roots in the profound bond that unites him with his Creator: In man, in every man, in any phase or condition of his life, shines the reflection of the very reality of God," the Holy Father said.

"For this reason, the magisterium of the Church has constantly proclaimed the sacred and inviolable character of every human life, from its conception to its natural end," he indicated. "This moral judgment is already valid from the beginning of the life of an embryo, even before it is implanted in the maternal womb, which protects and nourishes it during nine months until the moment of birth."

Finally, the Pope invited the scientists and experts to cultivate an attitude of wonder and respect before the mystery of the origin of human life, a "mystery whose significance science will be increasingly capable of illuminating, although it will hardly be able to decipher it completely."

The Holy Father added: "We have improved our knowledge enormously and better identified the limits of our ignorance, but it seems that, for human intelligence, it has become too difficult to realize that the sign of the Creator is seen when contemplating nature."

"In reality, whoever loves truth should perceive that research on such profound topics makes it possible for us to see and almost touch the hand of God."

"Beyond the limits of the experimental methods," the Pope added, "at the confines of the area that some call meta-analysis, where sensorial perception and scientific tests are neither enough or even possible, that is where the adventure of transcendence begins, the commitment to 'go beyond.'"

Prophets of doom and gloom wrong on ‘population explosion’

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The population explosion that was predicted to happen about now by “population prophets” several decades ago simply has not happened. These prophets of doom and gloom would have our earthly home so full that people would be falling off the planet.

As regards the true facts of world population, I share with you some reflections that come from Life Insights [Sep/Oct. 2004] of the USCCB Secretariat for ProLife:

"It’s not a secret that fertility rates worldwide have plummeted in the past 30 years. The U.N. Population Division, numerous respected demographers, economists and social scientists have described this phenomenon in official publications, books, scholarly articles, and the popular press. Today the only sources which still warn of an impending population explosion are outdated American textbooks and diatribes from population control extremists and abortion ideologues.

Consider the demographic evidence:

- Global fertility rates are 50% lower than 1972-2.9 children per woman, down from 6 children per woman. They continue to fall at an increasing pace. For population to remain stable, the fertility rate must be 2.1 in nations with relatively low infant mortality and proportionately higher than 2.1 where greater numbers of children die in childhood from communicable diseases or malnutrition.

- Philip Longman, author of the new book “The Empty Cradle,” writes in Foreign Affairs (May/June 2004): “All told, some 59 countries, comprising roughly 44 percent of the world’s total population, are currently not producing enough children to avoid population decline, and the phenomenon continues to spread. By 2045, according to the latest UN projections, the world’s fertility rate as a whole will have fallen below replacement levels.”


- President Vladimir Putin calls Russia’s population loss of 750,000 people a year a “national crisis.” The yearly loss could increase to 3 million or more by 2050. And it is estimated that “Bulgaria will shrink by 38 percent, Romania by 27 percent, Estonia by 25 percent” (Meyer, above).

- Japan’s fertility rate of 1.3 children per woman will soon put the population into absolute decline. According to U.N. estimates, over the next four decades, Japan will lose a quarter of its 127 million people.

- China’s fertility rate has dropped from 5.8 children per woman to 1.3 (Chinese census data). “By 2019 or soon after, China’s population will peak at 1.5 billion, then enter a steep decline. By midcentury, China could well lose 20 to 30 percent of its population every generation” (Meyer, above).

Why are birthrates plummeting?

To start with, 46 million abortions occur annually, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute (http://www.agi usa.org/pubs/fb0599.html). More or less “effective” artificial contraception and widespread sterilization have greatly reduced birthrates, especially in those developing countries where coercion is used to reach population targets. UN data report that 62% of women of reproductive age who are married or “in union” are using some form of artificial birth control (Meyer).

But economic and “lifestyle” factors also can affect a family’s decision to have fewer children, for example:

1) Migration of families from farming areas – where children’s labor benefits the family – to urban centers where there’s no immediate economic incentive for having children

2) Women’s access to paying jobs in urban areas, and the reality that many have to work to help support the family

3) The continually rising cost of raising children: over $200,000 to age 18,

(Please See EXPLOSION/20)
Earth Day: A time to show respect for our biodiversity

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Earth Day, April 22, 2012, calls us to respect all life on planet Earth, especially human life. Today this respect for life is expressed in the term “biodiversity.” Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the great wealth of beings that live on planet Earth, as well as the delicate equilibrium of interdependence and interaction that exists between them and the physical environment that hosts and conditions them.

This biodiversity is translated into different ecosystems, of which examples can be found in forests, wetlands, savannah, jungles, deserts, coral reefs, mountains, seas and polar zones.

There are three imminent and grave dangers to biodiversity that require an urgent solution: climate change, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. The latter has been developing in recent years at an unprecedented rate. Recent studies indicate that on a worldwide level that mammals, amphibians, bird life and reefs are threatened or in danger of extinction.

Biodiversity is linked to human activity, our lifestyle and how we respect all life on planet Earth. Earth Day is a time for all of us, government, church, special interest groups families and individuals to seriously ask the question: How are we, how am I, providing for the care and stewardship of all life on planet Earth and what particular contribution can I make to enable all life on Earth to be preserved, increased and flourish?

Each day we are in contact with the beautiful nature that surrounds us. And we are called to respect and value the beauty of all creation, from the conviction that we experience peace and tranquility, renewal and reinvigoration, when we come in close contact with the beauty and harmony of nature. There exists in nature a certain reciprocity: as we care for creation, we realize that God, through creation, cares for us.

Earth Day is a day to remind ourselves how we are to care for our beautiful planet Earth that sustains our life needs and how we are to share in a loving way these gifts with others. All the goods of the Earth belong to all the people on Earth.

Seminary candidate talks of his understanding of the priesthood

(Publisher’s Note: What follows is a testimony of a 17-year-old young man who wants to begin his seminary studies as a priest for the Diocese of San Angelo. This young man, at an early age, shows much spiritual maturity and wisdom as he begins to live out his call to priesthood as a seminarian. I was very happy to approve him as a candidate for our seminarian program. I would ask those who read his testimony to pray for him and to share this with other young men. –Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI)

The holy priesthood, instituted by God the Father, portrayed and glorified by God the Son and kept alive by God the Holy Spirit, means so much to me. I have come to understand that the priesthood means more than just reciting words and listening to people’s problems. To me, the priesthood is chiefly about serving others, and being Christ to all. Being a part of this most sacred order, however, is not to be taken lightly. I understand how powerful and meaningful it is to be a priest for the Lord. Being a priest means giving up one’s life to serve God’s people, and to become the leader of a flock and a father to God’s children. One of the greatest images that stands out to me is when Jesus washed the feet of His apostles. I believe that is exactly how a priest should be...the poorest servant of the people. Being a priest is to be there for God’s children, to help them with their problems, to give them the sacraments, to help feed their souls, and to minister to them. Above all, to be a priest means sacrifice, prayer and service to the church, which needs men to give up their lives for Jesus Christ.

I began to think about the priesthood in middle school. This was the time when I began to realize the wonders of the Church and who Jesus really was. I began to hear a strong call during mass and especially during RE classes. The lessons in class really interested me and I felt a tugging at my heart. Ever since then, I have found that I have been very caring for other people, and gifted in sharing the faith with others.

By becoming a priest, I hope to contribute to the church in many ways. I pray that I would be someone who lets others know the meaning of life, that all you need is the love of Christ. I pray that I will be a humble man, whose generosity shatters darkness and gives people new hope. I want to give the church a new understanding of life and that we must love each other. There are so many things that I wish to contribute to the Church, some that I cannot express in words. But most of all, I hope to give the Church love, so that it may be shared with others.

I feel the priesthood can benefit me by teaching me what Christ’s love truly is. I also hope that I could gain wisdom from the many experiences that one encounters as a priest, and to learn from them. I know the priesthood will teach me many things and that these things will help me to become a better person, and a better servant of Christ.

Phillip Owen, 26, right, smiles at the beginning of the ordination liturgy at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago May 21 in this Catholic News Service file photo. About 440 men were ordained to the priesthood this year in the United States. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)
Retired diocesan priest Msgr. Frey recalls memories of service

By Msgr. Francis Frey

In 1946, I was just out of high school in Pittsburgh, Pa., working in a grocery store. In the produce area of the store, the ladies always desired to know when the “Pecos Cantaloupes” were coming in. They knew they were special. Later, in 1962, I found myself appointed to my first pastorate by Most Rev. T.J. Drury, at St. Agnes Parish, in Ft. Stockton, with the missions of St. Isidore, Coyanosa and Our Lady of Lourdes, Imperial and St. Ignatius, Little Mexico, just outside of Ft. Stockton, in Pecos County. Pecos County had belonged to the El Paso Diocese before it was made part of the new San Angelo Diocese and St. Agnes was a mission of St. Joseph’s Parish in Ft. Stockton.

Fr. James Franchi was the long time legend of St. Joseph’s. Now that St. Agnes was a parish Fr. Franchi kept the Mexican people as his parishioners and sent all the Anglos to St Agnes. St. James in Sanderson was the next nearest parish and Fr. Nicolas Feminia was the long time pastor there. Both Fr. Franchi and Fr. Feminia were revered by the members of their parish, and with good reason. They were influential members of the community. For instance, Fr Franchi was responsible for integrating the movie theater. St. Ignatius only had a weekday Mass and so I only had the parish and two larger mission churches to take care of on the weekend. Before long I had one vicar after another. The most notable was Fr. Herman Valledares (eventually pastor in Abilene). On Sundays he would take the missions and before I knew it he had them singing, especially at Our Lady of Lourdes Mission in Imperial. I can still hear his Sancta, Sancta Maria! Father Franchi died and was replaced by Fr. John Lucassen, the pastor of St. Joseph’s Odessa. Within a few years Fr. John went back to Odessa as the pastor of a new parish. He was replaced by Fr. Alvin Wilde. Fr. Al, a native West Texan, started the San Juan Festival and was known for leading a parade down Main Street riding a white horse. But more importantly he published a yearbook size history of St. Joseph’s. And I was assigned to St. Mary’s, Odessa.

While at St. Mary’s, Odessa, I had Sister Mary Andrew, a former principal of Bishop Stephen A. Leven, come to St Mary’s. She accepted whatever duty her parish in Crane during Fr. Sam’s time.

To build the new church, I had to find sufficient acreage. I felt 10 acres would be more than enough. I had just about given up hope when the Ft. Stockton Insurance Company offered to give me five acres outside for Sunday Mass. He also led one of my best altar servers, Fr. Michael Goode, to follow in his footsteps and become a member of the Precious Blood Fathers. The missions were taken over by the parish in Crane during Fr. Sam’s time.

I mentioned at the beginning about the Pecos Cantaloupe. I found that they were grown in the Coyanosa Farm area, and they were especially flavorful. Not only that but I found that west of Ft Stockton there are thousands of pecan trees grown. They were not sold locally but contracted for by large companies.

Ser Catolico — creer y practicar la fe

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

Ser Católico significa creer y practicar el evangelio de Cristo y las enseñanzas de la iglesia Católica. En cuanto a este tema les presento para su meditación una reflexión tomada del Misal Mensual para Julio 2001.

“Sí o NO”.

“Soy católico: creo en Dios, en Cristo y en la Iglesia”. ¡Cuántas veces lo oímos y decimos! Conocidos, amigos, profesores… hasta nosotros mismos olvidamos a veces lo que esto significa.

A diario escuchamos a personas reconociendo a Cristo, afirmando tener fe en Él, pero al mismo tiempo negando asistir a la misa dominical. El nuevo término introducido en nuestro lenguaje habitual: “católico no practicante”.

¿Qué significado le podemos otorgar a esto? ¿Es que existen dos clases de católicos: los “practicantes” y los “no practicantes”?

Esta es la nueva expresión, la forma de no vivir el cristianismo plenamente, es decir, de vivirlo solo en teoría.

Sin embargo, ¿se puede vivir la fe sin comprometerse con ella? ¿Se puede ser cristiano sin tener verdadera fe?

Será mejor corregir esa expresión, diciendo así: “bautizado, pero sin vivir la fe católica”. Aunque esto fuera un poco largo nos ayudaría a no confundir a la gente, a no igualar ideas contrarias y, lo más importante, a no engañarnos a nosotros mismos llamándonos católicos sin serlo.

No se puede vivir una vida a medias, no se puede ser cristiano a medias.

Si tenemos fe en algo, creemos, tenemos confianza y nos comprometemos con ello.

Ser católico significa no solamente creer pero practicar la fe católica.
Trust in God to bring change, pope tells Mexico

Pope’s message of non-violence bolstered by hope that Mary’s influence will bring fraternity and help set aside acts of revenge and banish hatred.

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

SILAO, Mexico -- Celebrating Mass in the Catholic heartland of Mexico, Pope Benedict XVI told a nation and a continent suffering from poverty, corruption and violence, to trust in God and the intercession of Mary to help them bring about a "more just and fraternal society."

"When addressing the deeper dimension of personal and community life, human strategies will not suffice to save us," the pope said in his homily during the outdoor Mass at Guanajuato Bicentennial Park March 25, the second full day of his second papal visit to Latin America. "We must have recourse to the one who alone can give life in its fullness, because he is the essence of life and its author."

Citing the responsorial psalm for the day's Mass -- "Create a clean heart in me, O God" -- the pope said that evil can be overcome only through a divinely inspired change of the human heart.

The pope made note of the monument to Christ the King visible atop a nearby hill and observed that Christ's "kingdom does not stand on the power of his armies subduing others through force or violence. It rests on a higher power that wins over hearts: the love of God that he brought into the world with his sacrifice and the truth to which he bore witness."

That message was consistent with Pope Benedict's frequently stated objections to strategies for social progress that blend Christian social doctrine with Marxism or other secular ideologies.

"The church is not a political power, it is not a party," the pope told reporters on his flight to Mexico March 23. "It is a moral reality, a moral power."

In his Silao homily, the pope did not specifically address any of Latin America's current social problems, but after praying the Angelus following the Mass, he recited a litany of ills plaguing Mexico and other countries in the region: "so many families are separated or forced to emigrate ... so many are suffering due to poverty, corruption, domestic violence, drug trafficking, the crisis of values and increased crime."

Speaking in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato, which was a stronghold of the 1920s Cristero Rebellion against an anti-clerical national regime, Pope Benedict recited the invocation that served as the Cristeros' rallying cry: "Long live Christ the King and Mary of Guadalupe."

But reaffirming his message of nonviolence, the pope prayed that Mary's influence would "promote fraternity, setting aside futile acts of revenge and banishing all divisive hatred."

The presidential candidates from Mexico's three main political parties attended the Mass, along with President Felipe Calderon and his family.

The Vatican said 640,000 people attended the Mass. Some Mexicans took long trips just to see Pope Benedict on his first trip to the country since being elected in 2005.

The journey was not easy for many. Thousands of the faithful walked more than three miles from parking lots in the town of Silao, 220 miles northwest of Mexico City.

"This is nothing too difficult," quipped Jose Trinidad Borja, 81, a retired hardware store owner from Queretaro who boasts of having participated in the annual eight-day diocesan pilgrimage to the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City for 65 straight years.

An army of vendors hawked water, coffee and tamales along the route in addition to Vatican flags and photos of Pope Benedict and his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II, who, with his five visits, became one of the most beloved figures in an officially secular country.

"With Benedict, I feel something indescribable," said Guadalupe Nambo Gutierrez, a retired secretary from Guanajuato City, who saw the pope in the colonial town March 24 and attended the Mass the following day.

Getting a ticket was another matter. Nambo won a raffle for some of the tickets the Archdiocese of Leon allotted to St. Joseph and St. James the Apostle Parish. Others simply decided to try their luck by showing up -- and many could be seen outside the Mass site behind barricades guarded by federal police officers.

Bishop Raul Vera Lopez of Saltillo said his diocese only received its allotment of 2,500 tickets 10 days before the Mass, making it difficult for parishes to plan trips for churchgoers. Still, all the tickets were claimed and more than 6,500 requests were made.

Most of those coming from Saltillo, in northern Mexico, traveled overnight and were expected to return immediately after the Mass. Some parishes opted not to send people to the Mass because of concerns about security along the route.

"We hope that things calm a little after this visit," said Silao resident Jorge Morales as he walked to the Mass.

The previous evening, after a brief appearance before a crowd in Guanajuato's main square, Pope Benedict privately greeted a group that included eight people who have lost relatives to violence, much of it drug-related, which has killed nearly 50,000 Mexicans over the last five years.

Addressing his remarks there particularly to local children, the pope called on "everyone protect and care for children, so that nothing may extinguish their smile, but that they may live in peace and look to the future with confidence."

On several previous international trips, Pope Benedict has met with local victims of clerical sex abuse, but no such meeting has been announced for this visit.

On March 24, sex abuse victims of the late Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, founder of the Legionaries of Christ, held a press conference to present a new book criticizing the Vatican's failure to act against Father Maciel, whom Pope Benedict eventually disciplined and posthumously repudiated.
Catholic Voices

Protecting religious freedoms: A duty not just of the bishops

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

It was a few weeks ago when I heard something I have not heard in any church in the last few decades: a letter from the bishop read from the pulpit.

Then there was something I never recall ever hearing: the congregation’s applause for this letter from the bishop.

The name of the diocese will go unmentioned (in the hope that it is not all that unusual). The bishops’ letter dealt with the religious freedom aspect of the federal mandate requiring Catholic and other institutions to provide items in their health insurance plans that are against their moral belief.

The applause seemed evidence that this bishop’s message was understood as more than just a single issue. It dealt with the ability to practice our faith.

A question remained however. How can this enthusiasm be translated to the broad membership of the church, to deal not only with this current issue but to become an effective force, one that must be reckoned with in the public square?

The first sign may come when headlines such as "bishops oppose" or "bishops say this and that" fade from the public to be replaced with "Catholics demand religious freedom" or "Catholics stand up for the right to life."

Public life is a duty not just for the bishops. Catholic participation in the political process is not great.

One reason for the hesitancy may be a misunderstanding that churches are forbidden to do so. This is not the case.

Churches and other nonprofit organizations are granted tax-free status by the Internal Revenue Service. Since this is a privilege -- not a right -- in accepting this status, organizations agree to neither endorse candidates nor take partisan positions.

A church cannot encourage or discourage a vote for any candidate. It can, however, speak to issues, including those that may be on the ballot. In clearly presenting church teaching about issues, it can provide information to allow persons to make critical decisions about how a candidate stands with the teaching. It may be political without being partisan.

We acquiesce too much to the separation of church and state or to the idea that the church can’t be involved in politics. We are not imposing our morality on others.

The role of a bishop is to teach principles; the role of the laity is to be involved and bring a religiously informed conscience to the public square.

"Bishops don’t claim to speak for every baptized Catholic," Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George wrote in a recent message. "Bishops speak, rather, for the Catholic and apostolic faith. Those who hold that faith gather with them; others go their own way.

"They are and should be free to do so, but they deceive themselves and others in calling their organizations Catholic."

It was good that day to hear the applause, but when the applause fades and the pews empty, and the congregation goes once again into the world, that is the time to accept the obligation to be faith-informed and bring the teaching of the church to the political scene.

(Comments are welcome. Email Uncle Dan at cnsuncle01@yahoo.com)

Hunger Games more than just a movie — it’s reality for millions

By Dan Morris
Catholic News Service

It depends on whose statistics you prefer, but it is pretty reliable to say that about a dozen children die of hunger-related causes every minute of every day.

So, in the time it took you to read this far, a child died, maybe two.

You may well be aware of this. However, I mention it because last Sunday’s homily at our parish was intentionally brief to make room for a somewhat lengthy, comedic role-play presentation seeking pledges for a $7 million project to build a new church.

Within moments of the end of the “money talk,” we parishioners responded in unison, "Hear our prayer" for the first prayer petition — a request we pray for the countless children in the world who would starve to death that day. We were told that number would be more than 16,000.

Yes, I am going to wander into the bottomless-pit question: Is it better to build churches or to feed the starving? I admit I once harbored great sympathy for those of us who argue we can do both. Not only that, but that we should do both.

Legendary advocate of the poor Dorothy Day is famously quoted as saying that even the poor deserve and need places of beauty in which to worship.

I do not disagree.

I do, however, question the timing.

I wonder if it might be better for us Catholics to sit tight where we possibly can for as long as we can with the churches we already have. I wonder if a starving child would prefer a peanut butter sandwich or a gilt-framed color portrait of Dorothy Day.

I wonder if we should flood parish halls with worshipers if we do not have enough priests to schedule more Masses.

I wonder if we should attend Mass in barns or warehouses or under umbrellas as a witness to Gospel poverty and take a stand in favor of Jesus’ clear admonition: love God, love and serve neighbor.

If someone you or I do not even know was to knock on our door and collapse from starvation, what might we do?

For a moment, leave out the option of dialing 911.

At a minimum, one hopes we might offer food, drink and shelter. How can we not see that we do, in reality, have thousands of starving brothers and sisters right now at our front door?

That front door might be the evening news or a Catholic Relief Services magazine or a computer screen — but the starving are knocking.

In weak moments, I confess I wish the pope would auction off some of the Vatican art treasures and earmark the proceeds for feeding those who are about to die.

It might make some of us question our second and third televisions, our desire for a new car, our focus on being "in style."

Yet it is too easy to make feeding the malnourished the pope’s job. It is our obligation and duty and joy.

If you read at a moderate pace, like me, about two dozen children died of hunger-related causes in the time it took you to read this.

(Comments are welcome. Email Uncle Dan at cnsuncle01@yahoo.com)
**Embracing the frog — not the prince — within yourself**

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

I spent several years teaching a class of 4-year-old preschoolers, so I wasn't surprised when the priest pulled the fuzzy green toy frog out of his bag.

The frog has a big, smiling zipper mouth. I've seen the old frog-to-prince trick and it's a good one. When the frog is pulled inside out, a purple-robbed prince with a golden crown emerges. The frog has disappeared.

But it was the priest's words that stuck with me. They contained a truth I believe, and yet it's a truth that is sometimes hard to accept.

"You know, most of us spend our lives trying to be princes and princesses," he said. "But it's the frog within us that people really respond to."

"How true. I've spent some time trying to be a princess, and I think that goes for most of us. We worry about the image we convey. We can be consumed with "what shall I wear?" when headed to a special event. We rue a bad hair day, have a bag of make-up tricks and fear that people will notice a few extra pounds.

Who hasn't worried about that initial reaction when entering a room?

Men want to be princes, too. Like women, they worry about the impression they create with their image, their title, the car they drive, the house they show off, the kids they brag about.

"We want to exude a sense of success. We don't want to be the failure. We don't want to be the frog."

The poor frog, after all, gets kissed fleetingly as we make our way to the prince.

But think about the people in your life. Imagine that you are suddenly in dire trouble and need a true friend. Would you care about the clothes that person wears, or would your choice revolve around her integrity, wisdom and faithfulness?

Make a mental list of the most influential people in your life. Did their little bodies or impressive title have the tiniest thing to do with their place on your list?

Usually the people at the top of our life's list of greatest folks are the ones who, like a comfortable old shoe, wear well with the years. They don't call attention to themselves. They're the ones who are always available and don't mind you popping in when their house is dirty and they're in their sweatpants with the hole in the knee.

The greatest people are the ones who walk into a room worrying about who they'll see, not how they look.

They are happy to have you cry on a shoulder that isn't covered by this year's best cashmere.

The people on your list aren't obsessively fashionable or successful by the world's standards. They worry about more important things.

Ultimately, they're more like Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, or Jesus.

Did Jesus die a prince? No, Jesus died as a crucified, tortured criminal, a man executed by the state.

So here's to answering the call of Jesus, who never yielded to the need for success or prestige but died a failure in the world's eyes and a model of faithfulness for all of us.

---

**Humor, education needed for unity, peace**

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

Without a doubt, one of today's most battered virtues is tolerance.

Religious groups often are intolerant of one another. Members of Congress frequently demonstrate they can't stand each other. Countries we shed blood to protect want no part of us. Bigotry abounds when discussion arises about immigrant families being allowed into the United States.

The air we breathe is not only ecologically polluted, but it is also filled with toxic inhuman fumes of intolerance, narrow-mindedness, racism and prejudice.

Tolerance means to bear, to put up with one another, to allow and to permit. It is a prized virtue, the basis for peace and unity we desire for our country, our families and businesses.

Helen Keller, an American author and the first deaf and blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree, once said, "The highest result of education is tolerance."

I'm not talking about school. Earning an A in school does not make a person educated. We are educated when we view an issue from many sides, when we are open-minded, docile and admit we don't know everything.

We are educated when we have cultivated introspection, when we don't jump to conclusions and admit mistakes.

Author W. Somerset Maugham points to another aspect of tolerance: "You are not angry with people when you laugh at them. Humor teaches tolerance."

Expanding on this idea, the renowned theologian Father Romano Guardini tells us: "One other thing is required by kindness, something of which we rarely speak -- a sense of humor. It helps us to endure things more easily.

"Indeed we could hardly get along without it. The person who sees man only seriously, only morally or pedagogically, cannot endure him for any great length of time. We must have an eye for the oddity of existence."

He goes on to add: "Everything human has something comic about it. The more pompously a man acts, the greater is the comic element. A sense of humor means that we take man seriously and strive to help him, but suddenly see how odd he is, and laugh, even though it be only inwardly. A friendly laugh at the oddity of all human affairs -- this is humor. It helps us to be kind, for after a good laugh it is easier to be serious."

To this we can add: It also makes us tolerant.

Most of the intolerance we are experiencing can be traced to a lack of education and a loss of a sense of humor.

These two ingredients are imperative for purifying the present toxic atmosphere of intolerance that exists and to generate the unity and peace needed to restore our mental health.
Federal mandates and the crushing of fundamental religious freedom

By Father Tad Pacholczyk

On Jan 20th, 2012 the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a mandate placing first amendment rights and religious freedom in the crosshairs.

The mandate, as a provision of ObamaCare, requires “preventive health services” to be covered by all health insurance issuers and all group health plans. Those insurance plans must provide (with no co-pay) the full range of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved contraceptive methods for women. These include not only surgical sterilizations, but also potential abortion-causing agents, such as Plan B (the morning-after pill), intrauterine devices (IUDs) and another form of “emergency contraception” known as Ella. This drug, which the FDA acknowledges may also work against the life of the embryo “by preventing attachment (implantation) to the uterus,” can be taken up to 5 days after “unprotected” sex.

Essentially all employers would thus be forced — and therefore complicit in — financially subsidizing pharmaceutical abortions, contraception and sterilization procedures for their employees. All these procedures represent sinful and damaging human choices, as the Catholic Church has never ceased to point out.

The mandate constitutes a direct intrusion into the religious works and governance of the Church and represents a federally-sponsored violation of her members’ consciences. The Church, as the largest provider of not-for-profit health care in the US, operates roughly 600 hospitals and employs three-quarters of the entire provider of not-for-profit health care in the US, operating hundreds of thousands of others in her educational and social service ministries.

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago aptly described the authoritarian environment being created by the HHS mandate in one of his recent newspaper columns: “The bishops would love to have the separation between church and state we thought we enjoyed just a few months ago, when we were free to run Catholic institutions in conformity with the demands of the Catholic faith, when the government couldn’t tell us which of our ministries are Catholic and which not, when the law protected rather than crushed conscience. The state is making itself into a church.”

In the words of another commentator, “As is more and more obvious, ObamaCare has nothing to do with controlling healthcare costs. It has everything to do with government control. It's time to admit a mistake, repeal the law, and look at market-based ways to control health care costs.”

Critics of every persuasion have condemned the HHS mandate as a particularly egregious violation both of religious freedom and the rights of conscience. “I side with those who feel this was an insult to freedom of religion and a slap in the face of faith-based institutions,” Rabbi Eliot Pearlson of Temple Menorah in Miami Beach said.

Rabbi Dr. Michael Kormann of Congregation Anshei Shalom in West Palm Beach concurred: “The entire contraception policy was poorly instituted. It appears to be in violation of our first amendment.”

Jessica Devers in a Letter to the Editor of the Wall Street Journal perhaps put it most clearly when she wrote: “I am not Catholic. I am a social liberal and a supporter of Planned Parenthood. I’ve educated my children about birth control since they were young. Nevertheless, I am offended at the arrogance of our government ruling that the Catholic Church must provide a benefit that the church believes is immoral.”

On February 10, after stormy reaction even from President Obama’s staunchest Catholic supporters, he announced a so-called “accommodation,” which — as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops quickly explained — really changed nothing. When the government documents were made available, it became clear that there was no compromise at all but rather some slight procedural modifications that left the substance of the mandate entirely intact.

The day the “accommodation” was announced, in fact, the mandate was entered into the Federal Register with no changes, along with vague assurances of possible modifications at a future date (reminiscent of Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s famous line when campaigning for ObamaCare: “We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it.”)

Philip Rovner in the same issue of the Wall Street Journal sums it up this way: “The …promise in favor of the birth-control mandate is based on [its] being ‘essential to the health of women and families.’ I assume such items as food, housing, clothing and transportation are ‘essential to the health of women and families,’ as well. Therefore, I propose that the ObamaCare mandates be extended to cover food, shelter, clothing, autos, etc. In this scenario, everybody would be paying for everyone else's essentials…”

The real issue, of course, has nothing to do with access to particular “reproductive issues” (like abortion or birth control), and everything to do with whether someone else can be forced by the strong arm of a federal mandate, in direct violation of their religious freedom, to pay for practices they recognize as morally reprehensible.

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.ncb-center.org

A Letter From the USCCB

US bishops promise to continue vigorous fight against HHS violations

San Angelo Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, in full agreement with statement by US bishops, which declares, in part, that government has no place defining religion or religious ministry.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops are strongly united in their ongoing and determined efforts to protect religious freedom, the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) said in a statement March 14.

The Administrative Committee, chaired by Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the USCCB, is the highest authority of the bishops’ conference outside the semiannual sessions of the full body of bishops. The Committee’s membership consists of the elected chairmen of all the USCCB permanent committees and an elected bishop representative from each of the geographic regions of the USCCB.

The bishops’ full statement can be found at www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/Admin-Religious-Freedom.pdf

The Administrative Committee said it was “strongly unified and intensely focused in its opposition to the various threats to religious freedom in our day.” The bishops will continue their vigorous work of education on religious freedom, dialogue with the executive branch, legislative initiatives and efforts in the courts to defend religious freedom. They promised a longer statement on the principles at the heart of religious freedom, which will come later from the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty.

The bishops noted that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that forces all private health plans to provide coverage of sterilization and contraceptives — including abortion-inducing drugs — called for an immediate response. Of particular concern, they said, are a religious exemption from the mandate that the bishops deem “arbitrarily narrow” and an “unspecifed and dubious future' accommodation” offered to other religious organizations that are denied the exemption.

The bishops thanked supporters from the Catholic community and beyond “who have stood firmly with us in our vigorous opposition to this unjust and illegal mandate.”

“It is your enthusiastic unity in defense of religious freedom that has made such a dramatic and positive impact in this historic public debate.”

The bishops said this dispute is not about access to con

(Please See USCCB/22)
BROWNWOOD — On March 10, several members of MOTC attended the Baptism and Confirmation of eight residents at the Ron Jackson TJJD Facility in Brownwood after several months of sacramental preparation by MOTC members. This was a joyful day as this process began with the annual MOTC Retreat at the facility last November. Since then residents, mostly from Catholic families, have come forward asking to be prepared for baptism into the Catholic Church. Many had ‘slipped between the cracks’ when parents had fallen away from practicing the faith. The residents had learned what they knew about the faith from their abuelitas (grandmothers), who never ceased praying for them, trying to share the faith with their grandchildren. After several months of individual visitations and monthly group reunions the residents were ready to be baptized. The Bishop was notified. Permission was given by the pastor of St. Mary’s in Brownwood. Diocesan particular law allows for this.

MOTC members Fr. Tom Barley and Deacon Andy Gonzalez were the ministers of the Sacraments. Other MOTC members served as sponsors for those receiving the Sacraments. The residents were given First Communion veils made by a member of MOTC. Only one parent was able to attend the celebration. A reception was held for the residents following the Reception into the Church. “Mystagogia,” a continued religious formation and education of the residents, will continue as long as these new Catholics are in the facility. MOTC planned to go back to the facility sometime around Easter to celebrate Mass with the Catholic residents and will continue to meet with the Catholic residents during their monthly reunion visitations.

We especially thank Chaplain Allison Voss for her support in making this event coming to fruition.

The March 10 date was selected as some of the residents who had attended the MOTC Retreat were starting to be released. One resident being prepared to Baptism and Confirmation was released from the facility days before March 10. Another was released a few days after that date. Once back in the general population the former residents will face temptations, hardships, and prejudice. MOTC remembers that the only person who Jesus Christ said would be with him in Paradise was a thief known as “the Good Thief” – St. Dismas. Your prayers are requested for these new Catholics.
Pope Benedict visits Mexico, Cuba

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Havana — Preparing to leave Cuba at the end of a three-day pastoral visit, Pope Benedict XVI made his first reference to the U.S. embargo of the island and the embargo’s impact on the country’s poor.

All Cubans need to work together to build a renewed and reconciled society, but progress is difficult given a “lack of material resources, a situation which is worsened when restrictive economic measures, imposed from outside the country, unfairly burden its people,” the pope said March 28 during his official farewell ceremony. He did not mention the United States by name.

The ceremony was moved indoors at the last minute because of a sudden rain storm.

Pope Benedict XVI carries his pastoral staff after celebrating Mass in Revolution Square in Havana March 28. During the service the pope called for full religious freedom and greater respect for human rights in Cuba. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope Benedict XVI visited Cuba on March 26. (CNS photo/L’Osservatore Romano)

A choir sings during Pope Benedict’s Mass in Revolution Square in Havana March 28. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope Benedict XVI wears a traditional Mexican sombrero, in Leon, Mexico, March 25. (CNS photo/L’Osservatore Romano)

Pope Benedict XVI arrives at Jose Marti International Airport in Havana March 27. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

A boy holds a Cuban flag with a portrait of Fidel Castro behind him as he watches Pope Benedict XVI’s caravan make its way to the airport in Havana March 28. (CNS photo/Luca Silva, Reuters)

Clockwise from center photo, Pope Benedict XVI carries his pastoral staff after celebrating Mass in Revolution Square in Havana March 28. During the service the pope called for full religious freedom and greater respect for human rights in Cuba. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope Benedict XVI visits Cuba on March 26. (CNS photo/L’Osservatore Romano)

A choir sings during Pope Benedict’s Mass in Revolution Square in Havana March 28. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope Benedict XVI wears a traditional Mexican sombrero, in Leon, Mexico, March 25. (CNS photo/L’Osservatore Romano)

Pope Benedict XVI arrives at Jose Marti International Airport in Havana March 27. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

A boy holds a Cuban flag with a portrait of Fidel Castro behind him as he watches Pope Benedict XVI’s caravan make its way to the airport in Havana March 28. (CNS photo/Luca Silva, Reuters)

Pope Benedict XVI visits Mexico, Cuba

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Havana — Preparing to leave Cuba at the end of a three-day pastoral visit, Pope Benedict XVI made his first reference to the U.S. embargo of the island and the embargo’s impact on the country’s poor.

All Cubans need to work together to build a renewed and reconciled society, but progress is difficult given a “lack of material resources, a situation which is worsened when restrictive economic measures, imposed from outside the country, unfairly burden its people,” the pope said March 28 during his official farewell ceremony. He did not mention the United States by name.

The ceremony was moved indoors at the last minute because of a sudden rain storm.

The Vatican repeatedly has criticized the U.S. embargo as a measure that has not forced Cuba’s communist government to respect human rights, but instead has had a devastating effect on the Cuban people, especially the poor.

The pope said that peaceful coexistence requires individuals and nations to “reject immovable positions and unilateral viewpoints, which tend to make understanding more difficult and efforts at cooperation ineffective.”

“Patience and sincere dialogue” are necessary, he said.

Before departing from Havana’s Jose Marti International Airport for his return flight to Rome, Pope Benedict told government officials and the Cuban public that he was convinced that, wherever Jesus Christ is present, “discouragement yields to hope, goodness dispels uncertainties and a powerful force opens up the horizon to beneficial and unexpected possibilities.”

He said he hoped his presence in Cuba would strengthen those who “with perseverance and self-sacrifice” carry out the work of evangelization.

And he said he hoped no Cuban would feel excluded from taking up the “exciting search for his or her basic freedoms” or feel excused from the challenge because they lack energy or resources.

While the pope said his message was motivated by faith and the desire to share it, he insisted that societies themselves are better off when people are free to profess their faith and when faith-based schools and social services are allowed to operate.

He prayed that the light of faith would shine on Cuba, helping people “to foster social harmony and to allow the blossoming of all that is finest in the Cuban soul, its most noble values, which can be the basis for building a society of broad vision, renewed and reconciled.”

Several miles of the main road leading to the airport were lined with crowds several people deep. A few waved Vatican or Cuban flags, but they did not demonstrate the wild enthusiasm shown for the pope’s motorcade in Mexico just a few days earlier. Civilians with their backs to the road provided crowd control as the pope passed by in the popemobile and it began to rain.

Pope Benedict XVI visits Mexico, Cuba

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Havana — Preparing to leave Cuba at the end of a three-day pastoral visit, Pope Benedict XVI made his first reference to the U.S. embargo of the island and the embargo’s impact on the country’s poor.

All Cubans need to work together to build a renewed and reconciled society, but progress is difficult given a “lack of material resources, a situation which is worsened when restrictive economic measures, imposed from outside the country, unfairly burden its people,” the pope said March 28 during his official farewell ceremony. He did not mention the United States by name.

The ceremony was moved indoors at the last minute because of a sudden rain storm.

The Vatican repeatedly has criticized the U.S. embargo as a measure that has not forced Cuba’s communist government to respect human rights, but instead has had a devastating effect on the Cuban people, especially the poor.

The pope said that peaceful coexistence requires individuals and nations to “reject immovable positions and unilateral viewpoints, which tend to make understanding more difficult and efforts at cooperation ineffective.”

“Patience and sincere dialogue” are necessary, he said.

Before departing from Havana’s Jose Marti International Airport for his return flight to Rome, Pope Benedict told government officials and the Cuban public that he was convinced that, wherever Jesus Christ is present, “discouragement yields to hope, goodness dispels uncertainties and a powerful force opens up the horizon to beneficial and unexpected possibilities.”

He said he hoped his presence in Cuba would strengthen those who “with perseverance and self-sacrifice” carry out the work of evangelization.

And he said he hoped no Cuban would feel excluded from taking up the “exciting search for his or her basic freedoms” or feel excused from the challenge because they lack energy or resources.

While the pope said his message was motivated by faith and the desire to share it, he insisted that societies themselves are better off when people are free to profess their faith and when faith-based schools and social services are allowed to operate.

He prayed that the light of faith would shine on Cuba, helping people “to foster social harmony and to allow the blossoming of all that is finest in the Cuban soul, its most noble values, which can be the basis for building a society of broad vision, renewed and reconciled.”

Several miles of the main road leading to the airport were lined with crowds several people deep. A few waved Vatican or Cuban flags, but they did not demonstrate the wild enthusiasm shown for the pope’s motorcade in Mexico just a few days earlier. Civilians with their backs to the road provided crowd control as the pope passed by in the popemobile and it began to rain.
Message of ‘October Baby’ hits home for star

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- Actress Shari Rigby sat right across from her interviewer, her legs crossed. On the instep of her right foot was a tattoo of a flower. She was asked what it was.

"Her name would have been Lily," Rigby answered, "and so that's there to remind me."

She was talking about the baby she had aborted 20 years ago.

Rigby plays a relatively small part in the new movie "October Baby," but it's a pivotal role: She plays the birth mother of Hannah (Rachel Hendrix), but Hannah was born as the survivor of a botched abortion; Hannah's twin brother only survived a handful of days after the abortion attempt.

But the kicker is that brother directors Andrew and Jon Erwin, when they sent Rigby the script for her consideration, had no idea she had ever undergone an abortion.

In fact, Jon Erwin told Catholic News Service, it wasn't until after the movie had been shown to several focus groups that Rigby went in front of the camera again to address moviegoers about her own abortion experience, which has been added to the film's closing credits.

"There are millions and millions of post-abortive women out there," Erwin said.

"October Baby," which debuts March 23 in about 360 theaters, details the revelation to college student Hannah about the circumstances of her birth, which is ultimately revealed to her through a series of flashbacks.

While the film's primary message serves as a means to discuss important spiritual and moral issues, Rigby also says it is her personal coping mechanism to help deal with her decision.

"I thought, 'Okay, that's why we do it,'" Rigby said. "...Whenever I get really scared or really frightened by that, I think, 'Oh, but I did it for this.'"

(Please See RIGBY/20)

Fair doesn't necessarily always mean equal

By Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

It can seem to most parents that the first complete sentence their darling says is "That's not fair!"

It's a cry moms and dads hear early and often and, despite knowing that life is not fair, they may attempt to make their children's lives equal.

But they can't. You can't.

It can help to remind yourself, at a calm time before you're in the next thick of a "discussion" on fairness and unfairness, that just as each of your children is unique, so are his or her needs and abilities.

Yes, you love them. Yes, you want what's best for them. While love is immeasurable, giving "what's best for him and what's best for her" can seem different when placed side by side.

How children love to place those actions, those decisions -- your actions, your decisions -- side by side. It's not too tough to point out that your 10-year-old gets two cookies for dessert but your 5-year-old gets one. (Two are one too many for a child that size.)

It's tougher, a lot tougher, if an older sister got her driver's license when she was 16 and now, as a younger brother approaches that age, you know he's not ready to handle that kind of responsibility.

Just as our heavenly Father doesn't give each of us identical strengths, talents, and gifts, a parent has to recognize that an individual child's strengths, talents, and gifts -- and an individual child's needs -- can be a lot different from his or her siblings.

That can be pretty obvious if one of your children has special needs. If, because of a mental, physical, or emotional concern, he or she needs more of your time, energy, and sometimes even family finances, it's easier to grasp.

The daughter who does well in school needs you to be nearby if she has a question about homework but can finish assignments quickly, easily, and almost independently. The daughter who has a learning disability needs you by her side at the kitchen table, night after night, for an hour or more.

Not equal, but fair.

Or, another example: you want your children to eat nutritiously and you pay attention to their diets but have to be more vigilant when it comes to the one who has a food allergy.

Again, not equal, but fair. And more than fair, it's right.

Making your children's lives equal wouldn't be fair -- or right. Just as treating one child differently from the other just because of personal preferences -- one is easier to get along with while the other is more challenging, for example, wouldn't be fair or correct.

What's a parent to do?

Here are two suggestions:

First, during a calm time, talk to your child about why a sibling needs more of your time, attention, or part of the household budget. Explain why, while one of their siblings may receive a privilege at a particular age, (that driver's license or later curfew), doesn't mean the younger ones will automatically be given it when they reach that age.

Second, pay attention to each child, making sure to spend quality time with each. It can be too easy to overlook the quiet, dependable child when the other sibling is often causing so much parental concern.

On the Web: Kids and Allowances KidsHealth.org has some suggestions on making allowances fair but not equal. Go to: http://tinyurl.com/fairnotequal.

Your Family

Learning to trust one of life’s most frightening tasks

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service

Nearly everything frightens us in life. We fear dying; we fear failure and a host of little things such as public speaking. But faith always protects us against fear.

My mother was a saint, but she also was a worrier. The two are not mutually exclusive. I often picked up on her vibes. As a result, I was usually more fearful than I should have been. I had to work through my fears at an early age.

My dad gave me good training when it came to getting rid of physical fear.

When I was small, he would invite me to stand on his right hand, which he put down on the floor. Then, holding on to his left hand, I would step up, and he'd raise me up over his head, and say "Now I'm going to let go of your hand, but don't be afraid, I won't drop you. Stand up straight. If you feel that you're going to fall, just fall forward onto my arm."

He would then let go and if I got wobbly, he tilted me toward his outstretched arm and I'd fall on it and swing down. We'd do that over and over, until I had no fear of falling. When he held me high above his head, my mother had fits, but my dad told her not to worry.

At the beach, we would walk around like that and attract lots of attention. This became our routine. If I ever lost my balance, he would always catch me and swing me down gently. I got a sense that he enjoyed this gymnastic feat as much as I did.

He would always say, "Don't be afraid, I won't drop you," and he never did.

I learned to have faith in my dad's promises.

Somehow, over the years, the memory of his reassurance morphed into a feeling that God the Father was saying the same to me. Certainly the words of Jesus: "Fear is useless, what you need is trust." My translation: "Do not be afraid, I'm right here to catch you."

I think of elderly women alone at home, living on a restricted income, men who have lost their jobs and are unable to find work, students afraid about the future.

There are always plenty of things to worry about, things that stop us in our tracks. But don't be swept away.

There is always faith. There is always divine grace.
The Angelus APRIL 2012  Page 15

JUST 4 KIDS

Mary discovers Jesus’ empty tomb

By Joe Sarnicola

On the first day of the week, so early in the morning that the sun had not yet risen, Mary of Magdala visited the tomb where Jesus had been laid. When she arrived, she discovered that the huge stone that sealed the tomb had been moved and the tomb was open. And it was empty.

Mary immediately ran to find Peter, who was with one of the other apostles, and said to him, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

The two men ran with Mary back to the tomb, to see for themselves what had happened. Peter went into the tomb and found the burial clothes that Jesus had been wrapped in, and they were rolled up in a pile inside the tomb. The two men and Mary did not yet understand that, according to the Scriptures, Jesus had to rise from the dead.

Later that same day, two men who had been followers of Jesus were walking to Emmaus, a village not far from Jerusalem. They were talking about the events that had happened over the past few days when a man joined them and asked them a question.

“What are you discussing as you walk along?”

One of the men, whose name was Cleopas, looked at the man with sadness in his eyes and answered, “Are you the only visitor there in these days?”

“What sort of things?” the man asked.

One of the men said, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him.”

After the men explained that three days had passed since Jesus had died they added, “Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body.”

The man scolded them: “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

Later the man joined the men for a meal, and after he had said a blessing, he revealed to them that he was Jesus and immediately disappeared.

Psst ... spreading rumors not the way to get to the top

By Karen Osborne

Catholic News Service

It's time for another presidential election in the United States, which means it's also time for another barrage of nasty campaign ads.

Sure, those under 18 can't vote, but by the time you're finally able to pick your choice in a ballot box, 18 years' worth of political rhetoric will have already influenced how you see the world.

If today's politicians have anything to say about it, you'll probably see rumormongering and innuendo as a great way to get what you want.

Today's local and national candidates sometimes use rumors, true or not, to achieve their agendas. It doesn't matter if you're talking about Republicans, Democrats, Greens or Pirates (yes, the Pirate Party is real).

Candidates have used rumors and scaremongering against opponents to advance their desires and wishes for the country.

It seems that destroying one another for political gain is practically an American tradition.

Mean campaign ads are nothing new. Lyndon Johnson's campaign in 1964 ran an ad that inferred that nuclear war would occur unless Johnson was elected.

An attack ad by one Florida politician called his opponent "Taliban Dan" because of the opponent's voting record on women's issues.

Candidates have used creepy music from the TV show "The Twilight Zone" to influence viewers' political tastes.

Even the nation's Founding Fathers got in on the act. During the 1800 general election, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams hired "hatchet men" in an attempt to discredit each other, and said things so malicious about each other that I

(Please See OSBORNE/20)
Cuban official involved in the planning of Pope Benedict XVI's papal visit to Cuba was more complicated, said a spokesman for coordinating Pope Benedict's visit was compounded by a Cuban's poor internal economic situation.

"Cuba, as a sovereign nation, is not separate from the rest of the world," Gabriel told Catholic News Service. "We are not a developed country but, just like other nations of the world, we have felt the effects of this financial-economic crisis of recent years."

Although private-property laws changed soon after President Raul Castro took office in 2006, creating an increase in small businesses, the economy is lagging, Gabriel said.

"We have been dragging along the economic aftermath of three strong financial impacts in our history," said Gabriel, referring to the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba since 1962, a sudden 1989 drop in European contracts, and the most recent global economic crisis.

Cuba has no ministry of religious affairs, said Gabriel. However, for events like the papal visits, teams are composed using personnel from several agencies.

"Right here in this room, we have colleagues from foreign relations, communications, transportation, and other ministries," he said. "We come together as needed, because here there is no continuous use of resources for religious matters, having a secular government."

By Wallice J. de la Vega

Catholic News Service

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Cuba (CNS) -- In many respects, the coordination of Pope Benedict XVI's papal visit to Cuba relied on the experience from the 1998 visit of his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II.

Blessed John Paul visited four cities in five days. Although Pope Benedict visited two cities in three days, in some ways this trip was more complicated, said a Cuban official involved in the planning.

Marcos Gabriel, coordinating official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigned to oversee the Santiago portion of the March 26-28 papal visit, also worked on the 1998 trip.

He told Catholic News Service March 28 that for multiple-location events, like the two papal visits, the Cuban central government sets up separate teams that organize individually and coordinate jointly.

Although the 1998 visit meant a larger set of expenditures and manpower provided, in part, by the state, the shorter lead time -- three months from Vatican confirmation -- for coordinating Pope Benedict's visit was compounded by a

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Hundreds of people gathered March 23 in front of U.S. courthouses, statehouses sites for religious freedom rallies cannot be silent when it comes to human rights.

"We are here because the faith community must stand up and tell the government not to tread on our religious freedoms. We must organize, contribute and fight for the right to worship God the way we choose to do so," said Kathryn Slaats, who came with a busload of people from St. Patrick Parish in Malvern, Pa.

"We want to tell the government not to contradict the prevailing view that a majority of U.S. women support the contraceptive mandate," said Kathryn Slaats, a registered nurse at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a member of Holy Cross Parish in Mount Airy, Pa., was passing out literature at the rally, sponsored the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in conjunction with organizations connected with the pro-life movement.

"It is important to me as a health care provider to have those conscience clauses that will protect me as an individual in accordance with my conscience and not having to go against my conscience," she told The Catholic Standard & Times, Philadelphia's archdiocesan newspaper.

"We are here because the faith community cannot be silent when it comes to human rights and we will never comply with an unjust order that violates our faith."

In Philadelphia, the rally took place outside of Independence Hall, the birthplace of American liberty. A large percentage of the 2,300 participants were women, which seemed to contradict the prevailing view that a majority of U.S. women support the contraceptive mandate.

Michelle Griffin, a registered nurse at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a member of Holy Cross Parish in Mount Airy, Pa., was passing out literature at the rally, sponsored the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in conjunction with organizations connected with the pro-life movement.

"This time it's Catholics, but it won't stop there," she added.

Two Catholic obstetricians/gynecologists from Omaha, Neb., who were visiting San Francisco to learn techniques of microsurgery to repair fallopian tubes to restore fertility, attended the rally. "We know there is better health care available that doesn't involve abortion and contraception because we practice it daily," Dr. Christine Cimo-Hemphill told Catholic San Francisco, the archdiocesan newspaper.

"The fact that we have to be here today -- in this day and age -- fighting for our rights is unbelievable," said George Wesolet, director of the San Francisco archdiocesan Office of Public Policy and Social Concerns and a rally speaker. "We are not going to be confined to the walls of our church. Our faith tells us to go out and serve others, no matter what."

In Portland, Ore., Jim Stair, 68, a member of Clackamas Bible Church, was among 300 people who rallied in front of the federal courthouse.

"The president needs to re-read the Constitution," he told the Catholic Sentinel, Portland's archdiocesan newspaper. "The First Amendment provides freedom of religion. Anything the government does to violate that is unconstitutional."

Health care law supporters rally on the sidewalk outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington March 26 as oral arguments take place inside the court on challenges to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. (CNS photo/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters)

Courthouses, statehouses sites for religious freedom rallies

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Hundreds of people gathered March 23 in front of U.S. courthouses, statehouses sites for religious freedom and protest a federal mandate they say violates that freedom by requiring most religious employers to provide no-cost contraceptive coverage even it is contrary to their beliefs.

All of the events, held at noon local time in 143 cities, were part of a nationwide "Stand Up for Religious Freedom" rally organized by the Pro-Life Action League in Chicago and Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, based in Michigan. About 58,000 people participated, according to organizers.

The website http://standupforreligionsfreedom.com lists the crowd size for all cities. Spokesman Tom Cieselka told Catholic News Service March 27 that numbers reported on the national site were gathered from local media estimates and, where available, counts verified by local city or park officials.

In Washington, a rally was held in front of the Washington headquarters of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Rev. Patrick Mahoney, a minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church who is director of the Christian Defense Coalition, opened it with a prayer.

"We are here not with clenched fists but in humility before God," he said, urging the crowd of about 2,000 to kneel on the paved area in front of the HHS building.

"We are here because the faith community cannot be silent when it comes to human rights and we will never comply with an
Our Faith

Do marriage and sex exist in heaven?

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. After decades of a really good marriage, my partner has passed away, and I have some questions. Is there marriage in heaven? Does the one who is in heaven have a special link with the one who is still alive? When both of them have died, will there be a particular relationship between them in the context of perfect happiness? (A small town in upstate New York)

Q. In a recent column, when asked whether pets go to heaven, you said that if you need your pet to be happy in heaven, you can be sure they will be there. That begs this question: If the physical body gets resurrected and spouses meet in heaven, will sex continue to be a part of their life? (I know this points beyond itself to a reality that is not material, but I would really like an answer.) (Virginia Beach, Va.)

Fr. Doyle

Paul that "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9).

We are reduced, then, to speculation. But our speculation must begin with what we know, which is that a similar question was once asked of Jesus.

In Matthew 22:23-30, some Sadducees, in an attempt to ridicule the belief of the Pharisees in an afterlife, posed to Christ the problem of seven brothers who had been married successively to the same woman -- the issue being whose wife she would be in heaven. Jesus said, "At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven."

Resurrection means not just resuscitation, a return to the bodies we currently experience. In heaven, our bodies will no longer be mortal or vulnerable, nor will we need to worry about the survival of the species or the continuation of a family name.

But at the same time, it seems logical that a special relationship would continue into eternity between a man and woman married on earth. There is, in the marriage relationship, a quality of transcendence that points beyond itself to a reality that is divine.

We are made in the image of the Trinitarian God, a divine whirlwind of self-giving love, and I can well imagine that a couple will find their ultimate fulfillment in rejoicing together before the face of God, which is the ecstasy hinted at in all earthly intercourse.

Q. I am 94 years old and live in a nursing home with the meals furnished. Must I abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent, or may I eat what the home is serving? (Marion, Ohio)

A. Canon No. 1253 of the Code of Canon Law gives national conferences of bishops wide latitude in determining the observance of fasting and abstinence.

In the United States, the bishops have "preserved for our dioceses the tradition of abstinence from meat on each of the Fridays of Lent, confident that no Catholic Christian will hold himself lightly excused from this penitential practice."

Whereas the discipline of fasting (one full meal a day, no eating between meals -- applicable on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) binds only those between the ages of 18 and 59, abstinence (refraining from meat) covers those who are 14 or older.

Death penalty: a life issue with no room for error

By Father Peter J. Daly
Catholic News Service

What percentage of Catholics know that the church opposes abortion? Probably 100 percent.

What percentage of Catholics know that the church opposes capital punishment? I bet hardly anybody.

We are vigorous in our defense of innocent life, but it is a lot harder to defend the lives of people who may be guilty of terrible crimes.

Abortion is, of course, a much larger issue. There are more than a million abortions every year in the U.S., while there have been about 1,300 executions in the U.S. since 1976, when the death penalty was reinstated.

While the death penalty is a smaller (by the numbers) problem than abortion, it is still a contradiction of our value of life. The church tries to be consistently pro-life.

In the 1980s, the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin challenged us to see all life issues as part of a "seamless garment."

In 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote, "The Gospel of Life." In it, he said the death penalty could only be justified when there was absolutely no other way for society to defend itself.

"Today... such cases are very rare if not practically nonexistent," he wrote.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that public authority should limit itself to "bloodless means" of punishment if they are sufficient to defend human live and protect "public order."

Laterly, in our parish, we have heard two powerful personal testimonies as our state, Maryland, is debating becoming the 17th state to abolish the death penalty.

We heard from Kirk Bloodsworth, a man who spent nine years on Maryland's death row. He was convicted of the horrific killing of a 9-year-old girl in 1984. It was a crime he did not commit.

Bloodsworth is a former Marine who had never been in trouble with the law until he was arrested for the killing after witnesses testified they saw him in the area of the crime.

DNA results released in 1992 led to his exoneration. Bloodsworth was the first prisoner exonerated from death row by DNA results. Since his release there have been more than 200 prisoners proven not guilty by DNA tests and about 20 of them were on death row.

While in prison, Bloodsworth became a Catholic. He found spiritual solace in the church. Today he spends his time trying to end the death penalty and trying to free others who have been wrongly convicted.

Our Holy Father’s 2012 Monthly Intentions

APRIL

General Intention: Vocations. That many young people may hear the call of Christ and follow him in the priesthood and religious life.

Missionary Intention: Christ, Hope for Africans. That the risen Christ may be a sign of certain hope for the men and women of the African continent.

MAY

General Intention: The Family. That initiatives which defend and uphold the role of the family may be promoted within society. .

Missionary Intention: Mary, Guide of Missionaries. That Mary, Queen of the World and Star of Evangelization, may accompany all missionaries in proclaiming her Son Jesus.

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.

Answers from Kids Puzzle (Pg. 15)

Culture

‘October Baby’ honorable effort at spreading message of value of life

NEW YORK (CNS) -- "Every life is beautiful." That's the tagline -- as well as the underlying theme -- of the thoroughly honorable, if not always fully effective, drama "October Baby."

After she collapses on stage during the opening night of a college play, freshman Hannah Lawson (Rachel Hendrix) winds up in the hospital and on the receiving end of two pieces of staggering news: She learns first, that her devoted parents -- mom Grace (Jennifer Price) and dad Jacob (John Schneider) -- adopted her as an infant. And second, that she's the survivor of an attempted abortion.

As her doctor explains, the latter fact accounts for the chronic medical problems that have long plagued Hannah and that culminated in her blackout.

Devastated and bewildered by this sudden revelation, Hannah sets out in search of her birth mother, Cindy (Shari Rigby). She's accompanied on her journey by Jason (Jason Burkey), her best friend since childhood. He's arranged for them to hitch a ride with a group of fellow students who are off to New Orleans for Mardi Gras.

In their feature debut, brothers Andrew and Jon Erwin helm a strongly pro-life message movie whose import viewers dedicated to the dignity of all human beings will welcome unanimously. Opinions about the aesthetic package in which they wrap their point, however, may be more divided.

The spring break-style odyssey on which Hannah and Jason tag along is obviously intended to provide some much-needed light relief. But only some of the comedy centering on the expedition's leader, disheveled but good-hearted B-Mac (Chris Sligh), works.

Instead of being kept in sharp focus, Hannah's potentially poignant vulnerability on discovering that she was unwanted -- and that her very existence was treated as disposable by her own mother -- gets diffused amid more conventional expressions of teen angst and confusion.

Families should talk about film before sending teens off to ‘Hunger Games’

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Though presumably targeted -- at least in part -- at teens, the dystopian adventure "The Hunger Games" (Lionsgate) involves enough problematic content to give parents pause.

Responsible oldsters will want to weigh the matter carefully before giving permission for clamoring kids to attend.

At first glance, the depressingly futuristic premise of the piece -- inherited from Suzanne Collins' best-selling trilogy of novels, on the first volume of which the film is based -- makes it seem unlikely fare for a youthful audience.

In a post-apocalyptic North America, have-not youngsters from oppressed outlying districts are chosen at random to participate in the titular event, a televised survival tournament staged each year for the entertainment of the decadent elite who populate their society's luxurious capital city.

Since combatants are forced to battle one another -- and the hostile wilderness environment in which the games are set -- until only one remains alive, the fearful ordeal also serves to keep the once-rebellious, now cowed underlings intimidated.

Director and co-writer Gary Ross' script, penned in collaboration with Collins and Billy Ray, tracks two teens caught up in this gladiatorial horror show. As early scenes reveal, Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson) was selected in the usual way. Heroine Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence), by contrast, altruistically volunteered herself as a substitute after her vulnerable younger sister Primrose's (Willow Shields) name was drawn.

What follows, as this sympathetic duo confronts their doom, is an effective combination of epic spectacle and emotional drama during which humane values are pitted against Darwinian moral chaos.

Invariable media coverage, led by smarmy TV host Caesar Flickerman (Stanley Tucci), and the wildly off-kilter values of the foppish upper crust, embodied by Peeta and Katniss' nannylke escort Effie Trinket (Elizabeth Banks), satirically mirror some darker aspects of our own time.
Rhonda Legg and Monica Minzenmayer co-chaired the committee in charge of planning the annual Spaghetti Dinner/Bake Sale/Prize Drawings sponsored by the Rowena Catholic Daughters — Court Our Lady of Grace #1734, on February 26. Proceeds go to the charitable and service projects of the court on the local, state and national level.

“Los Pequeñíos Hijos De Maria” is a group of servers who work together from different parishes of the diocese, including Odessa, Midland, Brady, San Angelo, Brownwood, Pecos and Presidio, Las Cruces and Carlsbad, NM (El Paso Diocese), Eastland (Fort Worth Diocese). Los Pequenos serve under the guidance of Rev. Mark Woodruff of SEAS in Odessa. Spiritual Directors are Deacon Jesse Guajardo from Our Lady of Guadalupe in Midland and a Lay Preacher — Francisco Araujo from Cautemo, Mexico. This particular weekend of March 3-4, LP met for one of their bi-annual workshops for Spiritual Growth and Formation.
OSBORNE

(From 17)

Miracles happen. Prayer works. Be calm. You will survive this as you have everything before this. Most of our worst nightmares never come to pass. Learn to laugh at yourself more. Brush it aside. Turn your worries over to your Father in heaven. Trust him and him alone. Be patient. You've gotten through worse. When the sun comes out, the snow melts. Remain patient in your trust. If you fall, the Lord will catch you. He will always be there for you. Trust is the love answer. Don't leave home without it.

May the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of Our Blessed Mother Mary and all the saints, and may what good you do or suffering you endure lead to the remission of your sins, the increase of grace and the gift of everlasting life.

EXPLOSION

(From 4)

excluding college, according to the Department of Agriculture
5) young people spending more years in higher education to meet the demands of a more highly skilled workforce, which delays the average age of marriage and increases their education debt (de Marcellus)
6) the later average age of marriage, resulting in lower fertility among women and a shortened period of child-bearing in marriage (de Marcellus)
7) divorce
8) sexually-transmitted diseases which can impair fertility are at epidemic levels due to multiple partners
9) materialism and consumerism, fueled by advertising and television
10) radical feminist ideology that measures women's worth solely by the acquisition of money and power, and denigrates their contributions to family life.
As demographers examine declining birthrates worldwide, economists are beginning to raise the alarm about what this portends for the future economic health of nations when there will be far fewer workers contributing to the programs which support a growing population of the elderly.

To bring clarity to the concern of population and poverty, I quote here the wise words of Pope Benedict XVI in his World Day of Peace message, January 1, 2009: “Population is an asset, not a problem. Poverty is often considered a consequence of demographic change. For this reason, there are international campaigns afoot to reduce birth-rates, sometimes using methods that respect neither the dignity of the woman, nor the right of parents to choose responsibly how many children to have; graver still, these methods often fail to respect even the right to life. The extermination of millions of unborn children, in the name of the fight against poverty, actually constitutes the destruction of the poorest of all human beings. And yet it remains the case that...whole peoples have escaped from poverty despite experiencing substantial demographic growth. This goes to show that resources to solve the problem of poverty do exist, even in the face of an increasing population.”

Obviously, the benefits of raising children transcend economics. Children are a source of joy, love, and hope. They transform and sanctify their parents. Our society and our world need to recover an appreciation for the gift of children whose presence is needed now more than ever.
Publisher’s Note: Earlier this year I made an urgent appeal to the people of the Diocese of San Angelo asking them to write to their government officials about the administration’s decision to force Catholic employers and insurers to provide coverage for immoral practices such as drug-induced abortions, sterilizations and contraception. Below is a letter from the 9th grade CCD class from St. Mary, Star of the Sea, in Ballinger, who contacted their senator about this critical issue. — Bishop Pfeifer

Dear Senator,

We write this letter strongly encouraging you to support legislation that would reverse the presidential administration’s decision that would force all Catholic employers to offer their employees health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs and contraception. During Sunday Mass, our priest, Father Wade, read a letter from our Bishop, Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, of the San Angelo Diocese, referring to this ruling. We had a discussion and explanation of what the letter meant to us at the beginning of our CCD class. As we began this lesson from our textbook, the first Bible verse read was, “May he open your heart to his law and his commandments and grant you peace (2 Macabees 1:4).” We were unfamiliar with the Book of Macabees, so we opened the Bible and started reading about a “government” coming into a country and taking over the religious liberties of its people. We were moved that God had guided us to the Bible to find out how wrong it is for a government to take control of the religious beliefs of the people. We decided, as a class, to take a stand for our freedom of religion and write this letter to you.

This ruling by the administration casts aside the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, denying to Catholics our nation’s first and most fundamental freedom: that of religious liberty. This ruling would force Catholics either to violate our conscience, or to drop health coverage for employees — and suffer the penalties for doing so. Please support legislation that reverses this unjust policy.

Thank you and God Bless You,

9th Grade Class
St. Mary, Star of the Sea Catholic Church
Ballinger, Texas

Carrie Salazar
Gabriella Martinez
Hailey Esquivel
Jessica Good
Chelsea Zoliver
Felix Martinez
Julie Fischer
Caroline Toliver (teacher)

GOSPEL

(From 1)

“We need to tell our children that there are worse things that can happen to you than getting pregnant,” Thorn said.

Thorn, founder of the Project Rachel Post-Abortion Support Ministry keynoted the Gospel of Life Conference, co-sponsored by the Knights of Columbus National Headquarters. Thorn noted that one in three women have had at least one abortion by age 45.

“We all know someone who has had an abortion,” she said. “There is a reason the Pro-life movement is incredible and impassioned and it’s not because it’s a philosophical debate. If it were we’d all be polite. It’s a heart issue and because it’s a philosophical debate. If it were we’d all be polite. It’s a heart issue and because it is, everyone feels compassion and we have to recognize that. We have to understand the opposition, many of whom are walking wounded, women who have had their own abortion.”

Thorn said women carry cells in them from every child they ever conceive for at least 40 years.

“These cells are everywhere in their body and are active. It is physically impossible for her to forget the children that have been in her womb.

“No child is a mistake and we need to tell that. We don’t need to tell them if they come home pregnant they’re outta here. They need to know if they become pregnant we’ll stand with you.”

The conference was co-presented by San Angelo Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, who also spoke briefly on the devastating effects of abortion, as well as on his recently completed ad limina visit with Pope Benedict XVI in Rome.

Bishop Pfeifer announces death of his sister

Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer announced March 30 the death of his sister, Angela Kapeller following a long illness.

Bishop Pfeifer issued the following memo to priests, women religious and deacons in the diocese:

It is with great sorrow that I advise you of the death of my dear sister, Angela Kapeller, who died this morning in San Antonio. She was residing there with her daughter and her daughter’s husband, Mary and L.P. Long. She lived most of her life in Corpus Christi.

At the same time, in a spirit of faith, I rejoice that my dear sister has been taken to her final home of peace and joy in heaven, a home for which we all hope and pray. My sister had been very ill for the past several years so it is the consolation of faith to now see her no longer suffering and is forever at peace.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of my dear sister and for God’s comfort and hope for her children and all family members including myself and my brother, Father Ted Pfeifer, OMI.

Thank you all for this special remembrance.

I wish you all a blessed and joyful Easter with our Risen Savior. Christ’s resurrection is what gives us all great hope for the future.

In Christ and Mary,
Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer.

(Ms. Kapeller’s funeral Mass was celebrated Wednesday, April 4, 2012, at St. Andrews Church by the Sea, 14238 Encantada Ave., Padre Island.)

Sister Grace Dominic, of the recently formed Sisters of Life in New York, also spoke to the Gospel of Life attendees May 24 at Angelo Catholic School in San Angelo.
It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."

It is called the sacrament of Reconciliation, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother."

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1422 "Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offenses committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.

WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1423 It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.

1424 It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

1425 "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." One must appreciate the magnitude of the gift God has given us in the sacraments of Christian initiation in order to grasp the degree to which sin is excluded for him who has "put on Christ." But the apostle John also says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And the Lord himself taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses," linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.

1426 Conversion to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish." Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls concupiscence, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life.

This is the struggle of conversion directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.

WHY A SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AFTER BAPTISM?

1427 Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.

Conversion to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish." Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls concupiscence, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life.

This is the struggle of conversion directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.

THE CONVERSION OF THE BAPTIZED

1428 Christ's call to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.

Conversion to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish." Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls concupiscence, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life.

This is the struggle of conversion directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.

INTERIOR PENANCE

1430 Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sack-cloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the conversion of the heart, interior conversion. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.

1431 Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called animi cruciatus (affliction of spirit) and compunctio cordis (repentance of heart).

1432 The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart. Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him: "Restore us to thyself, O Lord, that we may be restored!" God gives us the strength to begin anew. It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear offending God by sin and being separated from him. The human heart is converted by looking upon him whom our sins have pierced.

Let us fix our eyes on Christ's blood and understand how precious it is to his Father, for, poured out for our salvation, it has brought to the whole world the grace of repentance.

USCCB

(From 10)

The bishops called the HHS mandate "an unwarranted government definition of religion," with government deciding who is a religious employer deserving exemption from the law.

"The introduction of this unprecedented defining of faith communities and their ministries has precipitated this struggle for religious freedom," the bishops said. "Government has no place defining religion and religious ministry.

"If this definition is allowed to stand, it will spread throughout federal law, weakening its healthy tradition of generous respect for religious freedom and diversity."

The bishops said the government's foray into church governance "where government has no legal competence or authority" is beyond disturbing. Those deemed by HHS not to be "religious employers," the bishops said, "will be forced by government to violate their own teachings within their very own institutions. This is not only an injustice in itself, but it also undermines the effective proclamation of those teachings to the faithful and to the world."

The bishops also called the HHS mandate "a violation of personal civil rights." The new mandate creates a class of people "with no conscience protection at all: individuals who, in their daily lives, strive constantly to live in accordance with their faith and values," the bishops said.

"They too face a government mandate to aid in providing 'services' contrary to those values whether in their sponsoring of, and payment for, insurance as employers; their payment of insurance premiums as employees, or as insurers themselves - without even the semblance of exemptions," the bishops said.

"Government has no place defining religion and religious ministry. This is not only an injustice in itself, but it also undermines the effective proclamation of those teachings to the faithful and to the world."

"The bishops called the Catholic faithful, and all people of good will throughout the nation to join them in prayer and penance "for our leaders and for the complete protection of our First Freedom - religious liberty."

"Prayer is the ultimate source of our strength," the bishops said, "for without God we can do nothing. But with God all things are possible."
a la conversión, la vuelta al Padre del que el hombre se había alejado por el pecado. Se denomina sacramento de la Penitencia porque consagra un proceso personal y ecle- sial de conversión, de arrepentimiento y de reparación por parte del cristiano pecador.

1424 Es llamado sacramento de la confesión porque la declaración o manifestación, la confesión de los pecados ante el sacerdote, es un elemento esencial de este sacramento. En un sentido profundo este sacramento es también una “confesión”, reconocimiento y alabanza de la santidad de Dios y de su misericordia para con el hombre pecador.

Se le llama sacramento del perdón porque, por la absolución sacramental del sacerdote, Dios concede al penitente “el perdón y la paz”.

Se le denomina sacramento de Reconciliación porque otorga al pecador el amor de Dios que reconcilia: “Dejaos reconciliar con Dios”. El que vive del amor misericordioso de Dios está pronto a responder a la llamada del Señor: “Ve primero a reconciliarte con tu hermano.”

**POR QUE UN SACRAMENTO DE LA RECONCILIACIÓN DESPUÉS DEL BAUTISMO**

1425 “Habéis sido lavados, habéis sido santificados, habéis sido justificados en el nombre del Señor Jesucristo y por el Espíritu de nuestro Dios.” Es preciso darse cuenta de la grandeza del don de Dios que se nos hace en los sacramentos de la iniciación cristiana para comprender hasta qué punto el pecado es algo que no cabe en aquel que “se ha revestido de Cristo”. Pero el apóstol San Juan dice también: “Si decimos: ‘no tenemos pecado’, nos engañaremos y la verdad no está en nosotros” y el Señor mismo nos enseñó a orar: “Perdona nuestras ofensas”, uniendo el perdón mutuo de nuestras ofensas al perdón que nos concederá a nuestro pecados.

1426 La conversión a Cristo, el nuevo nacimiento por el Bautismo, el don del Espíritu Santo, el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo recibidos como alimentos nos han hecho “santos e inmaculados ante él”, como la Iglesia misma, esposa de Cristo, es “santa e inmaculada ante él”. Sin embargo, la vida nueva recibida en la iniciación cristiana no suprimió la fragilidad y la debilidad de la naturaleza humana, ni la inclinación al pecado que la tradición llama concupiscencia, y que permanece en los bautizados a fin de que sirva de prueba en ellos en el combate de la vida cristiana ayudados por la gracia de Dios. Esta lucha es la de la conversión con miras a la santidad y la vida eterna a la que el Señor no cesa de llamarnos.

**LA CONVERSIÓN DE LOS BAUTIZADOS**

1427 Jesús llama a la conversión. Esta llamada es una parte esencial del anuncio del Reino: “El tiempo se ha cumplido y el Reino de Dios está cerca; convertíos y creed en la Buena Nueva”. En la predicación de la Iglesia, esta llamada se dirige primordialmente a los que no conocen todavía a Cristo y su Evangelio. Así, el bautismo es el lugar principal de la conversión primera y fundamental. Por la fe en la Buena Nueva y por el Bautismo se renuncia al mal y se alcanza la salvación, es decir, la remisión de todos los pecados y el don de la vida nueva.

1428 Ahora bien, la llamada de Cristo a la conversión sigue resonando en la vida de los cristianos. Esta segunda conversión es una tarea interrumpida para toda la Iglesia que “recibe en su propio seno a los pecadores” y que siendo “santa al mismo tiempo que necesitada de purificación constante, busca sin cesar la penitencia y la renovación”. Este esfuerzo de conversión es la regia. Es el movimiento del “corazón contrito”, aflicción del espíritu, penitencia permanecen estériles y engañosas; sin embargo, la vida nueva recibida en la iniciación cristiana no suprimió la fragilidad y la debilidad de la naturaleza humana, ni la inclinación al pecado que la tradición llama concupiscencia, y que permanece en los bautizados a fin de que sirva de prueba en ellos en el combate de la vida cristiana ayudados por la gracia de Dios.

1429 La conversión a Cristo, el nuevo nacimiento por el Bautismo, el don del Espíritu Santo, el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo recibidos como alimentos nos han hecho “santos e inmaculados ante él”, como la Iglesia misma, esposa de Cristo, es “santa e inmaculada ante él”. Sin embargo, la vida nueva recibida en la iniciación cristiana no suprimió la fragilidad y la debilidad de la naturaleza humana, ni la inclinación al pecado que la tradición llama concupiscencia, y que permanece en los bautizados a fin de que sirva de prueba en ellos en el combate de la vida cristiana ayudados por la gracia de Dios. La conversión es la de la vida con la esperanza de la misericordia divina y la confianza en la ayuda de su gracia. Esta conversión del corazón va acompañada de dolor y tristeza saludables que los Padres llamaron “animi cruciatus” (aflicción del espíritu), “compunctio cordis” (arrepentimiento del corazón).

1430 Como ya en los profetas, la llamada de Jesús a la conversión y a la penitencia no mira, en primer lugar, a las obras exteriores “el saco y la ceniza”, los ayunos y las mortificaciones, sino a la conversión del corazón, la penitencia interior. Sin ella, las obras de penitencia permanecen estériles y engañosas; por el contrario, la conversión interior impulsa a la expresión de esta actitud por medio de signos visibles, gestos y obras de penitencia.

1431 La penitencia interior es una reorientación radical de toda la vida, un retorno, una conversión a Dios con todo nuestro corazón, una ruptura con el pecado, una aversión del mal, con repugnancia hacia las malas acciones que hemos cometido. Al mismo tiempo, comprende el deseo y la resolución de cambiar de vida con la esperanza de la misericordia divina y la confianza en la ayuda de su gracia. Esta conversión del corazón va acompañada de dolor y tristeza saludables que los Padres llamaron “animi cruciatus” (aflicción del espíritu), “compunctio cordis” (arrepentimiento del corazón).

1432 El corazón del hombre es rudo y endurecido. Es preciso que Dios dé al hombre un corazón nuevo. La conversión es primamente una obra de la gracia de Dios que hace volver a él nuestros corazones: “Convértenos, Señor, y nos convertiremos”. Dios es quien nos da la fuerza para comenzar de nuevo. Al descubrir la grandeza del amor de Dios, nuestro corazón se estremece ante el horror y el peso del pecado y comienzan a temer ofrecerá Dios por el pecado y verse separado de él. El corazón humano se convierte mirando al que nuestros pecados traspasaron.

1433 Tengamos los ojos fijos en la sangre de Cristo y comprendamos cuán preciosa es a su Padre, porque, habiendo sido derramada para nuestra salvación, ha conseguido para el mundo entero la gracia del arrepentimiento.

**PATTERSON**

(From 3)

dad just letting his son be a kid, and the kid doing a marvelous job of being just that.

With each passing inning the boy returned to his seat with no ball from Carlos. Each inning, dad became more and more eager for his son’s success.

The scene played out for about five innings. Each time, the boy would plead and Carlos the leftfielder would toss the ball off the field to the unseen ballpark employee. And each time Carlos ignored the little boy, the fans in the section, none of whom appeared to even know the young boy, would roundly boo the burly villain in leftfield.

Until the top of the ninth. Carlos took his position and began gently lobbing the ball to his partner in catch, just like he had done eight times before that night. The boy decided to give it one more try. Just like he had done all night long. Down the steps he walked until he reached the barrier separating the regular fans from the sequestered athletes.

The announcer read the name of the first batter.

“Carlos! Carlos! Could I have the ball?” the boy yelled out once more. But this time, things were different. This time, Carlos turned to the boy. He reared back his arm and as he did, everyone in the section rose, wanting to claim the prize the little boy had wanted for their own. Instead, it seemed, everyone just wanted to be the one to catch the ball and, if the boy needed any help, be the one to give that help.

Carlos saw the fans stand in anticipa-
tion of his throw. And he waved them all off. And with his glove hand, he pointed at the little boy.

Everyone sat down. And Carlos tossed the ball to the child. It bounced a time or two and a man sitting nearby reached down and picked the ball up, and handed it to the boy in the Mariners’ jersey.

The kid turned and headed back to his dad. And as he did, he walked through a crowd of maybe 100 fans who had watched it all unfold. All of them rose, wanting not to claim the prize the little boy had wanted for their own. Instead, it seemed, everyone just wanted to be the one to catch the ball and, if the boy needed any help, be the one to give that help.

Carlos saw the fans stand in anticipa-
tion of his throw. And he waved them all off. And with his glove hand, he pointed at the little boy.

**DALY**

(From 17)

The second story we heard was from Sister Helen Prejean, the nun who wrote "Dead Man Walking" a best-seller that was made into a movie. She says she was an ordinary Catholic who never thought much about the death penalty until she began corresponding with Patrick Sonnier, a man on death row in Louisiana.

He was convicted of killing two teenagers during a horrible crime. She wound up walking with him as his spiritual adviser as he was taken to his execution.

Both cases teach us the value of mercy and forbearance.

In Bloodsworth’s case, if the state had taken his life, it would have been an outrageous miscarriage of justice. In Sister Helen’s case, while the man was guilty, his death did not bring peace to her or to some family members of the victims.

The death of another person does not give us peace, nor does it allow room for error, conversion or reconciliation.

As we approach Good Friday, the day when our Savior was unjustly executed by the state, it is a good time to think about the death penalty.

Christ’s death was the greatest miscarriage of justice in history. It is the ultimate testimony that should make Christians consider the death penalty as a life issue.
Meeting with Pope Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict XVI poses for a photo with bishops from Texas during a March 16 meeting during *ad limina* visits to the Vatican. From left are: Auxiliary Bishop Mark J. Seitz of Dallas; Auxiliary Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel of Dallas; Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas; Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio; Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio; Pope Benedict; Bishops Patrick J. Zurek of Amarillo; Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo; James A. Tamayo of Laredo; Kevin W. Vann of Forth Worth; and Placido Rodriguez of Lubbock. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano) (March 16, 2012)

Texas Bishops Patrick J. Zurek of Amarillo, Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo and Kevin W. Vann of Forth Worth concelebrate Mass with other bishops from Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas in the crypt of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican March 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring) (March 15, 2012)

Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo, Bishop Placido Rodriguez of Lubbock, Bishop Edward J. Slattery of Tulsa, and Bishop James A. Tamayo of Laredo, wait for the start of a meeting with bishops from Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas at the Congregation for Clergy March 16 during their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican. (CNS photo/Paul Haring) (March 16, 2012)