Economic crisis fueled by greed

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Every day in the news there are stories illustrating the challenging economic times we face. The list of those suffering from the economic crisis is long. More people are losing jobs or having their hours or incomes reduced. Many are not able to provide for their family’s basic needs, and many more are accessing community resources seeking help. People have lost their homes or are in fear of losing them in the future, companies have declared bankruptcy or are closing down. Churches and Religious Communities have also suffered losses.

(Please See CRISIS/17)

Bishop responds to swine flu

Bishops from around the world responded in various ways to the global outbreak of swine flu, each according to how the disease affected their area.

At press time in early May, San Angelo Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, said he did not feel it necessary to take extraordinary measures such as suspending Communion from the cup and placing the host on the tongue, or advising against shaking hands during the Sign of Peace.

“First and foremost, I ask prayers for those who have been afflicted with this illness,” Pfeifer said. “Let us also pray that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our health experts, with the cooperation of all of us, will be able to prevent this illness from spreading.”

Bishop Pfeifer also encouraged people to take the necessary precautions to avoid contracting the flu. The bishop added that if conditions warranted, he would issue additional statements. We will post any updates on our web site.

-- Jimmy Patterson

'The darkness of Obama's stem cell policy.’ / Page 6

Stem cell research, treatment and the (ethical) future

By Arthur Rivas
Texas Catholic Conference

If you were a budding researcher and you were given the opportunity to work in a field that has produced cures, treatments, and has saved thousands of lives, or a field that has, since its inception over twenty years ago, been unable to produce a single cure, which field would you choose? If you were footing the bill, which field would you fund?

The answer is simple: support research that has proven to be successful.

The research we’re talking about here is stem cell research. There are two types of

(Please See STEM/3)

Diocese puts emphasis on family, married life initiative

Family life and marriage. The primary place where the Catholic faith is put into practice. Or should be.

Family life and marriage is where our Catholic parishes encounter our people. Therefore, the Diocese of San Angelo and its parishes are committed to support and encourage the practice of the faith among families. Read the diocesan Marriage and Family Life committee’s finding and recommendations/Pages 9-12

May: A month for moms

Traditionally, May is known as the month to honor and celebrate our mothers, especially the wonderful spiritual mother of all of us, Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The special day to honor mothers is the second Sunday of May, which this year falls on May 10, 2009/Pg. 4
Prayerfully consider giving generously to communications campaign

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In today’s hectic world, we all need to hear the Good News. It’s a powerful reminder of God’s love for us. It enriches us and nourishes our faith. The Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC) is committed to funding programs that uplift the Catholic community and that evangelize the world. The Collection for CCC will be taken up in our diocese on Sunday, May 17, 2009.

You can truly make a difference right here in our diocese through your donation to the CCC Collection. Half of all funds collected here are used for local communications projects such as our diocesan newspaper and Office of Communication. The other half is used nationally in traditional and new media. Because of parishioners like you all over the United States, the Church is able to minister and evangelize through its local and national communications efforts. To learn more about how CCC is making a difference and how you can help, please visit www.CatholicCommunicationsCampaign.org.

Your participation is essential to the success of the Collection. I am grateful for your past generous support and let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide all of our communication efforts.

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

Ballinger Knights assist with Pregnancy Help Center

The Ballinger Knights of Columbus Council #10885 annually raises money for the Pregnancy Help Center of the Concho Valley. Once a year, the Knights distribute baby bottles to parishioners at the weekend Masses at St. Mary’s. The parishioners are asked to place their loose change in the bottles for a month or until they are full, and then return the bottles to church. This recent collection brought in $1,243 for the Pregnancy Help Center. The picture shows council members (L-R) Jim Studer, David Workman, and Edwin Zly presenting the check to Jan Roberts representing the Pregnancy Help Center. The Pregnancy Help Center of the Concho Valley provides assistance to expectant mothers experiencing an unexpected or crisis pregnancy and alternatives to abortion.

May 22: Day of Prayer for Mariners

May 22 is the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea a day to encourage Catholics in the U.S. to support and participate in prayer services and remembrances of maritime workers such as mariners/seafarers, fish workers, port personnel and their families.

Maritime workers play a vital role in the transport of goods by the waterways and the faithful are invited to come and celebrate with his family and friends. In order to properly plan we ask you to RSVP no later than May 15 to one of the following addresses:

Lee Ann Pollock: pol.lea@hotmail.com
Helen Lange: helange@verizon.net
Msgr. Curtis Halfmann: cthalfmann@sbcglobal.net

Fall Festival Calendar

Sunday, October 25 -- St. Ann's Parish Festival in Sonora, celebrating 80 years.

2010 Lenten Pilgrimage to Italy

Holy Angels Catholic Church in San Angelo is preparing a Lenten Pilgrimage to Italy, March 9-18, 2010. Stops on the pilgrimage include Milan, Venice, Florence, Assisi, Orvieto and Rome, and will include a Papal audience in St. Peter’s Square, daily Mass and a special Mass in the catacombs of St. Callisto, Rome.

The cost is $3,747 roundtrip. Pilgrimage organizers are also offering an optional 5-day Southern Italy extension on the trip, from March 18-23, 2010, for $1,599 additional. Deposits are due June 1, 2009. Contact Lori Hines at Holy Angels Catholic Church, 13th and St. Thomas, Big Spring.

Seminarian Scholarships Offered

SAN ANGELO -- Catholic Life Insurance is currently offering two scholarship opportunities to Roman Catholic seminarians who have earned an undergraduate degree, and are now seeking financial support for graduate seminarian studies. The application deadline for the Msgr. Albert G. Henkes and the Msgr. Lawrence J. Stuebben Seminarian Scholarships is June 15, 2009. The Msgr. Stuebben Seminarian Scholarship is available only to seminarians attending Assumption Seminary in San Antonio. The Msgr. Henkes Scholarship is offered to those enrolled in any Roman Catholic seminary throughout the world. Applicants who meet the criteria of each scholarship may apply to both.

Since 1987, Catholic Life has awarded more than $250,000 in seminarian scholarships through the Msgr. Henkes and Msgr. Stuebben Funds. Fifty-nine recipients have been ordained, and 14 remain in the seminary.

Applications may be obtained by visiting the company website at: www.cliu.com or by contacting the Communications Department at 1-800-292-2548. Applications may also be available through Diocesan Vocation Directors.

Natural Family Planning

Helping couples to deepen conjugal love and achieve responsible parenthood is part of the Church’s total pastoral ministry to Catholic spouses. Fulfillment of this ministry includes both education and pastoral care. This means “instilling conviction and offering practical help to those who wish to live out their parenthood in a truly responsible way” (Pope John Paul II, Familiaris consortio, #35).

Below are scheduled seminars (San Angelo) and contact numbers for people who can help you with more information:

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, (325) 651-5352, 2-4 p.m. 2009 Dates:
May 17, Sep. 13, Dec. 6. Contact Amy at amdq@wcc.net.

MIDLAND-ODESSA, Our Lady of Guadalupe, call Christina Nevarez, (432) 682-2581;
ABILENE, Holy Family Church, call Mrs. Michael Lynn Riley, (325) 682-2581.

2009 Cursillo Dates

June 25-28 -- Women's English, Christ the King Retreat Center, San Angelo
July 16-19 -- Men's Spanish, St. Mary's, Odessa
July 30-Aug. 2 -- Men's English, Christ the King Retreat Center, San Angelo
September 24-27 -- Women's English, St. Thomas, Big Spring
October 15-18 -- Women's Spanish Cursillo, St. Mary's, San Angelo
October 22-25 -- Men's English Cursillo, St. Thomas, Big Spring

Applications may be obtained by visiting the company website at: www.cliu.com or by contacting the Communications Department at 1-800-292-2548. Applications may also be available through Diocesan Vocation Directors.

December 20, 2009

Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo
Sister Malachy celebrates 25 years at Newman

By Sister Marie Malachy Griffin

Twenty-five years ago two Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters visited bishops in the southwest looking for dioceses where the work was “great and difficult,” the criteria specified by our founder.

Where have the years gone? Wasn’t it only yesterday that Bishop Joseph Fiorenza offered me this campus position? Ministry with and to the Catholic community at the ASU Newman Center has been an incredible privilege. How blessed to share faith journeys with so many marvelous young adults and faculty members.

Has life here been an unmixed blessing? Of course not. This place of ministry is, after all, a university campus. “I deserve the best!” is heard with some frequency. Sexual dysfunction, abuse and disease occur even in our setting. Maxed out credit cards are fairly common as is exorbitant spending to make the body “perfect.” Additionally, wasted lives, talents, and resources; injustices, lies, gossip and negativity have the potential to do great harm.

Conversely, the good, the true and the beautiful by far out-weight the above which are the antithesis of what Jesus lived and taught and, on a regular basis, influence my lesson plans for discussions at noon over a meal.

Through the years I have treasured each group with whom I have been privileged to serve. God’s people are truly a gift! Doing a small part of God’s work brings immeasurable joy. I have received more than I have given. Therefore, living thankfully is a must.

Some of those who brought me to where I am today and for whom I give God thanks are my parents who gave me life, faith, family and a desire to live in harmony. My younger sister, Sister Mary James Griffin, O.P., is an example of someone one who is free to question everything. This gift has also been affirmed by reading John Henry Cardinal Newman. My youngest sister, Jean and her husband, have received more than I have given. Therefore, living thankfully is a must.

By Jimmy Patterson

The question was posed at a recent small gathering among friends. “Why?” it was wondered, “did God leave so many loose ends?”

If you think about it, there are unanswered questions in the Gospels, and with Jesus’ life, death and Resurrection.

I thought maybe two of the wiser members of the group might have been hearing a question they’d not heard before. I thought I had stumped the jury.

But it was all too quickly that one of them pitched up his hands and offered this: “It’s because of the bucket,” he said. “We are left with questions in this journey of faith because it forces us to refill our buckets.”

Collectively, we all sat on our hands not quite sure what our buckets were or how we filled them. Yet.

Soon enough, though, the bucket metaphor made itself clearer. Our buckets, our friend explained, represent the state of our spiritual renewal. Were we to go through this life without questions because we have all the answers, what need would we have to refill our buckets? Why would we return to Mass, to fellowship with others at Church, attend retreats or ‘Why Catholic?’ groups? Why would we have a need to refill if we know all the answers 24/7?

The bucket talk brought to mind the old Star Trek episode called “The Apple.” Blindly and without question, day in and day out, the people of planet Gamma Trianguli go to the altar of their computerized stone god, Vaal, and make sacrifices. They believe in their god without any doubts whatsoever, and they do as their forefathers have down through time: they keep feeding Vaal every day, lest they die. The people of the planet seem happy enough, in a zombie-like, unfulfilled manner, because they don’t know any better. They’ve never really felt a need to refill their buckets and they just think they’re happy.

Our God is kind and loving enough to leave us not only a loving Son who died for us, but a Son who provided us with untold lessons on how to live, and just enough unanswered questions in the Gospels, and with Jesus’ life, death and Resurrection.

The wise man in our group reminded us that some of our buckets may be small, others mid size and still others big. But it matters not how big or small they are, as long as when they spring a leak or some of what’s in them splashes out or dries up, we respond by heading to our nearest fountain of replenishment.

How full is your bucket? And what is the best way you can fill it up, and keep it filled up, so that your spiritual life is maximized every day?
What is marriage encounter?

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Marriage Encounter has returned to the Diocese of San Angelo, and it pleases me very much as bishop that Christ the King Retreat Center is sponsoring once again some of these this powerfully enriching marriage experience.

What is Marriage Encounter? Marriage Encounter is a weekend away from the responsibilities and practicalities of everyday life, in order to expand and deepen a couple's married life. An Encounter weekend is not a retreat as such, nor a marriage clinic, or a sensitivity group. It aims to help participants to develop very special communication skills in a prayerful setting. The Encounter helps married couples to come in contact with their feelings. This enables feelings and thoughts to flow more freely, resulting in greater love, renewed dedication, and more joy in living out the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Marriage Encounter began as a way of improving communication between husbands and wives. However as insights grew, it became apparent that the techniques used in the sessions could benefit anyone whose vocation involves close, caring communication with others. For this reason priests and religious can participate fully in an Encounter.

At a Marriage Encounter, a series of presentations are given by a team of Catholic couples and a priest. Each presentation allows couples to look at themselves as individuals, and then to look at their relationship to those with whom they live, work, and to whom they minister. Most importantly, Marriage Encounter leads couples to look at their relationship with God, the Church as a whole, and the world.

Marriage Encounter fosters dialogue between the marriage partners, enabling them to examine and test the new principles of loving communication learned in the course of the weekend. I strongly encourage married couples of our Diocese to think about making a Marriage Encounter. The Encounter is a special way of enabling couples to deepen their marriage commitment, to strengthen the bond of love for one another and for family.

Encuentro de Novios: San José en Odessa

Padre José Uecker, C.P.P.S.

El primer Encuentro de Novios en español tuvo lugar en la Parroquia de San José en Odessa el 20-22 de marzo. Después de estar en Odessa por varios años, el Padre José Uecker, C.P.P.S. conocía la necesidad de más preparación para el matrimonio en español, especialmente en esta parte de la Diócesis de San Angelo.

Buscó a dos parejas de la parroquia, Ricardo y Lidia Ruvalcaba y Homero y Linda Samaniego y con la ayuda del Encuentro de Novios en California, este equipo hizo lo necesario para presentar el primer encuentro en la diócesis.

Hubo 2 parejas como novios, una pareja ya casada por el civil y otra pareja ya casada por la Iglesia que va a ayudar en el futuro. Grupo pequeño, si; pero cosas buenas comienzan pequeñas. ¡Ojalá que en el futuro haya más parejas!

“Invitamos a las parejas a que vivan una nueva experiencia, en el sacramento que van a compartir. Fue hermoso y educativo para nosotros después de 31 años de matrimonio.”

“We recommend the encounter for every couple that is planning to get married. It was very rewarding and a beautiful experience.”

Una parte muy necesaria fue el apoyo que recibimos del Movimiento Familiar Cristiano de Odessa. Estas familias cocinaron y hospedaron a las parejas en sus casas. Recibieron a las parejas el viernes en la noche y rezaron todo el fin de semana por nosotros. Estamos agradecidos por todo, hermanos.
The Church’s teachings on indulgences

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In the March edition of the West Texas Angelus, I featured an article on the question: What are Indulgences? There is much misunderstanding about the true teaching of the Church on indulgences, and in this article I hope to bring clarity to a further question about indulgences — How can indulgences remove some or all of the temporal punishment for sin? As I stated in the last article on indulgences, the information that I share in this article is taken from United States Catholic Bishop’s document on Popular Devotion Practices: Basic questions and answers. As I did in the previous article, let me put the present question in the context of what Pope John Paul II stated about the Church’s teaching on indulgences. Our Holy Father pointed out that the truth about the Communion of Saints, which unites believers to Christ and to one another, reveals how much each of us can help others — living or deceased — to become even more intimately united with our Father in Heaven. The Pope stated clearly that all of us in the Communion of Saints need to recognize that whatever help we can give each other ultimately comes not from ourselves but from Christ. John Paul II stated, “For when the faithful gain indulgences, they realize that by their own powers, they cannot atone for the evil that they have afflicted upon themselves and the entire community by sinning; they, therefore, are moved to healthy humility.” (Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences)

How can indulgences remove some or all of the temporal punishment for sin?

It is because of the Communion of Saints that some or all of the temporal punishment for sin is removed. Although we always have to face the consequences of our sins in the form of the temporal punishment for sin — that is, the painful process of restoration and reparation — as members of the Body of Christ we are never simply on our own. We are linked with Christ and with the martyrs and saints and can benefit from their holiness in such a way as to be freed from at least a portion of the temporal punishment for sin. “In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others.” (61)

As a result of the communion that exists between Christ and all the members of the Church, the Church has a treasury of spiritual goods that is inexhaustible. The source of these spiritual goods is Christ. Pope Paul VI taught that this treasury of the Church is not to be likened to a centuries-old accumulation of material wealth. It means rather the limitless and inexhaustible value that the expiations and merits offered by Christ have in the eyes of God for the liberation of all humanity from sin and for the creation of communion with the Father. The treasury of the Church is Christ the Redeemer himself: in him the atonement and merit of his redemption exist and are at work. Since the martyrs and saints have accomplished all that they have in union with Christ, this treasury also includes the value of all their prayers and good works. “As they followed Christ through the power of his grace, they became holy and they have accomplished a work pleasing to the Father. As a result, in working out their own salvation they have also contributed to the salvation of their co-members in Christ’s Mystical Body.”(63)

Through her union with Christ, the Church has the authority to dispense this treasury. When the church does this, in order to spur people to acts of piety and charity, the Church requires those who seek an indulgence to perform some good work or act of devotion. (64) Furthermore, for reception of a plenary indulgence, which grants the remission of all temporal punishment due to sin, in addition to this good work or act of devotion, the Church specifies four conditions: (1) sacramental confession, (2) reception of Holy Communion, (3) prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, and (4) complete detachment from all sin, even venial sin. (65) It must not be thought, however, that such acts of ours are somehow of themselves sufficient to earn the remission of the temporal punishment for sins. Our efforts, themselves the work of God’s grace, express our openness to receive God’s mercy. In the work of our salvation, it is always God’s grace that is primary, with a power that far exceeds all our efforts.

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Excerpts from Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions and Answers
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May is the month to honor our mothers

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Traditionally, May is known as the month to honor and celebrate our mothers, especially the wonderful spiritual mother of all of us, Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The special day to honor mothers is the second Sunday of May, which this year falls on May 10, 2009. First and foremost, we pay loving tribute to Mary, our Mother, who is always watching over us, and always wanting to draw us closer to her Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a special month to thank our Blessed Mother for all the many wonderful things she does for us throughout the year.

In May, we also honor our dear earthly mothers, and thank God we have at least one day of the year set aside to honor these special people who have given us life, and who have helped us to be what we are. The first Mother’s Day observance was held at a church service on May 10, 1908 in the Andrews Methodist Church, Grafton, West Virginia. That service was requested by Miss Anna Jarvis to honor her dear mother. Miss Jarvis was a prime mover to establish Mother’s Day in the United States, and she was gratified to see President Woodrow Wilson issue the first Mother’s Day proclamation in 1914. While we have one special day to honor and thank our dear mothers, every day of the year we should recognize and express our love to our dear mothers for everything they do for us.

I congratulate all the mothers of our Diocese on their special day, asking Christ to bless them, and asking Mary our Mother to grant them her maternal care and protection. Many of us have lost our dear mothers, and we pray in a special way that God grant them eternal peace. Dear mothers, have a wonderful, joyful and relaxing day with your husbands and families on your special day.

Parishioner celebrates 101st birthday

Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer helped Maria Esquivel Sanchez celebrate her 101st birthday March 30, 2009.

Ms. Sanchez is a parishioner at St. Joseph’s Mission in Loraine.

Happy Birthday, Ms. Sanchez!
Making Sense of Bioethics

The darkness of Obama’s stem cell policy

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

President Obama, on March 9, 2009, signed an important executive order that vastly expanded federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research and crossed a significant and troubling ethical line. This decision, and the rhetoric during the signing, encouraged scientists and researchers to enter the moral quagmire of taking some human lives in order to benefit others. During his signing speech, in order to support his decision, the president invoked the name of Christopher Reeve and other patients desperate to find cures for their ailments.

Desperation, however, rarely makes for good ethics.

I once heard a true story that brought this point home for me in a dramatic way. The story involved a father and his two young sons. They had a favorite swimming hole out in the countryside which they would visit on hot summer days. The father, however, had never learned to swim, while the boys had learned when they were younger and could swim moderately well.

Their father would sit on the shore while the boys would swim inside a line of bright red buoys that marked where the shelf on the floor of the swimming hole would drop off steeply. Each year, the father would tell his sons not to cross that line, because if they did, he would not be able to swim out and rescue them. Each year they would faithfully obey. This particular year, however, they decided to challenge their dad’s authority and venture beyond the buoys.

As they swam beyond the line, their father saw them and called out to them to return, but they feigned they couldn’t hear him and continued to swim out even further. Their dad got nervous, and began to walk out into the water, as it got deeper and deeper, and suddenly he moved into the drop-off section and began sinking.

From a distance, the boys spotted him flailing around in the water, gasping for breath, trying to keep his head above water, and slapping the water with his hands. They suddenly realized he was drowning, and swam towards him. As they got near him, he yelled at them not to come any closer. He cried out, “Get away! Don’t touch me!” In fear, they kept their distance until he stopped struggling in the water, and began to sink beneath the surface, with gurgling and bubbling. As he slipped into unconsciousness, the boys approached him and grabbed him as best they could and dragged him back to shore, where he sputtered and revived and finally coughed out the water he had taken in.

Later, the boys asked him why he shouted at them to stay away. He said he was afraid if he put his hand on them, he would drag them under the water with him. He knew that a desperate person would reach for almost anything nearby in order to save himself; maybe even his own children, and he didn’t want to do that.

We must be similarly concerned in our society when scientists and desperate patients are tempted to put their hand onto our embryonic children in a bid to alleviate suffering or even to save themselves. Sadly, the President’s stem cell decision encourages this kind of unethical behavior by an emotional appeal to patient desperation. The President’s ethical mistake is further compounded by the fact that remarkable and powerful scientific alternatives exist, such as cellular reprogramming on the one hand, or the use of adult/umbilical cord stem cells on the other, neither of which requires ever laying a hand on a human embryo.

His stem cell decision also manifests a troubling shift towards a more widespread and systemic form of oppression within our society. The President is offering Americans the prospect of using the powers of science to oppress, or more accurately, to suppress the youngest members of the human family to serve the interests of older and more wealthy members. He is offering Americans the prospect of reducing fellow human beings to cogs and commodities in the assembly line of the medico-business industrial complex.

Many Americans, however, seem only vaguely aware of what has transpired in the President’s decision. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas once commented on the way that oppression can subtly arise in our midst: “As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there’s a twilight where everything remains seemingly unchanged, and it is in such twilight that we must be aware of change in the air, however slight, lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.”

Some would suggest that perhaps the darkness is already upon us. But a few moments of twilight may still remain, in which Americans can turn back the darkness.

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

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Alexandra Morris, CDS International Specialist

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Pope declares year of the priest to inspire spiritual perfection

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI declared a year of the priest in an effort to encourage “spiritual perfection” in priests.

The pope will open the special year with a vespers service at the Vatican June 19 — the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the day for the sanctification of priests. He will close the celebrations during a World Meeting of Priests in St. Peter’s Square June 19, 2010.

The pope made the announcement during an audience March 16 with members of the Vatican Congregation for Clergy.

He met with some 70 participants of the congregation’s March 16-18 plenary assembly, which focused on the missionary identity of the priest and his mission to sanctify, teach and govern.

During this jubilee year, the pope will also proclaim St. John Vianney to be patron saint of all the world’s priests. At present he is considered the patron saint of parish priests.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the death of this 19th-century saint who represents a “true example of a priest at the service of the flock of Christ,” the pope said.

St. John Vianney is widely known to Catholics as the Cure (parish priest) of Ars who won over the hearts of his villagers in France by visiting with them, teaching them about God and reconciling people to the Lord in the confessional.

In his address, Pope Benedict said the priestly ministry consists of total adherence to the ecclesial tradition of participating “in a spiritually intense new life and a new lifestyle which was inaugurated by the Lord Jesus and which the apostles made their own.”

Priestly ordination creates new men who are bestowed with the gift and office of sanctifying, teaching and governing, he said.

“The awareness of the radical social changes over the past decades must stir the best ecclesial energies to look after the formation of priestly candidates,” the pope said.

This means great care must be taken to ensure permanent and consistent doctrinal and spiritual formation for seminarians and priests, he said, specifying the importance of passing down, especially to younger generations, “a correct reading of the texts of the Second Vatican Council, interpreted in the light of all the church’s doctrinal heritage.”

Priests must also be “present, identifiable and recognizable — for their judgment of faith, their personal virtues and their attire — in the fields of culture and charity which have always been at the heart of the church’s mission,” he said.

“The centrality of Christ leads to a correct valuation of ordained ministry,” he said, adding that, without priestly ministry, there would be no Eucharist, no mission and even no church.

Therefore, he said, it is crucial to make sure that new bodies or pastoral organizations are not set up “for a time in which one might have to ‘dispense with’ ordained ministry based on an erroneous interpretation of the rightful promotion of the laity.”

“This would lay the foundations for further diluting the priestly ministry, and any supposed ‘solutions’ would dramatically coincide with the real causes of the problems currently connected with the ministry,” he said.

Community at Holy Family in Mereta celebrate blessing of new parish hall

Bishop Michael Pfeifer and Fr. Mario Ortiz, administrator of Holy Family Church in Mereta, joined parishioners March 15 for the blessing and opening of the new parish hall in the small community near San Angelo.

“It was a joyous occasion for the faithful of Holy Family to see their bishop at such an event,” Fr. Ortiz said. “The church was packed with people and everyone was excited to see and hear Bishop Pfeifer.”

Members of the parish council and Fr. Ortiz were thanked for their leadership in the effort to get the new hall built. Former pastor Fr. Tom Barley, instrumental in the earlier efforts to build the hall, also attended the celebration, which included a pot luck dinner that also served as a fundraiser for future projects.

“It was a blessed day,” Fr. Ortiz said. “It was a wonderful feeling being there. God was with his people that day.”

Photos: Bishop Pfeifer, left, with Fr. Mario Ortiz, Parish Administrator at Holy Family in Mereta (at left), and Eucharist is celebrated, right.
**Catholic Voices**

**Spirituality for adults: What is it exactly?**

By Antoinette Bosco

Catholic News Service

As winter was coming to an end, I felt it was time for my days to have an infusion of what I simply call "something sunny." Then I saw an ad in America magazine for a program at Wisdom House, a retreat center not far from where I live. Elizabeth A. Dryer, a professor at Jesuit-run Fairfield University in Connecticut, was scheduled to give a program on "Spirituality for Catholic Women." I signed up. But first I bought her zine for a program at Catholic News Service.

I immediately knew I was in the right place. That sentence was something worth meditating on!

At the program, I sat down next to two lovely women, Felicia and Barb, surprised to learn that they lived in my own town and are members of a former parish of mine. We were actually neighbors!

Felicia and Barb were sponsoring a "ministry of mothers" meeting on Friday mornings. They invited me to join them when I could, which I did a week later. It was a joyful encounter.

Felicia, a mother of teen triplets, spoke of their mothers ministry as having evolved into a meeting of "companions who share a grounding in faith and a commitment to see all of our life experiences through ministry." She added, "Now we have re-fallen in love with God."

Barb said, "Our moms ministry has given us the strength to survive what life throws at you all the time."

I cannot justly describe the joy that was in that room, but I knew the source of it. Often I've been reminded by my Catholic teachers that, where two or three are gathered in his name, God -- the source of all joy -- is in their midst!

Another book I was reading that week also gave me a spiritual boost. In "Listening to God's Word," award-winning Catholic author Alice Camille explains in her introduction that her book is "to facilitate that holy crossing from the world of the Bible to the world in which we live and move and have our being." And she adds a truth as only someone deeply immersed in the study of our religious history could: "If our citizenship in the reign of God does not influence our citizenship in this world, we may well be holding a false passport."

Camille begins her book by telling of a time when she suffered from a depression and said she couldn't shake. She asked God "testify": "So what do you want from me?"

**The Church’s position on tithing**

By Father John Dietzen

Catholic News Service

The neighborhood dogs and the disposition of my neighbors toward me haven't been the same since I took up the violin again. When played poorly, it grinds on my spirit and can alone speak to the world of the Bible to the world in which we live and move and have our being. And she adds a truth as only someone deeply immersed in the study of our religious history could: "If our citizenship in the reign of God does not influence our citizenship in this world, we may well be holding a false passport."

**Let the music begin**

By Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Catholic News Service

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**Prayer Sharing**

By Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Catholic News Service

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My husband is a stock farmer and works with heavy machinery much of the time. With my concern for him as he went out the door every morning, I began saying, "God bless you," in place of the other meaningless phrases.

At first, he didn't say anything, but he soon became more attentive and began repeating it to me. It's no big thing, but it makes me feel that God will take care of him when no one else can.

Another habit I've formed is in saying the Rosary.

"Catholic Spirituality for Adults," published by Orbis Books.

These experiences I've just shared have told me that it truly is about time that spirituality for adults continues to make good headway in our church!

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On April 2, 2009, the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of San Angelo recommended, and Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer adopted, a document prepared by the 2011 Committee called “Family Life and Marriage: The Priority for Ministry.” The document and its adoption establishes the main priority for ministry in the diocese as we approach our 50th anniversary.

The bishop also asked the presbyteral council to begin implementation of this ministry, therefore the council passed a motion recommending and funding the Office of Family Life And Marriage in the diocese. The bishop has also asked that priests continue the discussion and implementation of the ministry as presented in a recent convocation.

Deserving of much appreciation and gratitude are members of the 2011 Committee who have worked during the past three years on the topic of priorities in ministry as well as the hosts and facilitators of the focus groups for their generous assistance in listening to our families throughout the diocese. You have shared with us matters of concern and suggestions for ministry which will provide guidance for the diocese and parishes in Family Life and Marriage programs for a long time.

May God pour out his blessings upon all who participated in this work and may God grant guidance and grace to his ministry in our diocese.

What follows in the next three pages are highlights, summaries and strategies discussed by the committee concerning the Family Life and Marriage initiative in the diocese.

-- Monsignor Larry Droll
Vicar General
Diocese of San Angelo
FAMILY LIFE AND MARRIAGE: THE PRIORITY FOR MINISTRY
2011—the Diocese of San Angelo at 50 years

Family life and marriage. The primary place where the Catholic faith is put into practice. Or should be.

Family life and marriage is where our Catholic parishes encounter our people. Therefore, the Diocese of San Angelo and its parishes are committed to support and encourage the practice of the faith among families.

Summary of the Eight Pillars

Question 1: What concerns do you see about our family faith community?

Financial Concerns
- Lack of parishioner support
- Lack of parishioner involvement

Technology Concerns
- Lack of use of technology
- Lack of online community

Marriage/Relationship Concerns
- Lack of understanding of marriage
- Lack of communication

Catechesis/Formation/Education Concerns
- Lack of adequate catechesis
- Lack of ongoing formation

Social/Cultural Concerns
- Lack of social services to support families

Lack of hospitality to single parishioners

Lack of parenting skills

Lack of parish life

Lack of Parish family activities

Lack of involvement of families in religion education programs

Lack of sibling family on retreats such as ACTS, Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter, Couples retreats

Lack of family activities

Lack of communication

Lack of Family life and plan activities for the whole year

Community
- The community is an extension of the Church
- We need to reach out to others in community
- We participate as families in the community

Faith Life
- Catholics should marry in the Church
- We should follow the commandments
- We should be faithful to our marriage vows

Social Life
- Families are resources for families in need
- People are needed by others
- People are needed by others

Church/Parish
- Financial support for the Church
- Parishioner support for the Church

Question 2: What does Christ call us to as a family through Scripture and the Church?

Scripture Passage
- Galatians 5:13-18, 19-21
- Hebrews 12:14-17

Question 3: What are the ways we Catholics can enhance family life in our parishes?

 feasts

Marriage should be treated especially with high school youth.

Most parishes have some form of marriage preparation programs.
Practice Ideas: Planning for Family Faith Formation

Use the following strategies and planning questions in conjunction with the article, “Best Practices in Family Faith Formation,” to assess your current efforts and plan for strengthening and expanding family faith formation in your congregation. (The article was part of the handout packet and presentation at Marriage and Family Life the workshop.)

**Strategy 1. Make family faith a goal of congregational life and ministry.**
- How does your congregation currently equip families at every stage of life as centers of faith formation through church ministries—worship, education, service, stewardship, evangelism—and community life?
- Identify ways that your congregation can make family faith formation more central to the ministries and life of your church.
- What are one or two new initiatives that your church can undertake that would dramatically improve your efforts in teaching faith practices and providing resources for living the practices?

**Strategy 2. Utilize church ministries and programming to teach, model, and demonstrate family faith practices, and then provide the resources for families to live the practice at home.**
- How does your church currently equip families to live their faith at home? What types of resources does your church currently provide families to live their faith at home?
- What opportunities do you have in your congregation to add a “teaching and demonstration” activity to an existing ministry or program? Identify settings where the whole family is present or where you can gather parents while their children are engaged in other activities.
- How can your congregation utilize weekend worship to teach and resource families?
- What are one or two new initiatives that your church can undertake that would dramatically improve your efforts in teaching faith practices and providing resources for living the practices?

**Strategy 3. Build on practices families are already engaged in.**
- What faith practices are families already engaged in, such as praying, celebrating rituals, and serving?
- How can your congregation support families in their efforts and provide additional resources and opportunities to grow in their practice?

**Strategy 4. Involve the whole family in congregational life, programs, and leadership roles.**
- How are families already participating together in the ministries and programs of your church? Identify examples of where the whole family is engaged in a church ministry or program.
- How can your congregation expand the opportunities for the whole family to participate together in worship, education, service, outreach, stewardship, leadership, and other church activities?
- How can you redesign existing programs and activities so they involve the whole family?
- What are one or two new initiatives that your church can undertake that would dramatically improve your efforts at involving the family in congregational life, programs, and leadership?

**Strategy 5. Offer family and intergenerational learning programs.**
- What types of family and/or intergenerational learning programs does your congregation offer? When are they offered? What are the topics or themes addressed?
- How can your congregation expand the opportunities for the whole family to learn together? Consider the following program ideas:
  - monthly large group family or intergenerational learning programs
  - family workshops through the year focused on family faith practices, church year seasons, and/or family-focused topics
  - family cluster or small group learning programs
  - family-centered (small group or large group) lectionary-based Scripture reflection
  - family-centered or intergenerational vacation Bible school
  - family retreats and camps
  - family Bible study
  - family-centered sacramental/ritual preparation programs

**Strategy 6. Develop family faith formation around life-cycle milestones.**
- How does your congregation currently provide faith formation around milestone events in the lives of individuals and families? For example:
  - Faith Community Milestones: baptism, receiving a first Bible, learning to pray, first communion, confirmation, mission trip, wedding, funeral
  - Life-cycle Milestones: birth/becoming a parent, start of school, driver’s license, graduations, leaving home, career/first job, becoming a grandparent, retirement, death
  - Rhythm of Life Milestones: birthdays, anniversaries, first day of school, family gatherings and reunions, holidays and vacations, new home, separation and loss
- How does your congregation currently 1) prepare people for a milestone, 2) celebrate or remember the milestone, and 3) provide follow-up after the milestone? How does your church provide congregational activities and home resources for each milestone?

**Strategy 7. Offer a variety of developmentally-appropriate family service projects.**
- What types of family service projects does your church currently offer?
- How can your congregation expand the opportunities for the whole family to be involved in service to those in need and in justice projects—locally and globally?
- How will you prepare families for service, guide them in reflecting upon the service, and support them in continuing their service involvements?

**Strategy 8. Provide at-home resources for the core family faith practices.**
- What types of resources does your congregation provide families throughout the year, such as resources connected to educational programming or Sunday worship or liturgical seasons?
- What opportunities already exist in your church to provide resources to families around the five core family faith practices?

**Strategy 9. Use the Internet to resource and connect families.**
- Does your church have a web site? What kinds of information is provided online? Does your church web site serve and reach families?
- How can you better utilize your church’s web site to deliver timely faith formation resources to the home, provide social networks among families to share faith stories and practices, and provide support, sources, and networking for parents?

**PRIORITYES:** Diocese to make marriage, family life top issue for 50th jubilee year

(From 11)

Marriage preparation in place for couples approaching the sacrament of marriage. The Diocese of San Angelo approves the Engaged Encounter and the Sponsor Couple Program of Fr. Robert Ruhnke, For Better and Forever.

Weddings will be celebrated prayerfully and joyfully. Some form of following up with newly weds is encouraged.

Parishes would do well to call parishioners’ attention to existing retreats and professional counseling services for marriage enrichment or to deal with marriage problems. They might develop opportunities for parish level retreats or times of reflection for couples.

Parishes will offer assistance to parishioners who may need certain canonical procedures to be addressed before couples can celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage.

**How can the Diocese of San Angelo support the parishes in this work?**

The Diocese of San Angelo will develop an Office of Family Life and Marriage, with a person(s) professionally trained in this area. This office should be on an equal level with the Office of Education and Formation or the Vocation Office.

The first duty of this office should be to train those in parishes involved in Family Life and Marriage ministries.

The second duty of the diocesan office is to offer programs at the retreat center or in parishes.

Each diocesan department can intensify its focus on family life and marriage, too. For example, the Office of Education and Formation, pro-life, rural life, criminal justice ministry and others can keep the family focus in mind and make this an intentional part of their ministry and programming.

**Conclusion**

Family Life and Marriage is to be the prime priority for ministry in the Diocese of San Angelo, as we celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2011. If this priority is to take hold, it must be given time and resources to grow.

We dedicate ourselves to fulfilling Moses’ command to the People of God: “Take care and be earnestly on your guard not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live, but teach them to your children and to your children’s children.” — Deuteronomy 4.9
STEM: Adult cells can be obtained without harm to donor, ethical issues

(From 3)

This is a false claim because embryonic stem cell research is fully allowed in the United States—there is no federal law (and almost no state law) against it. The government had in the past set some limits on the number of embryonic stem cell lines eligible for federal funding, limits which have been removed recently by President Obama.

Adult stem cells, on the other hand, can be obtained without harm to the donor and without any ethical problem, and these have already demonstrated great medical promise. Thousands of lives have been saved by adult stem cells—most often in the form of "bone marrow transplants" for leukemia and other conditions. Today, adult stem cells are being used to help people with Parkinson's disease, many kinds of cancer, spinal cord injury, sickle-cell anemia, heart damage, corneal damage, and dozens of other conditions.

State funding for the Texas Cord Blood Bank is an excellent example of how state dollars for adult stem cell research are curing people now. The Texas Cord Blood Bank is a division of the South Texas Blood & Tissue Center in San Antonio. The Texas Legislature created the nonprofit program in 2001 to establish a statewide cord blood bank. Cord blood donations from this bank have saved lives.

Common sense dictates that our limited taxpayer dollars fund research that is producing results. But what about the moral argument? As I mentioned earlier, embryonic stem cell research involves the destruction of a human life. Any form of embryonic stem cell research, regardless of the source of the embryo, is both unethical and immoral. It denies a young human his or her most basic right—the right to life.

Choosing to kill an embryo because it will simply be discarded is morally wrong and6ethically indefensible; we cannot attempt to procure good by committing evil.

Andrew Rivas is the Executive Director of the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Texas Roman Catholic Bishops.
**Family**

God doesn’t abandon the grieving at time of death (he’s just a little busy)

By Jimmy Patterson

It’s been over three years since mom passed away and I still remember many of the events leading up to her death like they were yesterday, or last week at least. I was recently reminded of one of the most miraculous occurrences surrounding the death process when some close friends lost an immediate family member and experienced a similar situation that had happened to Mama on January 13, 2006, the afternoon she would take her last breath.

Hospice had informed our family that my mother would die when no one was around.

“She will likely spare everyone the pain of having to watch her die,” I remember the hospice worker telling my sister. “When you step down the hall, or all go to have a bite to eat, or someone slips into the restroom for a minute, that’s when she’ll go.”

It’s like they know. Yeah, it’s like they know. But how? How can the dying be so sure they are alone?

So often those close to death lie in a semi-comatose state. How they even know anyone is standing next to them is a miracle and that they know someone has stepped away is beyond any simple, of-this-world explanation.

But it happens. Three-and-a-half years ago as mom lie in a hospital bed in Irving, my sister and father stood next to her. Claudia stayed by her bedside as my dad turned around and began “puttering” as he has called it all his 85 years. Picking up scattered unread newspapers, sweaters, half empty soft drink cups and used straws. Whatever was out of place Dad always has had to pick up. Mom called it straightening. Dad puttering. And so that’s what he was doing when my sister suddenly said, “She’s gone.” Mom and dad were married 59 years and 10 days when she passed away. She spared him the pain of watching her go. Simple as that, as hard as it is to explain.

And it happened again in April, when some close friends gathered and watched as their uncle lie in a hospital bed. It was only when the family had stepped into the hall that he died. While no one was looking and no one was there. So there would be no pain.

It is not uncommon for people to question the existence of God, to be mad at him and to even abandon him temporarily after a loved one passes. The grieving often accuse God of “taking someone for no reason.” Such feelings of abandonment any counselor will tell you are natural. Even Christ himself implored God why he was abandoning him.

But God does not leave people. People leave God, many times as a means of dealing with their grief. And it is only when the grieving realize that dealing with their grief without God isn’t working very well either that they come back to God. God, they will find, has gone nowhere. He’s still where he always was. Right there.

Even though people often turn from God when a loved one dies, that is when God is most present. Witness the showing of friends and the outpouring of love during a funeral, the time of a family’s greatest grief.

And witness God’s presence -- surely that’s what it must be -- when a person, so often semi-conscious, draws his or her last breath when others have slipped out of the room. How else can you explain that?

There really is no other way.

When you are faced with the loss of a loved one, try not to be too hard on God. If it seems like he’s abandoned you, maybe it’s just because God’s just a little busy taking such good care of the one who’s saying goodbye to us, and hello to him.

*Jimmy Patterson is Director of Communications for the Diocese of San Angelo and editor of the West Texas Angelus.*

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**Bill & Monica Dodds**

Taking care of your kids as you care for your aging parent

By Bill and Monica Dodds

Catholic News Service

If you’re a member of the "sandwich generation," if you’re taking care of your aging parent as well as your children, it’s hard to shake the feeling that if you focus on one generation you’re losing sight of the needs of the other.

It can help to remember -- to realize -- that taking care of your parent is good for your children too. How so?

You’re right that your kids also make a sacrifice, because you can’t be around as much as they would like you to be and, most likely, they have to do more -- become more responsible -- because you can’t be there. (Maybe they have to make their own lunch to take to school. Or you can’t be a chaperone at some school event even though you were able to do that a year or so ago.)

Yes, in some ways a child is being deprived of what a parent might be able to give if he or she didn’t have caregiving obligations to an older family member (or to a spouse who is ill or to a child with special needs). From another perspective, however, those parents are giving something to that child that he or she otherwise couldn’t give: a front-row view of love in action without any possibility of mistaking the unchangeable fact that true love demands service and sacrifice.

Still, it can be a lot to put on little shoulders.

All they may see at first glance is that parents aren’t there (or there but exhausted from caregiving and holding down a job). And they miss not just what that parent does for them (nice meals, rides to practice and so on) but also that person himself or herself. They miss time spent together.

With that in mind, here are a few suggestions if you’re taking care of an aging parent and your children:

- Talk about this at a time when neither you nor your child are tired and emotions are not running high.
- Do something special with each child, one on one.
- Explain what it’s like to be a care-receiver, how it can be hard to accept help.
- Talk about why you’re taking care of Grandpa or Grandma and explain in an age-appropriate way what his or her condition is.
- Work at establishing a link between your children and your parent. Let them have some time together.
- Remember that children can, in small ways, help with caregiving too.
- Teach what respectful care means and explain the difference between “dignity” and "dignified." Yes, at times a situation may be less than dignified, but that doesn't mean a person can't be treated with dignity.
- Remember to thank the child for making sacrifices and for helping you help your mother or father.

On the Web: Help for Parishes

http://catholiccaregivers.com has material to help parishes help family caregivers.

And for a free copy of "The Stations of the Cross for Caregivers" send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Friends of St. John the Caregiver, P.O. Box 320, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043.

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Bill and Monica Dodds are the founders of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver and editors of My Daily Visitor magazine. Their Web site is www.FSJC.org. They can be contacted at MonicaDodds@YourAgingParent.com.
Multitasking and achieving multiple goals two different things

By Therese J. Borchard

I want you to help me solve a time riddle. Let’s say you are a mom who works 50 hours a week. You also devote a considerable amount of time to your two children, ages 5 and 7, and try to participate in their school events as much as possible. Your daughter pleads with you to come to her preschool’s special science presentation, and your son begs you to chaperone his field trip later that same day. What do you do?

a) Go to both of those functions, and try to make up the extra work by staying up really late, possibly giving you a case of the grumpies the next day?
b) Skip both of them so you can focus on your work and get to bed early?
c) Attend both of them, but take your Blackberry with you, so that you can squeeze in an e-mail here or there, between say, the reptile exhibit and anteater showcase?

Russell Bishop of the Huffington Post would vote for the option in which you can do one thing at a time, but multiple things together. In a post for the Living section, he talks about the difference between “multiple goals” and “multitasking.” Russell explains, “When you take on a goal, figure out what you have to deliver in order to succeed, and then determine the steps necessary. You must manage the process one step at a time. That doesn’t mean you can’t have multiple goals; however. It does mean that when you are working on one area, you better have your focus there if you want to do well.”

That advice has been extremely helpful to me as a working mom who is required to do her fair share of juggling and multitasking in order for Kid 1 to show up at soccer, not ballet; Kid 2 to make it to her eye exam on time; and a blog post about Abraham Lincoln to publish on Presidents Day, not April Fools. So let’s go back to our example of the mom struggling with what to do about the science presentation and field trip. I suspect that Russell would come up with a fourth option: Choose one of these events (going with your favorite kid). That way you don’t have to pull out the Blackberry in front of the snakes or stay up late to meet your deadline. Promise the other child (I was just kidding about the favorite) that you will attend her or his event next time.

Why this option? Because if you attempt to show up at both gigs, with your Blackberry of course, chances are great that you will be “half-tasking.” That’s Russell’s term, and I like it.

He writes, “I call it half-tasking. Half their attention is on one goal, and half their attention is on another. When someone is busy half-tasking, often both tasks wind up being underperformed. In fact, sometimes the most important reasons for being there get missed.”

Well said. Amen!
Theresa Borchard writes a column for young adults for the Catholic News Service.
MALACHY: Newman Center director grateful on 25th jubilee

(From 3)

George provided a witness of loving fidelity in marriage and the willingness to accept children from God (eight). Paul James (maternal grandfather) passed on a love for study and reading for enjoyment.

The next group of gift-givers is composed of women religious. The Sisters of Mercy exemplify living in a counter-cultural mode, reserving a space at the core of my being for God alone, making decisions communally and assiduously searching for TRUTH. Sister Thomasine, O.P. (a cousin) encouraged me to “hang on” to my Irish sense of humor because that is essential to living a balanced life. The School Sisters of Notre Dame lit a fire under my academically.

Sister Gail Marie Fitzpatrick, O.C.S.O. urged me to trust myself and my judgments and fostered my contemplative bent. God gave me an enthusiasm for life, a determination to grow spiritually and emotionally and gifted me with all of the people just mentioned and those to follow.

At this Newman Center manifold blessings are showered upon me daily. Currently, most students, faculty, administrators and staff who come regularly are enthusiastic, intelligent, energetic, creative, giving, prayerful, joyous and truly Spirit-filled. We work, play and pray together well. Lectionary Study, Praise and Worship Services, Guided Meditations, and the informal chats after Sunday Liturgy are all holy encounters. On most Wednesdays we celebrate the Eucharist or a Word Service with Communion. Those who pray with us come out of choice, partly because our Presiders are superior! They come prepared and in addition to feeding us with the Body of Christ, they provide nourishing homilies and reflections. Our culinary artist is second to none. She will probably be here long after the students graduate if she keeps making fresh salsa and homemade cobbler. The yard “crew” is really two “Master Gardeners,” one of whom is also the best of volunteers. Many graduates keep in touch. All who support this vital university ministry can be proud of our graduates. Most are active lay ministers and are raising faith-filled children. Then there are the generous benefactors; FACULTY, alumni, parents, clergy, friends, and students.

So, when all is said and done, yes, this ministry is definitely “great and difficult.” However, years ago I thanked Bishop Fiorenza for taking a chance on me and I have expressed my great gratitude to Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, O.M.I. for providing a stipend for a ministry that usually brings joy in abundance. Each of us chooses whether to be happy. The old saying, “Happiness is an inside job” rings true and usually flows from being grateful. For me, at least on most days, this is the only way life makes sense.

TAD

(Para 6)

del la presencia de una figura paterna y que enfrentaba otras dificultades en su desarrollo debido a las decisiones que ella había tomado.

Cuando elegimos seguir una senda intrínsecamente inmoral, necesariamente nos estamos engañando respecto a cuál sería, a nivel total, nuestro mejor estado de cosas. Generalmente también hacemos daño a otros con estas decisiones.

En lo que se refiere a la elección intrínsecamente desordenada de la fertilización in vitro, como la atención del último está intensamente dirigida al bebé que anhelamos, puede resaltar aún más difícil ver la naturaleza perjudicial de esta decisión. Las parejas que se someten a este procedimiento están convencidas de que el mejor estado de cosas para ellos es tener un hijo, sin importar los pasos que se requieran.

Volviendo a mi conversación con la pareja de casados, ellos admitían darse cuenta cómo sus fuertes deseos de ser padres inclinaron la balanza en el proceso de tomar la decisión. También aceptaban que estaban empezando a percibir otras realidades involucradas en su decisión de someterse a la fertilización in vitro, por ejemplo: cómo en realidad fue un tercero, un técnico de laboratorio en el cuarto de atrás, quien manufacturó los niños; cómo ellos mismos, los padres, habían hecho mal uso de sus cuerpos y su sexualidad, convirtiéndose en poco más que donantes de células sexuales; cómo la pornografía y la masturbación, síntomas de sus propios hijos; cómo habian producido una cantidad sobrante de hijos, congolaron algunos y desecharon otros durante el proceso.

Probablemente la verdad más difícil de discernir es que aun los fines más deseables, como tener nuestros propios hijos, no justifican el uso de medios inherentemente inmorales para conseguir dichos fines. Pensamos que nuestros deseos son dignos de realizarse por cualquier medio al suponer que somos nosotros mismos quienes determinamos lo que es mejor para nuestras vidas. Sin embargo, cuando nuestros deseos son el árbitro final de lo correcto e incorrecto o cuando estos deseos están en primer plano, sólo un paso nos separa del desastre.

Una pareja inférttil puede suponer que tiene derecho a tener hijos pero la verdad es que no es así pues la realidad más profunda es que los hijos son siempre un don. Cuando el don se exige (mediante la fertilización in vitro) entonces el hijo ya no es un don sino una posesión, un medio u objeto en la búsqueda de la satisfacción de los padres, atrapado en el fuego cruzado de los deseos de paternidad. Frecuentemente las parejas infértiles no han hecho una pausa para reflexionar en otros posibles caminos, o no han considerado ampliamente otras formas importantes de lograr la plenitud humana y de expresar su fecundidad marital, como son la enseñanza, ser guías o tutores de niños necesitados en su comunidad, o la adopción.

El anhelo por los niños puede ser tan fuerte que nos impida percibir con honestidad los aspectos malos de que quizá estén entrelazados en nuestras decisiones. Querer tener hijos por vías desordenadas puede conducirnos a lastimar las bendiciones mismas que estamos anhelando para nuestra vida y de quienes nos rodean.

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Intentions 2009

Daily Offering Prayer
O 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.
Experts continue to analyze why we’re where we are

(From 1)

Nation-wide, 3.6 million jobs have been lost since the recession began. The 7.6% unemployment rate is the highest since 1992 and could hit 9.6% next year. It was recently announced that $2 trillion of retirement savings have been lost, and the savings of many more are at risk. Millions and millions of elderly – relatives and family members – have seen their pensions reduced by one third or half, or more. Who is “bailing-out” these dedicated senior citizens from their harsh situation?

Underlying Causes of Crisis

What are the underlying causes and reasons for this worldwide economic crisis? Economists are humbly identifying the corporate and individual reasons for the breakdown in the present economic system. Pope Benedict XVI recently insisted that underneath the current global economic crisis lurks greed, rooted in original sin, and that reform of global economic architecture will be of little use without the conversion of individual hearts. Pope Benedict said, “Where there are no just people, there is no justice. For that reason education in justice must be a priority.” The Pope added that the economy is built on sand. The current crisis has revealed that the unbridled pursuit of profit ultimately demolishes everything in its path. Left to itself, the financial market will be of little use without the conversion of individual hearts. Pope Benedict said, “Where there are no just people, there is no justice. For that reason education in justice must be a priority.” The Pope added that the economy is built on sand. The current crisis has revealed that the unbridled pursuit of profit ultimately demolishes everything in its path. Left to itself, the financial market will be of little use without the conversion of individual hearts.

We are coming to realize that the root causes of the financial crisis are ethical and the present financial system is lacking clear ethical foundations. The financial crisis has also exposed a spiritual crisis and a distorted hierarchy of values. The inner sense and value of human work has been pushed to the background in the general struggle for profits.

As we observe the present crisis in our economy and the breakdown of financial systems that lacked ethical values and principles to guide responsible behavior, the words of Christ ring out loud and clear in our present day reality: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroys, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroy, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be.” (Mt.6:19-21) Where is our heart in this economic crisis? Have God’s people and the goods of our planet been regarded mainly in a functional utilitarian way? Have we placed too much trust in the unscrupulous behavior and unjust practices and misjudgment of some corporate and public service leaders, and have we brought much of this on ourselves by reaching out far too much with too little and always wanting more? Has greed taken over our lives? It is not only our present economic system that is being questioned, but our societal model that lacks clear ethical foundations. It is not just the bank balances that are in the red; it is not just the global economic system that has been rocked; our religious equilibrium and moral direction have also slipped out of control. The consumer culture is not morally neutral; as Christians who have a sacramental view of the world, we have the responsibility to be aware of the ties behind the things we buy, restoring the human relationship between producers and consumers. From the Christian perspective, the deep personalization of the economy demands a new course be taken that brings the human person back to the center of the whole economic system. Ethical and Moral Principles are needed while it is not my intent to give an in depth analysis of the financial and economic complexities of this present crisis, nor to offer specific financial policies and legislation that will pull us out of the present financial crisis, I, along with other religious leaders, can offer some Gospel, ecclesial directives and ethical and moral principles on which a new economic order must be placed.

To begin with, we need to remember that our ultimate hope lies in our relationship with the Lord, and our principal virtues are faith, hope, and love. This is a message that needs to be preached loudly and clearly for all of our people, especially for those caught in fear and despair because of the present economic situation. This is an opportunity to rediscover a life of trust in God and of simpler choices.

As we deal with the financial situation that has made unbridled profit the ultimate guide, we proclaim that human dignity is the cornerstone of our social teaching. This dignity involves the human being in all his or her facets. People are more than just consumers or producers; people are social and relational, moral and spiritual beings. We constantly must remember that all are made in the very image and likeness of God and are not to be exploited. The present crisis makes us realize that we are powerless to save ourselves with our own ingenuity and strength and we must put our total trust in our Risen Savior, Jesus Christ, who is our Good Shepherd and who will lead us through this dark valley.

Economic Justice for All

As we discern the causes of the present economic crisis, and work for a new economic order that will provide justice for all, that will place people ahead of profits, I recall some of the very wise and applicable teachings for all of us — individuals and families, business people and economists, government leaders and public servants — from the U.S. Catholic Bishops in their pastoral message, Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy: The Bishops stated that in an age absorbed in materialism, always seeking more pleasure and possessions, that as followers of Christ, we must base our lives on the beatitudes given to us by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the poor in spirit…blessed are the lowly…blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice.” The Bishops pointed out: “Our faith calls us to measure this economy not only by what it produces, but also by how it touches human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.”

In that message, the Bishops also remind us: “Every perspective on economic life, is human, moral and Christian, and must be shaped by three questions: What does the economy do for people? What does it do to people? And, how do people participate in it? …People shape the economy and in turn are shaped by it. Economic arrangements can be sources of fulfillment, of hope,… Strengthening moral vision is essential if the economy is to serve all.”

The quality of the national discussion about how to overcome the present economic crisis and to establish a just economic system for all, both in this country and throughout the world, must take into account how all of this will affect the poor. The Bishops state: “Decisions must be judged in light of what they do for the poor, what they do to the poor, and what they enable the poor to do for themselves. The fundamental moral criteria for all economic decisions, policies, and institutions is this: They must be at the service of all people, especially the poor.” The Bishops reminded us, “It is the dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, that is the criteria against which all aspects of economic life must be measured.”

A Foundation built on Cardinal Virtues

To restore an economic model based on trust, that puts people over profit, that guards and respects the dignity of each human person, calls us to lay a new ethical foundation that stresses dedication, sacrifice, utilizing all skills, and built on the four traditional cardinal virtues of prudence, courage, justice, and temperance. These virtues, not only produce good fruits for ourselves and society, but also give us a new power for progress and perfection.

Archbishop Nichols of Birmingham, England recently pointed out that these traditional cardinal virtues must be the ethical foundation for a new economic order. He points out that the virtue of prudence, helps us to discern the true good and the right way to achieve it. It is the opposite of rashness and carelessness. It is very much needed in an age of advanced technology when the presumption is that if something can be done, then it should be done. Courage gives us firmness and strength in difficulties, and helps us to strive for the highest ideals, enabling us to conquer fear and hardships and calls us to go beyond ourselves. It is the opposite of opportunism. Justice, which is the basis for true peace, calls us first and foremost to give to God what is due to God, and then to give to our neighbor what is due to our neighbor. Justice promotes equality and the common good. It is the opposite of self-centeredness and unrestricted profit-seeking. Temperance is that great virtue that moderates our use of all created goods, especially our desire for pleasure and possessions. This virtue is the one that helps us to check greed and self-indulgence. It is much needed in an age of consumerism and excess.

Good Stewards and Good Samaritans

The exercise of these virtues founded on the greater theological virtues of faith, hope and love will help us to establish a model of stewardship for all the goods of this earth, realizing that they are gifts from God, that they are to be used and not abused, and that they are meant for all. These virtues especially call us to be Good Samaritans in these difficult times and to reach out to the poor and vulnerable of our society. These virtues also guide us to use material things in a responsible manner, reminding us to place our heart on the true treasures of life, storing up treasures in Heaven.

Pastoral Recommendations to deal with crisis

As we deal with the economic crisis, I offer some pastoral insights about how we can use our faith to support us in these harsh times as we strive to be both good stewards and good Samaritans. A strong emotion that surfaces from the crisis is fear – for our families, our homes, our jobs, and for the future of our children. To deal with this fear and uncertainty, our priests and pastoral leaders need to preach and teach about Gospel ways to deal with this crisis. In our parishes and in our homes, we need
(Para 3)

ECONOMIA

prioridad.” El Papa agregó que la economía está construida en arena. La crisis actual ha puesto de manifiesto que la búsqueda desenfrenada de ganancias últimamente destruye todo en su paso. Dejado a sí mismo, el mercado financiero pierde su marco externo de referencia revelando la necesidad para apretar las regulaciones de las instituciones financieras. El modelo económico que hemos visto ha sido basado en consunción continua y sin límite de recursos limitados, y esto solo puede acabar en lágrimas y temor.

Estamos llegando a la realización de que la causa original de la crisis financiera es ética y el presente sistema financiero le hace falta fundaciones claras y éticas. La crisis financiera también ha expuesto un modelo económico profundo de la economía actual, ni de ofrecer pólizas y legislaciones financieras que nos sacara del presente crisis financiero, yo, junto con otros líderes religiosos, si puedo ofrecer algunos directivas evangélicas y eclesiásticas y principios morales y éticas donde un nuevo orden económico debe ser puesta. Para comenzar, necesitamos recordar que nuestra esperanza primaria cae en nuestra relación con nuestro Señor, y nuestras virtudes principales son fe, esperanza y amor. Este es un mensaje que se debe de predicar en voz alta y clara para toda nuestra gente, especialmente para los que se encuentran en temor y desesperación por la situación económica actual. Esta es una oportunidad para descubrir de nuevo una vida de confianza en Dios y de opciones más simples.

Al tratar con la situación financiera que ha hecho la desatada ganancia la guía primaria, proclamamos que la dignidad humana es el fundamento principal de nuestra enseñanza social. Esta dignidad envuelve el ser humano en todas sus facetas. Las personas son más que solamente consumidores o productores; la persona es social y relacional, moral y un ser espiritual. Constantemente debemos de recordar que todos hemos sido hechos en la misma imagen y semejanza de Dios y nunca debe ser de explotada. La crisis actual nos hace realizar que no somos capaces de salvarnos, nosotros mismos, con nuestro propio ingenio y fuerza y debemos de poner nuestra confianza total en nuestro Salvador Resucitado, Cristo Jesús, quien es nuestro Buen Pastor y que nos guiará por el valle oscuro.

Justicia Económica para todos

Al discernir las causas de la crisis económica actual, y trabajar por un nuevo orden económico que proveerá justicia para todos, que pondrá a gente antes de ganancias, la resguarda y respeta la dignidad de cada persona humana, nos exige de poner una fundación nueva y ética que enfatiza dedicación, sacrificio, utilizar todos nuestros dones, y que es construida en las cuatro virtudes trascendentes cardinales de dignidad, fortaleza, justicia y templanza. Estas virtudes, no solo producen frutos para nosotros mismos y la sociedad, sino también nos da un poder para progreso y perfección. El Arzobispo Nichols de Birmingham, Inglaterra recientemente señaló que estas virtudes trascendentes cardinales deben ser la base ética para un nuevo orden económico.

Buenos Administradores y Buenos Samaritanos

El ejercer estas virtudes, se basan en las más grandes virtudes teológicas de fe, esperanza y amor, nos ayudará a establecer un nuevo orden económico, y trabajando por un nuevo modelo de administración para todos los bienes de esta tierra, realizando que son regalos de Dios, que han de ser usados y no abusados, y que son para todos en esta época absorta en placas y posesiones, que como seguidores de Cristo debemos basar nuestras vidas en la economía, y sus virtudes son más que solamente consumidores o productores, los que se encuentran en temor y desesperación.

Una Base Creada en las Virtudes Cardinales

Para restaurar el modelo basado en confianza, que pone a la gente antes de ganancias, que resguarda y respete la dignidad de cada persona humana, nos exige de poner una fundación nueva y ética que enfatiza dedicación, sacrificio, utilizar todos nuestros dones, y que es construida en las cuatro virtudes trascendentes cardinales de dignidad, fortaleza, justicia y templanza. Estas virtudes, no solo producen buenos frutos para nosotros mismos y la sociedad, sino también nos da un poder para progreso y perfección. El Arzobispo Nichols de Birmingham, Inglaterra recientemente señaló que estas virtudes trascendentes cardinales deben ser la base ética para un nuevo orden económico.
The liturgy, especially the Eucharist, brings together worship and our entire life, especially in the market place, as our great means for reorienting our attitude toward justice and charity toward others. The Eucharist, of course, is the abundance of life, yet it is inseparable from the self-emptying love of Christ in whom our own lives are incorporated through the receiving of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Through the Eucharist, we share in the pain and suffering of others, underscoring our responsibility to feed the hungry and to care for all the needs of our sisters and brothers. As brothers and sisters of our Eucharistic Lord, we then realize how we share in the incarnation of Christ using the wonderful gift of human freedom to transform and improve the free market and to remedy its material deficiencies. In our ministries, especially religious education, we need to show a pastoral concern for the present reality and especially help to focus our attention on how we can reach out to those who have lost jobs and other basic items of life.

Most of the charitable Catholic agencies have seen significant increase of people seeking help due to this crisis. I encourage these agencies to continue to support those in need and encourage all people to donate to these agencies so that we can help provide and care for our brothers and sisters who are struggling to meet their basic needs. As we offer a helping hand, we also need to offer a listening ear and show compassion to all those in need. Consider volunteering to help provide food for a needy family, and to get trained to assist people to enroll in Medicaid, CHIP, and other public benefits. Volunteer time at an emergency center or soup kitchen.

Now is the time to have more community food drives, to collect food and other basic items on a parish level, at the workplace or among friends and families.

Basically, this is a time when we are called to show more charity, to be better Good Samaritans. Being more charitable means more than just being generous on an occasional basis or feeling some stirring empathy for another person in need. Charity is also about our need to give. Charity is a lifelong calling that comes from being disciples of Jesus and members of His Body.

To assist all the communities of our Diocese during this time of financial struggle, in accord with the support of the Presbyteral Council, I am reducing the diocesan assessment for this coming year on our parishes by 1%, which translates into about $157,000 savings for our parishes. God has blessed our Diocese recently with a financial gift that will enable us to reduce the assessment in this manner, and to provide for our operational expenses.

In God We Trust

The present financial crisis is a reminder not to put our trust not in the dollar, but rather in the words on the dollar: In God we Trust. It is a time to remember to place our trust in Divine Providence who takes care of the grass of the field and the birds of the air, and who will take even greater care of us. This is a time, in spite of our losses, to develop an attitude of gratitude, by being thankful for what we have, no matter how much or how little we have, and affirm to ourselves and others that God is providing for us. We need to heed the words of Jesus, “So do not worry…Your heavenly Father knows what you need…but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.” (Mt. 6:31-33)
Fr. Hubert Wade Jr., pastor of St. Mary, Star of the Sea, Ballinger, began the celebration of Holy Week by riding on a 2,200 pound longhorn steer named Rooster. Fr. Wade, stated that though the longhorn is not biblical and that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt or ass, if he had been in West Texas, he would have certainly ridden a longhorn. The procession went around the church and the faithful were encouraged to stand back about 10 feet.

The members of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the community of Stanton partake in the live stations of the cross during Holy Week. Station directors Senaida Garza & Mauro Sotelo would like to thank the youth group and the community of Stanton for participating in the live stations this year.

Parishioners of St. Joseph, Rowena, helped their pastor, Father Magnus Chilaka, celebrate his birthday following the Easter morning Mass on April 12, 2009. Surrounded by young children with their Easter baskets which he had blessed and CCD students with buckets of coins as their gift to him, Father was presented a birthday cake and a resounding “Happy Birthday” sung by the entire congregation. Later, as the younger children enjoyed the traditional Easter egg hunt, parishioners joined Father Magnus for coffee, donuts and a piece of the cake.

Confirmation was held at St. Joseph’s, Rowena, on Saturday, April 4, 2009. Sixteen young people from St. Joseph’s and two from St. Boniface in Olfen, were confirmed by Bishop Michael Pfeifer. Following the ceremony and Mass, a reception was held in St. Joseph Parish Hall for the confirmed, their families and sponsors.