Priest Reassignments
(Effective Summer 2011)
Rev. George Thirumangalam has been assigned to Menard/Junction.
Rev. Bhaskar Morugudi has been assigned to St. Francis, Abilene.
Rev. Maxim Fernandes has been assigned to St. Margaret’s, San Angelo (3-month program).
Rev. Quirino Cornejo has been assigned to Fort Stockton/Sanderson.
Rev. Francis Njoku has been assigned to Brownwood.
Rev. Serafin Avenido has been assigned to the Southside Odessa churches.
Rev. Raj Gali has been assigned to St. Lawrence (under guidance of Gully & Light).
Patrick Chris Okpanobong has been assigned to Southside Odessa.
Joseph Prem Sunil Thumma has been assigned to St. Stephen’s, Midland.
Rev. Joseph Uecker, C.P.P.S., will be moved to Reduced Active Ministry, Odessa.

Masses cancelled, prayers offered for end to drought, devastating fires

“He sends the rain on the righteous and unrighteous.”
-- Matthew 5:45

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

The book of Matthew assures Christians that the rain will fall on us all, both the good and the bad. But Matthew doesn’t talk about what we are to do when both the just and the unjust suffer from no rain. For months on end. For many, in fact, there have been no instances of measurable precipitation in well over six months. Many have experienced longer periods of drought.

The results have been devastating. Wildfires in Pecos, Andrews, Tom Green, Coke, Ector and Midland counties and elsewhere have scorched literally hundreds of thousands of acres of ranchland and destroyed scores of homes. The fires within the diocese don’t take into account those near Fort Davis and Alpine in the El Paso Diocese. The Rockhouse Fire -- which consumed over 314,000 acres in Presidio and Jeff Davis County -- is now the biggest fire in Texas history. In addition to much loss of property, some of the most scenic vistas in Texas were burned and tourism in the area is expected to take a direct hit.

Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, along with mayors in many cities throughout the diocese set aside April 17 as a Day of Prayer for Rain. The prayers didn’t begin or end on that date. People have been praying for what a lector at one Midland church called “our desperate need for rain” for many years now.

Does it do any good? A reader poll conducted at MyWestTexas.com, showed that 80 percent believe prayer will help bring moisture.

(Please See FIRES/4)
From the Bishop’s Desk

Tex-Mex bishops lament escalating violence, killings

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

At their recent meeting in March, the Tex-Mex Bishops, a committee composed of Bishops from Texas whose dioceses border the Rio Grande, and Bishops of northern Mexico (I am a member of this committee) addressed the critical issue of the ever-escalating violence and killing caused by drug lords and drug trafficking, and the enormous amount of arms being shipped into Mexico.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the bishops issued a letter in English and Spanish to be shared with all of the people we serve, both in Texas and Mexico, calling upon our people to be more pro-active when addressing this critical issue, and especially by offering prayers for the thousands who have been killed, the victims who have been injured, and for the working for peace and an end to the disruption that this has caused in the Church and wider society. Here follows the letter of the Tex-Mex Bishops:

To the beloved Catholic peoples of the dioceses on the Mexico-Texas border: As Bishops of the border region next to the Rio Grande and Bravo we wish to share our pastoral concern for the wellbeing of our families, our youth, and our communities. The concern deals with the border violence that has beset our towns and cities. Many innocent parents, young persons, children and the elderly suffer as a result of it. The immigrants who travel through our lands are special victims of extortion and abuses against their persons.

Violence destroys victims’ lives, and it threatens the hope of all. An entire generation is in danger of losing its dream to a deathly nightmare. Rooted in criminal enterprises, devoid of morals, this violence arises from the aggressive ancient enemy of human life and grace. Powerful interests have

(Please See BISHOP/23)
Los obispos Tex-Mex lamentan el aumento de la matanza y violencia

Por el Obispo Miguel D. Pfeiffer, OMI

En su más reciente reunión en marzo, los Obispos Tex-Mex, un comité compuesto de Obispos de Texas cuyas diócesis colindan con el Río Grande, y Obispos de la frontera norteña de México (yo soy miembro de este comité) lamentan la situación crítica de ambos lados del Río Grande, del aumento continuo de violencia y matanza causada por los narcotraficantes y el tráfico de drogas, y la enorme cantidad de armas importadas ilegalmente a México. A conclusión de su reunión, los Obispos Tex-Mex emitieron una carta en inglés y en español para los feligreses de sus diócesis en Texas y México. En dicha carta los Obispos llaman a los feligreses a ser más proactivos al enfrentarse a este asunto crítico, y especialmente por medio de ofrecer oraciones por los miles que han sido matados, las víctimas que han sido heridas, y trabajar por la paz y poner fin a la disparidad causada en la Iglesia y en toda la sociedad. Aquí sigue la carta de los Obispos Tex-Mex:

A los queridos feligreses Católicos de las diócesis fronterizas de Texas y México:

Deseamos como obispos de la región fronteriza del Río Bravo y Grande compartir nuestra preocupación pastoral sobre el bienestar de nuestras familias, nuestros jóvenes, nuestra sociedad. Nos referimos a la dinámica de violencia criminal que pesa sobre nuestras comunidades. Sufren muchos inocentes, madres y padres de familia, jóvenes, niños y ancianos. Sufren particularmente los inmigrantes por las extorsiones y agresiones en su contra.

La violencia destruye la vida de sus víctimas, y amenaza la esperanza de todos. Está en proceso de convertir las ilusiones de toda una generación en pesadillas de muerte. Con raíces en las fuerzas delinuentes y sin consciencia, la violencia surge últimamente en la agresividad del antiguo enemigo de la
Harold and Cindy Lemley, parishioners at St. Therese in Carlsbad, own the Buffalo Springs Ranch in northern Tom Green and southern Coke counties. The above photo shows the Lemley’s ranch reduced to cinder. Lemley said the majority of his ranch was destroyed by fire.

According to the Texas Forest Service, since fire season started, Nov. 15, 2010, fire crews and forest officials have responded to 9,179 fires that have charred 2,285,620 acres across the state.

Of the three wildfires that remained active as of May 5 -- fires which had burned 498,000 acres -- two are within the borders of the Diocese of San Angelo: the Oasis Fire in Kimble County, which had scorched 9,050 acres as of the first Thursday in May, was 75 percent contained, and was centered four miles south of Junction. The Deaton Cole fire in Val Verde County was 75 percent contained after it burned 175,000 acres 30 miles southwest of Ozona. The Rockhouse Fire in Presidio and Jeff Davis counties, to the west of the diocese, was 95 percent contained.

In issuing the proclamation for the Day of Prayer for Rain, Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer recalled a Scripture promise.

“We are all children of God,” Pfeifer said, “and if a child asks his father for water, he will provide.”

In addition to writing to mayors in the diocese, the bishop also requested from over 100 pastors at churches of other denominations to observe the prayer request.

Although rain has fallen since that April day, including storms in and around San Angelo, and a wide band of light to moderate rain that fell from Big Spring east on April 29, no one would for a moment argue that it was enough to put an end to the long drought West Texans face.

Midland mayor Wes Perry told the Midland Reporter-Telegram on the Day of Prayer for Rain, “We ask our gracious God to bless West Texas with rains that will quench our thirsty land and fill our lakes and reservoirs.”

Midland remains in a particularly bleak scenario. Voluntary water rationing requests have been issued after the city was warned by the Colorado River Municipal Water District that if usage exceeds what the city is contracted to use from the CRMWD, the district would shut off the water flow to Midland.

Through May 5, Midland-Odessa has had five days of any sort of measurable precipitation since September 26, 2010 -- 224 days.

In that time, only .17 inches has been measured. In the same period, Fort Stockton has recorded .08 inches.

The U.S. Drought Monitor Map, which was started in 2000, showed in early May that the amount of land in exceptional drought in West Texas was the most since records began.

The long range forecast remained bleak, and the hot, windy dry weather saw no signs of abating. The forecast for the central Permian Basin on the first weekend of May called for temperatures above 100.

“Midland and Odessa remain under exceptional drought, the highest drought level,” said KPEJ weatherman Darrell Ward, a parishioner in Midland. “San Angelo and the Concho Valley are under extreme drought, the second-highest level.”

Despite the conditions, West Texans continued to try to have a sense of humor whenever possible. During one Facebook conversation about the weather, Brian Wimberley, a science teacher at Trinity School in Midland, brought to mind Texans’ unending optimism with this familiar anecdote: “When it finally starts to rain again,” Wimberley wrote, “it’s really going to come down. Wait and see.”
ACTS movement continues to grow, diocesan representative named

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

ACTS, which stands for Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service, is a parish-based spiritual renewal program that was born in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas some 25 years ago. During the past few years, a number of our parishes have taken part in the ACTS program which has brought about a spiritual renewal in the people who have shared in ACTS weekend programs.

The purpose of the weekend is to invite the retreat participants to a new relationship with our Lord and fellow parishioners through Adoration and daily prayer; through Community in one’s parish as a member of the body of Christ; through Theology encouraging an intellectual and spiritual growth that gives fruits in our daily lives; and finally to encourage a spirit of Service to our Lord, our parish and each other. Participants experience God’s love and joy through the weekend, returning to their faith community with a deeper love for each other and an increased desire to become more involved in their parish community. This mission is continued and enhanced by scheduled gatherings of the ACTS community, prayer groups and by evangelizing or service projects.

USCCB calls on Congress to stop funding Planned Parenthood

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], of which I am a member, has issued a media statement formally calling on Congress to stop funding Planned Parenthood. This media statement came from the Bishops through Dan Cardinal DiNardo, who leads the Pro-Life Committee for the USCCB, and states that whether to fund the largest abortion network in the country is not one of those hard choices. We should not use hard-earned tax dollars to kill the unborn.

The U.S. Bishops make it clear that the efforts by Planned Parenthood to divert the discussion away from abortion, and try to make the debate about women’s access to basic health care is false.

In his statement, Cardinal DiNardo points out that defunding Planned Parenthood does not divert one cent from health care services for women. In fact, these same tax dollars can now be used for the celebration of Mass. I share with you here what is the proper wine to be used for the celebration of Mass taken from the Code of Canon Law and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

What is valid altar wine to be used at Mass?

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Periodically I am asked by people what constitutes valid altar wines that must be used during the celebration of Mass? This is indeed an important issue, because invalid matter would render even the most perfect renewal of the sacred species as fruitless and void. This is why the Church insists that only certain valid altar wine be used for the celebration of Mass. I share with you here what the proper wine to be used for the celebration of Mass should be taken so that the wine intended for the celebration of the Eucharist is well conserved and has not soured. It is altogether forbidden to use wine of doubtful authenticity or provenance, for the Church requires certainty regarding the conditions necessary for the validity of the Sacraments. Nor are other drinks of any kind to be admitted for any reason, as they do not constitute valid matter.”

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee ...

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Each time we pray the Hail Mary, and we probably pray it several times a day, we proclaim our traditional Catholic belief based on the Gospel of St. Luke that Mary is indeed the Mother of God – the Mother of Jesus Christ, true God and true man. “Mother of God” – this is the highest title ever given to a human being, and in God the Father’s design, God chose the humble young peasant girl from Nazareth for the greatest role in all of human history—to be the Mother of God, the Mother of the Messiah, our Savior. With a deep spirit of humility and profound faith, Mary simply offered herself to fulfill God’s plan with the renowned words, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word.”

In the beautiful month of May, we honor our mothers who have given us life, and the first mother we want to honor is our spiritual Mother, Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. Jesus, as He was dying on the cross, gave us His own Mother to be our Mother. Hence, first and foremost, in the month of mothers, we thank God for giving us such a wonderful Mother, and we offer her honor and gratitude for all that she does for us as a kind and loving Mother. A special way to honor Mary is by renewing our devotion to her, especially striving each day to imitate her life, especially her spirit of faith, hope and loving surrender to the will of God. Her theme song should be our constant prayer, “May it be done to me according to your word.”

As we honor our mothers when we celebrate their special day, Mother’s Day, on May 8, we thank them for giving us life, and for the countless sacrifices they have made to help us be who we are. This is a day to tell our mothers, beginning with our Blessed Mother, that we love them and that we are grateful to them for all that they do for us. And, it is a day, yes, to pray with Mary, asking God to shower many new blessings upon them. Happy Mothers Day for all our dear mothers, and thank you for all that you do for your individual families and for our Church.

(Please See ACTS/22)
Diocese of San Angelo

50th Anniversary Mass

11 a.m.,
Sunday
October 16, 2011

San Angelo Coliseum
San Angelo

FROM THE ARCHIVES: APRIL 23, 1971

Editor’s Note: As part of our coverage commemorating the 50th anniversary of the diocese, the Angelus will publish historical articles during 2011. This month’s story, on the closing of Abilene Central Catholic School, was originally published April 23, 1971 edition of the Texas Concho Register (the newspaper which would ultimately come to be called The West Texas Angelus).

ABILENE -- The end of an era has finally arrived. Central Catholic Elementary School will close its doors in May, at the end of the spring term.

The Rev. James Bridges, of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, announced on April 9 that the decision was made after the Parish Council tabulated the results of a poll of the 356 families in the parish supporting the school.

Father Bridges said about two-thirds of the ballots mailed to the families were returned, and 78-percent of the families responding went along with the recommendation that the school close.

Father Bridges said Bishop Stephen A. Leven of the San Angelo Diocese gave Bridges the authority to act on the recommendation of the council and that “the school will close.”

In the Sunday bulletin, Father Bridges announced, “all attempts to find a buyer for the buildings had failed and there was a strong desire among parishioners to keep Central and develop it into a modern comprehensive Catholic formation and worship centre. Thus, awaiting the approval of the bishop, I plan in the near future to begin this development by moving to Central with Fr. Connors remaining in residence at Sacred Heart.

Beginning in May, the Sunday evening Mass will be held at Central rather than at Sacred Heart Church.”

Bridges said the closing is due to the low enrollment at the school as related to the amount of money needed to operate the school.

He said the cost of maintaining six grades and a kindergarten is about $3,000 per month more than what the school takes in, a cost borne by the parish. And, he said, that figure does not include the payment on the building.

“We didn’t feel like, for the expense involved, it reached enough people to warrant continuing the program,” Bridges said.

There are 110 children this semester in the school, Bridges said, a drop of an average of 35 percent per grade from last year’s enrollment.

Central Catholic High School closed before the 1970-71 school year began due to financial difficulty.

The school is staffed by seven religious sisters and five lay persons. He said the nuns would be moved to other schools, but other sisters would replace them for the formation work.

Abilene Public Schools Superintendent A.E. Wells said Friday night that no further discussion has been made of purchasing the Catholic facilities since the recent bond proposal failed. (During deliberations on whether to seek approval of bonds, the Abilene Board of Education discussed the possibility of buying or renting the facilities.)

Wells said the schools had not been in contact with the parish on the subject. He declined further comment until he could talk with board members and staff.

Parish banners

In anticipation of the Diocese’s 50th Anniversary Celebration in San Angelo on October 16, the San Angelo Coliseum, we are asking that each parish prepare a banner to hang in the coliseum during the Liturgy, much like we did for the year 2000 celebration.

The banner should be 5-6 feet long and 3-4 foot wide. The top of the banner should have Velcro on it so that it can be looped over the railing around the arena and fastened on itself. It will have to loop over a one-inch diameter rail and fasten back on itself. Please make your banners strong enough so that they will not begin to fall apart when handled while they are being put up on display. Please have your parishes go to work on these during the summer so they can be ready in October.

50th Jubilee Choir Forming

Music at the Mass commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Diocese of San Angelo, will be led by the Diocesan Choir, as commissioned by the Liturgy Commission, and it will consist of volunteer choristers representing various parts of the Diocese.

If you would like to participate in singing in the choir for this celebration, please register at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Shrine, 1401 E. Garden Lane, Midland, or call 432.682.2581 before April 25. Almost all music selections will be fully bilingual: English and Spanish. Once the number of participants is determined and copyright permissions are obtained, a music rehearsal packet containing recordings and sheet music will be mailed to you in advance so that you may prepare before attending the rehearsals.

If you have any questions you may contact Fr. Edward de León, OMI, Chair of the Liturgy Commission at edleoni@aol.com.

One Mass

Bishop Michael Pfeifer has announced that on Sunday, October 16, the day that marks the 50th anniversary of the diocese’s official establishment, only one Mass will be celebrated throughout the diocese — at 11 a.m. at the San Angelo Coliseum. No masses will be said except for the anniversary Mass in San Angelo and pastors should advise their parishioners of this. Ordinary masses of anticipation and perhaps added masses of anticipation will be said on Saturday, Oct. 15 at individual parishes, but there will be only one Mass in the entire diocese on October 16.” Those unable to attend the anniversary Mass in San Angelo are dispensed of their obligation the weekend of Oct. 15-16.
Our nation, government have the duty to protect marriage

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

President Obama and his administration is the most pro-abortion administration ever, and also is now the most hostile to the traditional understanding of marriage and family.

President Obama has stated that he believes the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA], which defines marriage for federal purposes as being between one man and one woman, is unconstitutional. He has instructed his Justice Department to stop defending this legislation against lawsuits. Obama’s decision, in effect, opens the door for legislation favoring same-sex unions, which regrettably the President favors.

The DOMA controversy is the latest development in the 15-year debate over same-sex “marriage.” In 1996 Congress – both the House and the Senate – overwhelmingly passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. DOMA denies federal benefits to “married” people of the same-sex and allows states to ignore those “marriages” sanctioned in other states. Thirty states currently have constitutional amendments banning same-sex “marriage.”

Anthony Picarello, General Counsel for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, reacted to Obama’s decision stating, “If the definition of marriage is discrimination, then supporters of marriage are bigots. We could be subject to all manner of government punishments and sanctions.” Picarello added, “You have the prestige of the Presidency now associated with the proposition that the definition of marriage between a man and a woman represents discrimination.”

I strongly concur with the words of the statement issued by Archbishop Timothy Dolan, President of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops, who reacted to the President’s decision saying, “Our nation and government have the duty to recognize and protect marriage, not tamper with and redefine it, nor to caricature the deeply held beliefs of so many citizens as discrimination.” Archbishop Dolan stated President Obama’s decision is “alarming and grave injustice.” Let it be stated clearly from the very beginning, the position of the Catholic Church, and many other churches, of not giving approval to same-sex marriages, can in no way be claimed as discrimination. To say this, would mean that God discriminates, but God has clearly determined, that marriage can only be between a man and a woman, and Sacred Scripture teaches that homosexual acts (same-sex unions) are immoral and bring about Divine condemnation. At the same time, it must be clearly pointed out that the Catholic Church, through its highest

On Catholics, non-Catholics and civil ceremonies

By Rev. Tom Barley
Judicial Vicar
Diocese of San Angelo

Why is it that if a Catholic marries in a civil wedding or in another church without a dispensation and a non-Catholic does the same thing, the Catholic’s marriage is invalid and the non-Catholic’s marriage is valid, given that there are no prior marriages or other impediments?

The simple answer is that the Catholic is bound by Canonical Form while the non-Catholic is not. Canonical Form means a Catholic must be married by a priest or deacon according to the rites of the church with two witnesses. This sounds simple enough and is very customary.

Canonical Form comes to us from many centuries ago when all of Europe was Catholic. All recognized marriages had weddings officiated by a priest. At some point couples began living together without a marriage. Times were hard. People worked to survive. A trend developed where the men would leave the family and move to a place where his living situation was not known – maybe 20 miles down the trail or to the next town. Travel was very dangerous for a man with companions and nearly impossible for a woman with children without protection. If the woman did find her husband, the man’s word was always believed

Chastity:
Crown of triumph for young people

A reflection from the Confirmation class at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ozona

“[Before celebrating Confirmation with the youth of our parishes, I send them a letter, asking them to share with me their reflections on the Holy Spirit, the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I also ask that they share with me their reflections on the pastoral letter I send them on chastity – Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? Here follows the reflections I received from the Confirmation class in Ozona.]

--Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

“The wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to live our lives like Jesus wants us to. We have learned that the main purpose of the Holy Spirit is to tell us about Jesus and glorify Him. The gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to serve others without counting the cost, and to share the good news with all people.”

“Our reflection on the virtue of Chastity is acknowledging that our sexuality is a gift from God. When this gift from God is used in accord with God’s will, we give glory to God and actually build up the Kingdom of God by being faithful to our state in life. When you decide firmly to lead a clean life, chastity will not be burden on you; it will be a crown of triumph. We are all at times like the blind man, but our faith opens our eyes to see the light of the world, Jesus Christ.”
**Catholic Voices**

**As evangelizing Catholics, what do we have to offer?**

By Stephen Kent  
Catholic News Service

It certainly was not the most propitious time for marketing a new religion. Despite a tumultuous welcome for its founder, just a few days later he was executed as a common criminal, his closest followers fleeing in fear to cower in an undisclosed location.

This year, neither are the days after Easter such a glorious time, what with two dozen priests in one archdiocese suspended and a religious order in the Pacific Northwest paying millions of dollars for abuse by its member priests.

How to evangelize this religion? Some 2,000 years later, as we celebrate the anniversary of Easter, one person is "stunned by how wretched the church is, by how her members fail to follow Christ." And this was said by Pope Benedict XVI.

What does this religion born in apparent failure and continuing to stun even its leader have to offer to the world? Hope.

This is a week when hope was born. Not the kind of hope that the world thinks of as exemplified by a headline on the cover of a weekly news magazine.

"In a world gone to hell, thank God for a wedding," the magazine proclaimed about "Kate the Great," the bride-to-be of Britain's Prince William.

We can thank God for more than a wedding. We thank God for a resurrection!

The new evangelization: What do we have to offer?

The church is not an organization or an institution, as Pope Benedict said in an interview last year, but a living organism in which all the members work in relation to each other because they are all united because of Christ.

Evangelization efforts are dealing with people who accept what the secular world offers as being all there is. We must show them more, for we are not asking them to join an organization, to become a member of an association.

The new evangelization is not a program but a mode of thinking, seeing and experiencing, Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl said in an address on the topic.

"We are interrelated and we have obligations to one another," he said. Catholics "must know the faith well enough and be comfortable to share it. We have to know who Christ is."

Hope was central to the remarks said by the pope during a series of interviews contained in the 2010 book "Light of the World."

"I believe that these two feelings belong together: the deep shock over the wretchedness, the sinfulness of the church and the deep shock over the fact that he (Christ) doesn't drop this instrument, but that he works with it; that he never ceases to show himself through and in the church."

What provides more hope, a fairy tale wedding or the risen Christ?

Best wishes to the royal couple, who will provide the world some cheer.

Hope, however, brings joy.

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

---

**When conflicted, remember the death penalty is not God's penalty**

By Tony Magliano  
Catholic News Service

The crucifixion of Jesus should have been enough to convince humanity and at least all Christians, that capital punishment is not of God.

One would think that the suffering endured by our Lord's execution would intuitively touch human hearts and persuade society to reject the inhumanity of this ungodly practice.

The death penalty is raw, brutal punishment, especially when it's directed at the innocent.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org), since 1973, 138 people in 26 U.S. states have been released from death row due to evidence of their innocence.

The very real possibility of executing an innocent person is reason enough to ban capital punishment altogether. But there are also other strong reasons for ending the death penalty.

For one, it is inhumane. The Death Penalty Information Center notes that, of the 1,245 people who have been executed in the United States since 1976, 1,071 were killed through lethal injection, 157 through electrocution, 11 in gas chambers, three were shot to death by firing squads and three were hanged.

Next, consider the cost. It is far more expensive to taxpayers to complete the process of executing a person as compared to keeping a person in prison for life, contends the Death Penalty Information Center.

It states, for example: "The California death penalty system costs taxpayers $114 million per year beyond the costs of keeping convicts locked up for life." And the most comprehensive study in the United States found that capital punishment cost North Carolina $2.16 million per execution over the costs of sentencing murderers to life imprisonment.

Now, what about deterrence?

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, when polled, 88 percent of former and present presidents of the country's top academic criminological societies reject the argument that the death penalty is a deterrent to murder.

And consistent with past years, the 2009 FBI Uniform Crime Report showed that the highest homicide rate in the country was in the South, even though that region accounts for 80 percent of executions. The Northeast, with less than 1 percent of all executions, once again had the nation's lowest murder rate.

Since states that allow the death penalty clearly run the risk of killing an innocent person, and since capital punishment is far more expensive to taxpayers than life imprisonment, and since the death penalty does not deter murder, why do millions of Americans -- including millions of Catholics -- favor it?

The obvious answer is vengeance. It all comes down to raw, unholy vengeance.

But killing does not bring peace; forgiveness does. This is the lesson we can learn from Bud Welch, whose 23-year-old daughter was one of 168 people killed April 19, 1995, by convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh.

Before McVeigh was executed, Welsh asked himself, "What does Bud Welch need to do to move on?"

In reflection, Welch realized that only forgiveness leads to reconciliation and healing. He also realized that executing McVeigh would be an act of vengeance and rage.

"And vengeance and rage are the very reasons that Julie and the 167 others were killed," Welch concluded.

We all know that, from the cross, Jesus exclaimed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

But what many still do not want to know is the Lord's profound lesson here that Bud Welch discovered: Only forgiveness leads to reconciliation and healing -- a Good Friday lesson that the whole world needs to learn! 

---

CRIMINOLOGY EXPERTS do not believe the death penalty effectively deters people from committing murder.

The death penalty significantly reduces the number of homicides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTALLY INACCURATE</th>
<th>LARGELY INACCURATE</th>
<th>LARGELY ACCURATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northwestern University School of Law's Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology ©2009 CNS
**Knowledge of your religion vital when sharing**

By Therese J. Borchard
Catholic News Service

Imagine that you are 18 and have just been dropped off at college. Your folks waved goodbye, tears in their eyes, and now it's all you.

What do you do?

You get online or go to a bookstore and you buy the book "The Freshman Survival Guide," because I swear it covers everything. I so wished I had a resource like it when I was sweating it out my freshman year.

I keenly remember the awkwardness of that first night at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind. We had an ice cream social, and although I have a killer sweet tooth, my stomach was so twisted up that I didn't eat anything for at least 48 hours. I freaked out, called home: "Come get me!"

But somehow things fell into place.

Busted Halo (www.bustedhalo.com) editors Nora Bradbury-Haehl and Bill McGarvey offer a comprehensive, hip, perfect resource for freshmen. They cover every topic that fits into college living, such as time-management and studying tips, living with a weird roommate, sex and dating, alcohol and drugs, going Greek and other clubs, online navigation advice, and even diet considerations.

However, Chapter 17, "Growing Up Your Religion," is my favorite, because it nails the issues that most college students confront:

- Not dropping their faith just because everyone else is. The authors cite a recent UCLA study that found that 52 percent of the students interviewed said they attended religious services frequently the year before entering college, but by their junior years attendance had dropped to 29 percent.

In the chapter's subsection "Decide, Don't Just Slide," the authors write: "Whatever you choose, don't just slide out of your beliefs-- make a conscious choice about religion. Inform yourself, then decide. Even if your decision is 'Not now,' consider that in the future the question of religious identity may (and probably will) come up again."

- Academia isn't necessarily the antonym for faith. I have heard one too many graduates tell me, "College ruined my faith."

There are some atheist professors who will argue logic and reason, and why both of those things are incompatible with religion. But there are also professors who have strong religious convictions.

According to the survival guide: "Despite the stereotype that college professors are an atheistic bunch hell-bent on making sure nobody leaves college with an ounce of faith, a recent study has revealed that professors are a surprisingly spiritual group. Four out of five describe themselves as being a 'spiritual person.' Three out of five consider themselves to be religious, and a similar number (61 percent) report that they pray/meditate."

- Some people practicing religion are hypocrites, but many are not.

I am asked all of the time how I can love the church despite the sexual abuse scandals, how I can believe in Catholic tradition, given all of the sins in the church's history. I have done enough research now to answer that question without coming off as overly defensive and emotional.

However, in college, I didn't know how to respond. Most freshmen and sophomores who want to fit in haven't been educated all that well on what it means to be Catholic.

"The Freshman Survival Guide" offers this advice: Seek out a master in your religious tradition just as you seek out masters in your field of study.

Most students can appreciate having a mentor in their studies, either an upperclassman with the same major or a professor who is generous enough to extend office hours.

So I challenge them: Why not do the same for your faith? So that you can grow in understanding and be able to respond to abrasive, Catholic-hating jerks.

---

**Forget flowers, where have all the rebels gone?**

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

Where have all the rebels gone?

I grew up during the Vietnam War and came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, when political involvement and protests were a fact of life. The question sometimes haunts me: What happened to passionate intensity?

Not that I claim to have been a firebrand myself. Indeed, I was pretty tame. The old saying goes, "If you can remember the '60s you weren't really there," and I actually remember the '60s well. So I was probably a good observer but hardly a radical.

Looking back on those days, however, I remember the moral fervor that surrounded us. Why have we become so tepid? Why do so few really burn with passion for change despite our desperately troubled times?

At the end of March, we discovered that there are rebels still among us. They're the same people who lived with conviction in the '60s and have kept the flame burning since. The five members of the Disarm Now Plowshares have been sentenced in federal court to imprisonment for an act of civil disobedience at a U.S. Navy nuclear weapons base in Bangor, Wash., in 2009.

Every one of them is older than I am, and remember. I'm old enough to recall the '60s. I'm an invertebrate obituary reader, and nowadays, when I read the obits, the first thing I check is the birth date, because I'm getting to that age where contemporaries are beginning to cash in.

So it was thrilling to read the March 29 issue of National Catholic Reporter and see that these five are not just still alive, but vibrantly and morally alive. Two Jesuits, Father Steve Kelly, 61, and Father Bill Bichsel, 82, will serve prison terms. Joining them for various amounts of time are Susan Crane, 65, Sacred Heart Sister Anne Montgomery, 83, and Lynne Greenwald, 61.

NCR reports that the Bangor base is the west coast home of the Trident nuclear-armed submarine, and that the Natural Resources Defense Council said in 2006 that 2,364 nuclear warheads were stored at that site.

The Disarm Now Plowshares Five found those facts morally unacceptable, a blight on America. So they cut through the fences, thus peacefully trespassing, and waited four hours for their arrest. Both retired Detroit auxiliary bishop Thomas Gumbleton and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark testified on their behalf.

I respect their courage, but again, it makes me ask, Where are the rebels of today's generation? Where are the passionate 20- and 30-somethings?

During the Vietnam War, students were mobilized to protest because the selective service draft brought the war directly into their lives. Today, we are fighting our longest war in history in Afghanistan, for reasons many of us are hard-pressed to explain.

(Please See CALDAROLA/23)
The courage to refuse to cooperate in evil

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

An electrician by trade, Tim Roach is married with two children and lives about an hour outside Minneapolis. He was laid off his job in July 2009. After looking for work for more than a year and a half, he got a call from his local union in February 2011 with the news anyone who is unemployed longs for, not just a job offer, but one with responsibility and a good salary of almost $70,000 a year.

He ultimately turned the offer down, however, because he discovered that he was being asked to oversee the electrical work at a new Planned Parenthood facility under construction in St. Paul on University Avenue. Aware that abortions would be performed there, he knew his work would involve him in "cooperation with evil," and he courageously declined the offer.

Significant moral issues can arise if we knowingly cooperate in another's evil actions, even though we don't perform those evil actions ourselves. Some helpful "principles of cooperation" have been developed over the centuries in the Catholic moral tradition as a way of discerning how properly to avoid, limit, or distance ourselves from evil, especially intrinsically evil actions. In particular, these principles enable us to recognize that there are certain real-life situations when we must refuse to cooperate.

A simple example can be helpful to illustrate some of these principles: suppose a nurse were to hand the instruments to a physician performing a direct abortion, or turn on the suction machine used to dismember the unborn baby. If the nurse intended the abortion, she would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil. Yet even if she personally opposed the abortion and did not share the intention of the physician performing the procedure, there would still be grave moral objections to her cooperation. Because she would be participating in circumstances essential to the performance of that particular act of abortion, like handing instruments or turning on the suction machine, her cooperation would be morally unacceptable, and would be known as immediate material cooperation.

The key point, then, is that both types of cooperation (formal and immediate material) are morally unacceptable. Whenever we are faced with the temptation to cooperate in intrinsically evil actions like abortion, destruction of embryos for stem cell research, euthanasia, assisted suicide, or direct sterilization, morally we must refuse. This is different, for example, from what theologians call "remote cooperation" in another's evil, as, for example, is done by the postal carrier who delivers letters to an abortion facility; although what occurs there might sicken the carrier's stomach, delivering the mail would not constitute an essential ingredient to the wrongful destruction of human life that occurs there.

On the other hand, driving someone to an abortion clinic so she can undergo an abortion, assisting as a nurse in the operating room during a tubal ligation, or thawing out human embryos from the deep freeze so that a researcher might vivisect them for their stem cells — even if we opposed the practices — all would constitute unacceptable forms of immediate material cooperation with evil.

Real world decisions about cooperation can be daunting and complex. Pharmacists, for example, cannot in good conscience provide the morning-after pill for use by a woman who has had consensual sex and wishes to avoid a pregnancy. The morning-after pill has a contraceptive effect, and may sometimes also work by altering the uterine environment and preventing implantation of an embryo (causing a pregnancy loss-abortion). Even if the pharmacist personally opposed both contraception and abortion, by providing the pill and knowing the purposes to which it would be put, he would cooperate in wrongdoing in an immediate and material way.

In fact, a pharmacist in these circumstances would not even be able to refer the woman to a co-worker, because if he were to do so, he would still be cooperating in an essential way in the causal chain leading to the prevention or ending of a pregnancy. He would rather have to decline to assist her, forcing the woman herself to initiate a new sequence of choices and actions that would not involve him — approaching a different pharmacist, for example, who might then provide the drug. For a pharmacist to choose the morally correct course of action in this situation not only requires fortitude, but also could cause significant tension with his supervisor, the pharmacy owner and with others who work there, particularly if such a scenario had not been discussed ahead of time.

Modern health care is replete with situations that tempt us to cooperate immorally in evil. Clearly, certain activities like abortion are not authentic medicine at all, but rather, acts of immorality veiled behind the professionalism of white coats and institutional protocols. Great care, discretion, and courage are required as we seek to avoid cooperation in medical situations where immoral practices may not only be tolerated, but even at times almost imposed on us.
Odessa’s southside Catholics lose longtime priests

The Angelus

Rev. Mark Miller, C.PP.S., and Rev. Joseph Uecker, C.PP.S., two fixtures with the Catholic churches on the southside of Odessa -- St. Anthony, St. Joseph and St. Martin de Porras Mission -- will be leaving their positions at the end of June.

Fr. Uecker to reduce role, Miller reassigned by Precious Blood order

Fr. Uecker has been elected to the General Council of the Society of the Precious Blood, based in Rome. The position will require a great deal of global travel and Miller will be based in Missouri where he will also pastor two parishes. Miller has been a key figure in social justice issues while in Odessa, and will continue to speak out concerning issues such as capital punishment.

Fr. Uecker is also ending his pastorate at the southside churches at the end of June. Uecker will continue to reside in Odessa and will be on reduced active ministry and will help at his former parish or elsewhere and have a smaller role in such programs as the Engaged Encounter.

Fr. Serafin Avenido, currently pastor of St. Mary Queen of Peace in Brownwood, has been named pastor of the southside churches in Odessa.

Patrick Chris Okpanobong, who will be ordained in Big Spring June 5, will also be assigned to assist Avenido at the southside Odessa churches.

New Roman Missal: Why is the Mass changing?

By Msgr. Maurice J. Voity
Diocesan Liturgical Commission

Some people have asked “Why is the Mass changing, Father?” I really have to answer that the Mass is not changing, but the English translation that we use is being revised and updated. It doesn’t mean that the Mass we have been celebrating in English for the past 40 or so years is wrong. The texts used for our current English Mass were all approved by the Holy See.

The current translation was drafted during the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), and in some respects, was done pretty quickly, at least by church standards.

So, you ask, what are we translating from in order to get the English translation? That’s easy to explain. All Masses celebrated in the Latin Rite (the largest rite in the Church, where Mass was exclusively celebrated in the Latin language worldwide until the Second Vatican Council) use the official Latin texts for Mass which are the standard for celebrating the Eucharist in the Latin Rite. So, as Mass began to be celebrated in the local languages (vernacular) of the people, these texts were to be accurate translations of the Latin. In actuality, though, many different translations of Mass in English were being used around the world, depending on which country and which episcopal conference the Mass was being celebrated.

Pope Benedict XVI has instructed that there be a review and revision of these translations, in order that Mass celebrated in the various languages of the world will more closely adhere to the official Latin documents. This is what has brought about the Revision of the Roman Missal in English.

There are some changes that you will immediately notice. For instance, at the present time the celebrant says, “The Lord be with you,” and we respond, “And also with you.” This will change to have us respond, “And with your spirit.” So where did we get that?

Those of you who are little bit older will remember the words of the Latin Mass. The priest said, “Dominus vobiscum,” and the people responded, “Et cum spiritu tuo.” So in the original Latin, the words are “The Lord be with you” and “And with your spirit.” In the revision, we are directly translating from the Latin. Interestingly enough, there doesn’t seem to have been a change from the very beginning in many other languages used for the celebration of Mass. For example, Mass in Spanish, has always used “El Señor esté con ustedes” (the Lord be with you), and the people respond, “Y con tu espíritu” (and with your spirit).

Another change you will notice is how we say the Creed. Currently we say, “We believe in one God, etc.” In the revised Mass, we will say “I believe in one God, etc.” This again is a direct translation of the Latin, which says “I,” and not “we.” That sort of makes sense, doesn’t it? It is each of us individually who is professing his or her faith.

These are just a few of the changes you will see when the Revised Roman Missal takes effect in our country on the First Sunday of Advent this year. During the next months, your parish priests and others involved in the liturgical ministry of your parish will be working hard to introduce you to the changes, in order that we will be fairly comfortable with them when the changes take effect.

It is important to remember that what we have been doing was not wrong in any way. Now the Holy Father has directed that Mass in the English language should be celebrated with the same translation around the world. So, whether you attend Mass in English here in the United States, or in England, or Ireland, or Australia, or New Zealand, or Canada, or wherever, you will hear the same translation.

I know it will take some getting used to, and I also know that change isn’t always easy. If we keep in mind that we are striving for a uniformity in our Eucharistic celebrations, perhaps it will become easier. We are One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. We generally can translate the word “Catholic” as “Universal.” It is this universality in our worship that is so important. By using one translation for our English-language celebrations, hopefully we will gain a greater awareness of this universality and catholicity which is one of the four marks of the Church as enunciated in the Creeds.

Please be open to the changes, and listen and study them as they begin to be presented in your parishes in the coming months.

Reflections from Earth Day 2011

Bishop's Note: I celebrated Earth Day Mass with the children and personnel at Angelo Catholic School recently. Enclosed are the reflections that the children shared regarding what Earth Day means to them.

Why should we as Catholics celebrate Earth Day? We, as Catholics, should celebrate and honor Earth Day because:

By ACS Sixth-grade class:
1. God gave us dominion over the Earth and animals. It is our responsibility to protect, preserve and love this precious gift that God has given us.
2. We can make a difference. The Earth is not just a planet, but a gift from God.
3. How we take care of the Earth shows how we love God.
4. God gave us this beautiful planet to love and protect as long as we live.

By the ACS Fourth-grade class:
1. Our trees are being deforested; animals live in the forests.
2. God created the animals on the Earth; we need to take care of the animals and love them like St. Francis of Assisi did.
3. On Earth Day, like on every day, we should pick up the trash and recycle. We want to have a clean Earth with no more pollution.

By the ACS Third-grade class:
1. The Earth is my home: I should take care of the present God gave me.
2. The Earth is special, because God made it with his own hands.
3. The Earth is a Garden of Eden for us.

By the ACS Second-grade class:
1. The Earth is God's creation.
2. God created the Earth because he loves us so much.
3. The Earth is home to butterflies; butterflies teach us about God's love. We love butterflies.
4. We can take care of the plants, trees and grass.
5. The plants give us oxygen.
6. God made rainbows as a sign of his covenant with us. We love rainbows and we love God.

By ACS Sixth-grade class:
1. God gave us dominion over the Earth and animals. It is our responsibility to protect, preserve and love this precious gift that God has given us.
2. We can make a difference. The Earth is not just a planet, but a gift from God.
3. How we take care of the Earth shows how we love God.
4. God gave us this beautiful planet to love and protect as long as we live.

By the ACS Fourth-grade class:
1. Our trees are being deforested; animals live in the forests.
2. God created the animals on the Earth; we need to take care of the animals and love them like St. Francis of Assisi did.
3. On Earth Day, like on every day, we should pick up the trash and recycle. We want to have a clean Earth with no more pollution.

By the ACS Third-grade class:
1. The Earth is my home: I should take care of the present God gave me.
2. The Earth is special, because God made it with his own hands.
3. The Earth is a Garden of Eden for us.

By the ACS Second-grade class:
1. The Earth is God's creation.
2. God created the Earth because he loves us so much.
3. The Earth is home to butterflies; butterflies teach us about God's love. We love butterflies.
4. We can take care of the plants, trees and grass.
5. The plants give us oxygen.
6. God made rainbows as a sign of his covenant with us. We love rainbows and we love God.
The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free."

-- Luke 4:18

Chrism Mass 2011

Blessing of the Oils

At the Chrism Mass, celebrated yearly just prior to Holy Week, oils used by priests throughout the year are presented to the bishop and blessed before being distributed.

The Oil of the Sick is presented by those who are involved in ministry to the sick, especially the priests who give solace and grace to the sick through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The Oil of Catechumens is presented by persons who are involved in the ministries of infant baptismal preparation and instruction and the ministries of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children.

The Sacred Chrism is presented by those involved in the various sacraments and rites associated with the use of Chrism: Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination and the Dedication of churches and altars.

Clockwise from top left singers in the Angelo Catholic School Children’s choir perform during the Chrism Mass; Bishop Pfeifer prepares to bless the oil; oil for the sick, catechumens and the sacred Chrism; Bishop Pfeifer with incense at the start of the Mass; Fr. Michael Rodriguez (left), Fr. Emilio Sosa and Msgr. Fred Nawarskas; Deacon Stanley Lange reads the Gospel; the assembled priests prior to the blessing of the oils.
The Beatification of John Paul II

Call him Blessed

Benedict beatifies John Paul II 'because of faith'

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- "John Paul II is blessed because of his faith -- a strong, generous and apostolic faith," Pope Benedict XVI said May 1 just minutes after formally beatifying his predecessor.

Italian police said that for the Mass more than 1 million people were gathered in and around the Vatican and in front of large video screens in several parts of the city.

Many in the crowd had personal stories about seeing Pope John Paul or even meeting him, and Pope Benedict ended his homily at the Mass sharing his own personal story. "I would like to thank God for the gift of having worked for many years with Blessed Pope John Paul II," he said.

As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith from 1982 until his election in 2005, Pope

Small miracles at beatification celebrations, pilgrims say

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Blessed Pope John Paul II worked a number of miracles at his beatification, some pilgrims said.

Weather forecasts of a weekend of heavy rains turned into innocuous grey clouds April 30 and then sunny skies May 1.

"We prayed to John Paul that it wouldn't rain," said Josephine Faehrmann from Sydney, Australia, who was planning to sleep outside with her friends.

"We prayed to John Paul that it wouldn't rain," said Josephine Faehrmann from Sydney, Australia, who was planning to sleep outside with her friends.

Also, mysterious benefactors with a special devotion to the Polish pope paid for a bus full of young people from Naples to attend the ceremonies "because John Paul II loved young people and we had to be here," Rosa Giordano said.

Each of the more than one million people of every age, background and nationality attending the April 30 vigil in Circus Maximus and May 1 beatification in St. Peter's Square had his or her own story of pilgrimage.

Danila Fabrizio, another member of the group that left Naples at 1 a.m. May 1 on the benefactor's bus, said, "This is a sign of God's providence that we're here."

The secret benefactors also supplied rosaries, prayer cards and a poster of the new blessed "to hang up in the back window of the bus, but it wouldn't stick because of the humidity," said Danila Fabrizio.

Valeria Buonpastore from Charlotte, N.C., was on the bus from Naples and said she had been planning to watch the ceremony on television from her home. But then a friend told her there was a free bus with two seats that had just opened up if she wanted to go. "It's really a miracle that I'm here," she said.

Thibaut Cappe, 23, from Paris, who came with a group of 12 people, said they had nowhere to spend the night, but someone in Rome invited them to stay in his very nice apartment.

"It was awesome. We were very lucky. Many people slept in the street," Cappe said. He said they got up at 3 a.m. and managed to get a spot halfway up Via della Conciliazione, the wide boulevard leading up to St. Peter's Basilica.

Another group from Paris was not so lucky. They were blocked in the same spot near a hospital by the river several blocks from the square since 6 p.m. April 30, said Carole Deverre. At 7:30 a.m. the next day

(Please See MIRACLES/20)
Our Faith

How is justice related to forgiveness?

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service

Q. Your answer to "Is Forgiveness Really Possible?" was very enlightening. It's not surprising you receive so much mail because this is a very common problem.

To take this one step further, what about justice? My brother committed various crimes against me and my parents, which ultimately caused my father's death. I forgive him for what he did to me, but that caused my father's death is something I cannot accept.

I feel I must get justice for my parents. Saying God will punish him is a cop-out. I want to turn to the district attorney, but I keep asking myself whether I am really seeking revenge in disguise.

If we sit and "forgive" everyone's crimes, we may as well abolish the police, courts and jails. Should we not attempt to stop the evil in this world? Revenge seeks to harm.

Justice seeks restitution. Can you help me figure this out? (New Jersey)

A. First of all, I'm going to assume that when you say crime you mean crime. Crime is an activity, usually quite serious, punishable by law. So not every injustice, even a grave one, is a crime.

Did your brother directly cause your father's death? Or did he bring about a family situation that, as you see it, occasioned the death? These kinds of facts will be significant.

Since you speak of approaching the district attorney, it seems you consider what your brother did as carrying legal sanctions. If you're not positive, it would be good to find out for sure before beginning a move to the courts. For all this, of course, you will need the advice of an attorney.

You omit in your letter some morally critical information, but a few prudential questions will be essential in any case. To begin with, you need to identify clearly what you wish to accomplish. You say you do not want revenge or punishment, but restitution. Is this money or something else? How much?

Then, is what you plan to do likely to be successful? For example, is the money, or whatever else, there to be returned?

Is what you want to do likely to accomplish more good than harm for you? Your mother? The rest of the family? Will it bring some closure or just reopen old wounds?

Are other avenues possible to achieve your purpose?

This may seem a rather cold approach to an emotional situation. But these are basic, common-sense questions to ask if you hope to arrive at prudent and otherwise virtuous decisions that will accomplish something positive for everyone concerned.

After we have reflected and done the best we can, leaving the rest to God is no cop-out. All life on this earth is imperfect, which means that, even morally, everything is not balanced or, if you wish, fair.

That full truth is, and can be, revealed only in eternity is still part of our faith and hope.

(A free brochure in English or Spanish answering questions Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612.)

One man's Lenten prep for his first Easter in heaven

By Fr. Peter Daly
Catholic News Service

Spiritually mature people never stop growing in grace. Even late in life, they are trying to improve, trying to be better people and better servants of God.

This truth about the life of the saints was brought home to me in the death of a former parishioner, Bill Gaiser. Bill had moved away from St. John Vianney Parish in Prince Frederick, Md., 20 years ago and before I came here as pastor. He had been our county agricultural extension agent for more than 20 years before that. For the past 20 years, he lived in retirement in Florida and New Jersey.

Bill converted to Catholicism as a young man in the 1950s. He took his conversion seriously. He was a reader and studier. He had no illusions about the church. He saw the sinfulness of her leaders. But he was in love with her truth and her spirituality.

At his death, his family found his sketch pad/journal among his books and papers. They shared it with me.

Bill had taken up pencil drawing late in life. He also had a habit of writing down spiritual thoughts and quotes that he liked.

In the journal, we found his Lenten resolutions written in pencil. They were made only a few weeks before he died at age 84. I put them in our Sunday bulletin and read them at all the Masses. Bill wrote: "During Lent and throughout the year: "Give up resentment; decide to forgive."

"Give up hatred; decide to return good for evil.

"Give up complaining; decide to be grateful.

"Give up pessimism; decide to be optimistic.

"Give up worry; decide to be trusting.

"Give up sadness; decide to be hopeful.

"Give up anger; decide to be patient.

"Give up pettiness; decide to be noble.

"Give up gloom; decide to be joyful."

During his last weeks on earth, Bill was still striving to live the Christian faith. His last journal page finished with a quote from St. Paul: "Rejoice always. ... In all circumstances give thanks (to the Lord), for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes 5:16).

I think Bill had it exactly right. Rejoice always!

God does not really care much if we give up chocolate or TV. It may help discipline us, but it does not really conform us more to the heart of Christ. As we grow closer to Christ, we really want to give up the "bad attitudes" that are the opposite of the beatitudes.

Among the other quotes that Bill had in his journal was one from William F. Buckley's book, "Nearer, My God." It read: "To ponder the glory of God is to worship a transcendence that gives us a measure of man, near-infinitely small on the scale of things, but infinitely great as a complement of divine love. Who are you buster? I am the man Christ (God) died for."

Not a bad thought as we finish Lent. Not a bad thought as Bill finished life.

Surely, God will be delighted to see somebody who had such a good grasp of what it meant to be his adopted child. Bill's last Lent on earth was devoted to preparation for his first Easter in heaven.

Bill, thanks for the lines scribbled in your journal. They are an inspiration and reproach to us all. Rest in peace, and Happy Easter!
Peter speaks to a crowd on the first Pentecost

By Joe Sarnicola

The apostles and other followers of Jesus were together on the day of Pentecost. Out of the sky came a sound like a driving wind that filled the house they were in. Tongues of fire appeared over them and the men began to speak in different languages, as the Holy Spirit directed them.

Many people were in Jerusalem for the holy day, visitors and residents, and they heard what was happening. They were amazed because they heard the men praying in their native languages at the same time. Other people thought the men had just had too much to drink.

To explain what was taking place, Peter stood up to speak to the crowd. "You who are Jews," he said, "indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning."

Peter recited a passage from the book of the prophet Joel, and then he said, "You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know."

In order to convince the people that he was telling the truth, Peter quoted from the Scriptures again, the psalms of David, when he said, "You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence."

Peter explained that David was dead, but that Jesus was very alive. "God raised this Jesus; of this we are witnesses," he said. "Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you [both] see and hear. ... Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

When Peter said this, many of the Jews regretted what had happened to Jesus. They asked, "What are we to do, my brothers?"

Peter gave them a simple and direct answer: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

After that, God worked many wonders and miracles through the apostles. They praised God everyday for the blessings he had given to them.
Family

Out of the mouths of teenagers often comes ... the truth

By Jimmy Patterson

It was just a flutter at first that caught my eye. But a second look and I noticed that the flutter was a cardinal landing on a branch in a tree in our backyard.

No big deal, right?

Well, depends on the circumstances. And in this case, the circumstances were that it was Easter and my family and I were sitting on the back porch enjoying some post-Mass conversation and brunch. And it is Midland, where I don’t know that in my 23 years here I have ever actually seen a cardinal.

I posted a photo of the bird on my Facebook page and a friend told me that some people view the cardinal as a sign of the Holy Spirit.

I had already suspect the Holy Spirit had been hanging around my house longer than just Easter afternoon.

His presence had been made known a few days before Holy Week began.

My wife was away for the evening, and our son and I were sitting on that same back porch eating dinner.

I love our son. He is smart, witty and fairly analytical for a 17-year-old. He cares about things and he knows what is important in life. He sprinkles a lot of our days with his trademark dry wit and I can safely say today that even though it is still over a year before he heads off to college, I already miss him. It will not be easy when he is gone.

James and I often talk and joke but honestly we don’t go deep too often. For whatever reason, we have kept a lot of our conversations on the surface. Some of it may have to do with the fact that he is in physics and pre-cal and anything that goes deep will surely be well above my head and I will feel totally lost.

But it was on the Wednesday night before Holy Week began as the two of us were having dinner when I ventured into the area of faith. I had always wondered just how seriously he took his faith. How important it was too him and what role it played in his life.

I’ll keep a lot of the details of that dinner conversation between the two of us if you don’t mind, but there was a point in the conversation that was telling and kind of set me on my ear.

I learned over the next few minutes just how much his Catholicism meant to him and how proud he was to be a part of a faith that takes so much effort to learn about. He is, if nothing else, thirsty for knowledge in many areas.

Because Catholicism was included in those desires made me feel really good.

Our conversation turned to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I have frankly never been really comfortable discussing the topic at length and I have long considered it not only one of the most personal aspects of one’s faith but also the one part of my faith that I have found most difficult to, well, believe. Just being honest.

My doubts prompted me several years to consult a trusted priest and family friend and share with him my concerns.

“That priest told me that I wasn’t alone in my doubts,” I told James. “A lot of people have those same questions. I guess the best way to look at it is, if you at least try to believe, that’s all God expects of you.”

I thought it was brilliant advice and it has stuck with me through many years as I watch the elevated host and cup and wonder, Really? Is it really happening?

I told my son what our priest friend told me and shared his advice because I didn’t want just that one doubt derailing the faith that is no doubt forming in him.

His response floored me, but in retrospect it was a response that maybe made me prouder than anything else he has ever shared with me. He shrugged his shoulders.

“I just always thought it was really happening,” he said.

Sometimes, we adults should learn how to listen first — and share our opinions only when our children bring it up first.

Jimmy Patterson is editor of the West Texas Angelus.

Your Family

Home is where the heart — AND creativity — is

By Bill and Monica Dodds

Catholic News Service

Necessity isn't just the mother of invention. Creativity is one of her children, too.

It's how a favorite family recipe and menu comes from a frantic "what am I going to give them for dinner!" late-afternoon search of the kitchen cupboards.

It is how a hallowed family custom traces its roots back to a snow-bound Christmas vacation when the children were bouncing off the walls and the parents were ready for a rubber room.

It is how, looking back, the family accountant managed to "rob Peter to pay Paul" when it came to the monthly bills year after year.

It is how no money for a fancy vacation meant an unforgettable camping trip or weekend at a low-end motel. (And now, years later, the horrific parts have become the most hilarious, the stuff of family legend and lore.)

Time and time again, families prove that creativity isn't somehow limited to artists and musicians and poets. It doesn't take a genius to be creative. And a person would be a fool not to use his or her creativity, especially as a mom or dad.

Like any God-given gift -- at once so divine and so human -- the more family members use creativity, the better they become at it, convinced over time that it is an invaluable tool for dealing with life's many challenges and for making life itself more enjoyable.

That's so because, made in God's image, we human beings were created by our creator to be, well, creative: to build a Lego robot, to create an entire doll "family," to plunk out an on-the-spot, made-up tune on the piano, to make a construction-paper card for Mother's Day or Father's Day.

Creativity blossoms when family members plan and plant a garden in the backyard, redo the bathroom, figure out a better way to handle a repetitive task at work or load the dishwasher at home. To realize doing this and this would help heal a fractured relationship with a friend, or that doing that and that will be a way for spouses to have more time together is creative. And on and on.

It isn't puffed-up pride but simple honesty that allows a person to step back, see what he or she has done, and -- like God at the dawn of creation -- take pleasure in seeing that it is good.

Recharging Your Creative Batteries

Want to recharge your creative batteries? A few simple suggestions:
1. Remember that sometimes staring out the window is doing more than simply staring out the window.
2. Notice that creativity tends to pop through after you take a refreshing walk, enjoy a long hot bath or have a good night's sleep.
3. Never hesitate to ask the Holy Spirit for a hint or a nudge.

On the Web: Kids and Creativity

A number of sites have suggestions on how to foster your children's creativity. This is just one: pbs.org/wholechild/providers/play.html.

Bill and Monica Dodds are the founders of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver and editors of My Daily Visitor magazine. Their website is www.FSJC.org.

ANSWERS

Leviticus

Hosea

Daniel

Psalms

Nehemiah

Book looks at tortuous process of canonization


Reviewed by Graham Yearley
Catholic News Service

With the sped-up process for canonization granted by the Vatican for Blessed Teresa of Kolkata and (soon-to-be Blessed) Pope John Paul II, Catholics and other Christians might have begun to think that declaring someone a saint is a quick business.


Anne-Therese Guerin was born in Brittany, France, in 1798. Her childhood was scarred by tragedy: One brother was burned to death, another died of a childhood disease, her father was murdered by highway brigands as he was coming home from campaigning with Napoleon and her mother descended into a debilitating depression with Napoleon and her mother when he was coming home from campaigning with Napoleon and her mother.

After a rough Atlantic crossing, the sisters journeyed from New York to Indiana by train, steamboat and carriage and, finally, by foot to a remote farmhouse owned by one Joseph Thralls, arriving Oct. 22.

Waiting with Thralls and his family were four young girls eager to join the order. All 10 sisters lived initially in the attic of Thralls' cabin. But, remarkably, within a year the sisters had built and opened a school and convent, despite the challenges of nature, which they named St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

But Mother Theodore faced an even more difficult challenge from her local bishop who disputed her property rights and control of the order so bitterly that he eventually removed her from her vows and forbade contact between Mother Theodore and the sisters. In time, the bishop was sent back to France and Mother Theodore continued to build a network of schools and convents in a region not noted from its receptiveness to Catholics.

She died at the age of 57 May 14, 1856. The Sisters of Providence, who had already started work on the campaign to canonize Mother Theodore in 1900, officially declared their intentions on the 50th anniversary of her death in 1906.

When the Sisters of Providence began their campaign, four miracles needed to be attributed to the intercession of a potential saint. Pope John Paul II, who canonized more saints than any pope in history, lowered the number of miracles necessary to one for beatification and another for canonization. But the second miracle must have taken place after the first miracle is deemed official. It took 90 years for the Sisters of Providence to have their first case accepted as miraculous.

St. Damien offers lessons in helping the sick


Reviewed by Catholic News Service

Father Damien de Veuster arrived at Kalawao village on Molokai, Hawaii, in 1864 at the age of 24. With only a prayer book in his possession, and a missionary zeal to serve those God had entrusted to him, this young priest embodied the missionary spirit.

A member of the Sacred Heart religious order, Father Damien traveled to Hawaii to live among the victims of leprosy. He ministered to these people by administering the sacraments, offering physical and spiritual assistance, and most importantly, showing them love. After 12 tireless years of working with the lepers, Father Damien fell victim to the disease but not to despair, and his efforts to restore dignity to those with what is now known as Hansen's disease intensified.

Author Jan De Volder reveals the spirit and soul of this Catholic priest in his thoughtful and penetrating book, "The Spirit of Father Damien." More than a century after the "leper priest's" death, St. Damien serves as a recognizable religious

(Please See CANONIZATION/21)

USCCB Film Ratings

NEW YORK (CNS) – Here is a list of recent films that Catholic News Service has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

The first symbol after each title is the Catholic News Service classification. The second symbol is the rating of the Motion Picture Association of America. CNS classifications:

A-I -- general patronage; A-II -- adults and adolescents; A-III -- adults; L -- limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling; O -- morally offensive.

A
The Adjustment Bureau, A-III (PG-13)  
B
Battle: Los Angeles, A-III (PG-13)  
Beastly, A-III (PG-13)  
Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son, A-III (PG-13)  
Black Swan, O (R)  
Burlesque, O (PG-13)  
The Call, A-II (no rating)  
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, A-II (PG)  
Country Strong, A-III (PG-13)  
D
Despicable Me, A-1 (PG)  
Devil, A-III (PG-13)  
Dairy of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, A-I (PG)  
The Dilemma, L (PG-13)  
Drive Angry, O (R)  
Due Date, O (R)  
E
The Eagle, A-III (PG-13)  
Easy A, O (PG-13)  
F
Faster, O (R)  
For Colored Girls, O (R)  
G
Gnomeo & Juliet, A-I (G)  
The Grace Card, A-II (PG-13)  
The Green Hornet, L (PG-13)  
Gulliver’s Travels, O (PG)  
H
Hall Pass, O (R)  
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1, A-III (PG-13)  
Hobbit, A-II (PG)  
I
I Am Number Four, A-III (PG-13)  
J
Jackass 3D, O (R)  
Jane Eyre, A-III (PG-13)  
Just Go With It, A-III (PG-13)  
Justin Bieber: Never Say Never, A-I (G)  
K
The King’s Speech, A-III (PG-13)  
The Lincoln Lawyer, L (R)  
Limitless, O (PG-13)  
Little Fockers, L (PG-13)  
Love and Other Drugs, O (R)  
M
Mars Needs Moms, A-I (PG)  
The Mechanic, O (R)  
My Soul to Take, O (R)  
N
No Strings Attached, O (R)  
O
Oceans, A-I (G)  
Of Gods and Men, A-III (PG-13)  
The Other Guys, O (PG-13)  
P
Paul, O (R)  
Piranha 3D, O (R)  
Rango, A-III (PG)  
Red Riding Hood, L (PG-13)  
The Rite, A-III (PG-13)  
The Roommate, L (PG-13)  
S
Saw 3D, O (R)  
The Season of the Witch, O (PG-13)  
The Social Network, A-III (PG-13)  
Source Code, A-III (PG-13)  
Sucker Punch, A-III (PG-13)  
The Switch, O (PG-13)  
The Town, O (R)  
T
Take Me Home Tonight, O (R)  
True Grit, A-III (PG-13)  
Unknown, A-III (PG-13)  
W
The Way, O (R)  
The Way Back, A-III (PG-13)  
(Please See DAMIEN/21)
The Angelus  MAY 2011  Page 19

TCC, CHA Joint statement on health care

The Texas Catholic Conference and the Catholic Health Association of Texas have released the following joint statement regarding Catholic Health Care in Texas:

During the health care debate, there were several voices within our national Catholic health care ministry who called for support of the final version of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). However, after a great deal of effort to change key language and careful examination of the controversial bill the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops did not support the final version of the national health care reform bill that was passed by Congress and signed by the President.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports health care reform, in principle, but not the particular legislation that passed. The bishops are committed to health care reform which ensures that health care is accessible and affordable for all, while maintaining current federal law regarding abortion funding and conscience protection. Unfortunately, the final health care bill did not meet all of these conditions.

As the 82nd session of the Texas legislature approaches, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas and the Catholic Hospital Association of Texas are committed to working together in fidelity to tenets of the Catholic Church. Catholic health care is an integral part of the health care delivery system that people in Texas rely on every day and the Bishops in solidarity with CHA TX have a long history of serving those in need and speaking for those whose voices often go unheard.

The Church’s health ministry, as a visible manifestation of the healing presence of Christ the Lord, is committed to providing quality health care to all people in our communities and to using the resources we have to do the greatest community benefit.

Andrew Rivas
Executive Director
Texas Catholic Conference

Patrick Carrier
Catholic Health Association of Texas

Cuidado Catolico de la Salud en Texas

Durante el debate sobre el cuidado de la salud, se oyeron varias voces dentro de nuestro apostolado nacional catolico para el cuidado de la salud que pedian apoyo para la version final del Acto para la Proteccion de Pacientes y el Cuidado Asequible (PPACA). Sin embargo, después de muchos esfuerzos para cambiar palabras clave y después de un examen cuidadoso del documento controvertido, la Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Catolicos no apoyó la versión final del documento para la reforma nacional del cuidado de la salud que fue aprobado por el Congreso y firmado por el Presidente.

La Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Catolicos apoya la reforma del cuidado de la salud, en principio, pero no la legislacion particular que se aprobo. Los obispos estan comprometidos con una reforma del cuidado de la salud que asegure que el cuidado de la salud es accesible y asequible para todos, al mismo tiempo que mantiene la ley federal actual en lo que se refiere a fondos para abortos y a la protección de la conciencia. Desafortunadamente, el documento final para el cuidado de la salud no abarcó todas estas condiciones.

Al acercarse la sesion 82 de la asamblea legislativa de Texas, los Obispos Catolicos Romanos de Texas y la Asociacion de Hospitales Catolicos de Texas estan comprometidos a trabajar juntos siendo fieles a los principios de la enseñanza moral catolica. El cuidado catolico de la salud es una parte integral del sistema de servicio del cuidado de la salud con el que cuentan las personas de Texas diariamente y los Obispos, en solidaridad con CHA TX, tienen una historia larga de servir a los necesitados y de hablar, con frecuencia, por aquellos cuyas voces no se escuchan. El apostolado de la salud de la Iglesia, como una manifestacion visible de la presencia sanadora de Cristo el Señor, esta comprometido a proveer un cuidado de salud de calidad a todas las personas en nuestras comunidades y a usar los recursos que tenemos para el mayor beneficio de la comunidad.

Andrew Rivas
Executive Director
Texas Catholic Conference

Patrick Carrier
Catholic Health Association of Texas

The Adult Catechism

Pope Benedict XVI and reflections on the Holy Eucharist

By Cardinal Donald Wuerl
Archbishop of Washington

The origins of the Mass are found in Jesus' Last Supper which appears in three of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) as well as one of the New Testament letters of Saint Paul (1 Corinthians).

The night before he died, Jesus gathered his Apostles with him to celebrate the Passover meal, a traditional Jewish sacrificial meal. The Passover was a solemn feast dedicated to the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. When Israel became established in the land promised by God, they customarily marked the Passover in Jerusalem, the nation's capital and holy city.

In the time of Jesus, devout Jews came by the hundreds of thousands from all over the known world to mark the day in Jerusalem. In the prescribed prayers and readings of Passover, the family recalled the Exodus as if it were a current event, as if their deliverance were taking place in their own generation. This was the context for Jesus' Last Supper. He said to his twelve Apostles: "I eagerly desire to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:25).

In the course of the meal, he took the bread and he declared it to be his body and then he took the cup of wine and he declared it to be his blood. All of this he did in fulfillment of something that he had promised in his preaching.

With the Last Supper, Jesus inaugurated what Christians have, ever since, called the "Paschal Mystery," the mystery of the suffering, death and Resurrection of the God-Man.

In great detail in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation The Sacrament of Charity, (Sacramentum Caritatis), Pope Benedict XVI presents for us the Church's teaching on the Eucharist using the reflections of the Eleventh Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that took place on October 2-23, 2005 in the Vatican. The Holy Father begins his reflections with a meditation on the Eucharist, a mystery to be believed. Here he tells us that the "mystery of faith," the words spoken immediately after the words of consecration, refer to the substantial change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus, a reality that surpasses all human understanding.

In this apostolic exhortation, the Pope teaches us that the Eucharist reveals the loving plan that guides all of salvation history (cf. Ephesians 1:10, 3:8-11). He goes on to state that "it is in Christ, dead and risen, and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, given without measure (cf. John 3:34), that we have become sharers in God's inmost life. Jesus Christ, who 'through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God' (Hebrews 9:14), makes us, in the gift of the Eucharist, sharers in God's own life" (8).

The faith of the Church in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist goes back to the words of Jesus himself that are recorded in the Gospel of John. In the Eucharistic discourse after the multiplication of the loaves, our Lord contrasted ordinary bread with the bread that is not of this world, but which contains eternal life for those who eat it. He said: "I am the bread of life...I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:48, 51). What Jesus offers us is his continuing, enduring presence every time we celebrate the Eucharist. The way in which Jesus is present in the Eucharist cannot be explained in physical terms because it transcends the ordinary necessities of space and measurement.

In his apostolic exhortation, the Holy Father then goes on to relate the Eucharist to the great sacrament, the Church, and then to each one of the other seven sacraments. At a later date I would like to develop the teaching found in that section of the exhortation.

These words from the conclusion of our Holy Father's exhortation serve us well: "Dear brothers and sisters, the Eucharist is at the root of every form of holiness, and each of us is called to the fullness of life in the Holy Spirit...This most holy mystery thus needs to be firmly believed, devoutly celebrated and intensely lived in the Church...The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love" (94).
BEATIFICATION

(From 14)

Benedict said he worked at the pope's side "and came to revere him."
"His example of prayer continually impressed and edified me: he remained deeply united to God even amid the many demands of his ministry," the pope said.
"Today his name is added to the host of those whom he proclaimed saints and blessed during the almost 27 years of his pontificate," the pope said in his homily.

Pope John Paul during his pontificate beatified 1,338 people and canonized 482 - more than all of his predecessors combined. The beatification of Pope John Paul just six years and a month after his death in 2005 was the fastest beatification in some 500 years.

Pope Benedict said that even at the moment of his death people "perceived the fragrance of his sanctity and in any number of ways God's people showed their veneration for him. For this reason, with all due respect for the church's canonical norms, I wanted his cause of beatification to move forward with reasonable haste."

After the Mass, Pope Benedict went into St. Peter's Basilica and knelt in prayer for four minutes before Blessed John Paul's casket, which was set in front of the main altar. After the pope left, the concelebrating cardinals filed up to the wooden casket, touching it lightly and kissing it.

Eventually, the Vatican opened the basilica to the general public and planned to keep it open either until the faithful stopped coming to pay their respects or until preparations had to be made for the official Mass of thanksgiving for the beatification May 2.

Thousands of people spent a chilly, damp night camped out near the Vatican in an attempt to find a place in St. Peter's Square when the gates were scheduled to open at 5:30 a.m. for the 10 a.m. Mass. The crowds were so large that police began letting people in at 2 a.m., according to news reports.

Thibaut Cappe, a 23-year-old from Paris, got up at 3 a.m. and managed to find a spot half way up the boulevard leading to St. Peter's Square. He said Pope John Paul "is an example of simplicity in the way of being a Catholic. It's not always easy to be a Catholic in our world. He was doing it in a way that was understandable for everyone."

Alongside the altar in front of St. Peter's Basilica, priority seating was given to official delegations from more than 80 countries, the European Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The United States was represented by Miguel Diaz, the ambassador to the Vatican, and by his predecessors, Francis Rooney and Jim Nicholson. King Albert and Queen Paola of Belgium led the list of royalty present and 16 heads of state attended, including Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Valeria Buonpastore, who is from Charlotte, N.C., said Pope John Paul "transcended nationalities. He was universal, that's what made him so great. He was loved by people of other nations, religions. A lot of my Protestant friends loved him, too," she said.

Also in the square was Sister Marie Clarice, a 30-year-old member of the Little Servants of the Sacred Heart from Madagascar.

She said she remembers when Pope John Paul came to Madagascar in 1989; she was only 7 or 8, and the image that has remained is of a person who cared about the weak and powerless. "I remember the way he welcomed the poor. He embraced them, like this," she said opening her arms in a wide hug.

Speaking briefly in Polish in his homily, Pope Benedict said of his predecessor: "By his witness of faith, love and apostolic courage, accompanied by great human charisma, this exemplary son of Poland helped believers throughout the world not to be afraid to be called Christian, to belong to the church, to speak of the Gospel."

"In a word: he helped us not to fear the truth, because truth is the guarantee of liberty," the pope said.

Pope Benedict read the formula of beatification at the beginning of the liturgy after Cardinal Agostino Vallini, papal vicar for Rome, petitioned the pope by saying, "I humbly ask Your Holiness to inscribe the venerable servant of God John Paul II, pope, among the number of blessed."

The pope responded by saying that after consulting many bishops and members of the faithful and after having the Congregation for Saints' Causes study the matter, "the venerable servant of God, John Paul II, pope, henceforth will be called blessed" and his feast will be Oct. 22, the anniversary of the inauguration of his pontificate in 1978.

The crowds burst into sustained applause, many people cried and brass players intoned a fanfare as soon as the pope finished reading the proclamation.

Polish Sister Tobiana Sobodka, who ran Pope John Paul's household, and French Sister Marie Simon-Pierre, whose cure from Parkinson's disease was accepted as the miracle that paved the way for his beatification, carried a relic to Pope Benedict and then to a stand near the altar. The relic was a clear glass vial of Pope John Paul's blood held in a reliquary of silver olive branches.

MIRACLES

(From 14)

they had still made no progress in getting closer to the square.

"We can't see the (television) screen, there is no toilet. It's not very pleasant," she said. "But we are very happy to be here and right now we are going to pray to not be disappointed," she said as the group's parish priest pulled out his rosary to lead them in prayer.

But many came prepared and shared. One couple passed around a thermos of stage floodlights as a reading lamp.

"Pope John Paul was a wonderful pope. Our parents have told us a lot about him and told us this was a great opportunity to grow our faith," Marin said.

"Pope John Paul was a wonderful pope. He was like us. My mom showed me a video where he was watching a clown and really laughing. And I saw another video where he moved his feet when the people were singing, following the beat."

About two hours before Mass began, to aid with the flow of the crowds, loudspeakers broadcast announcements urging people not to block the roads by sitting down and instead to "Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way," which was the title of the late pope's book in 2004. "This is a celebration for everyone, not for a few," the speaker said, encouraging everyone to keep moving toward the square.


**Canonization**

(From 18)

The Sisters of Providence had two contenders for the second miracle. The first was Edward Mulkern, a devout Catholic educated by the Sisters of Providence in Massachusetts, who suffered from a cancerous tumor in his throat the size of a lemon. While he had had radiation treatments, he was healed at a pace no physician could explain.

The second candidate, Phil McCord, was the chief engineer for the convent at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Raised nominally as a Protestant, McCord had no church affiliation as an adult and did not pray often. His eyesight was never good, but his right eye deteriorated rapidly after an operation for cataracts in 1998.

With a drooping eyelid and a red, ulcerating eye, McCord faced a corneal transplant operation with little hope of success. Anxious and desperate, McCord prayed in the convent chapel for peace of mind with a short, added petition for Mother Theodore’s intercession. He left the chapel calm and at peace for the first time in weeks and felt his prayer had been answered. The next morning his eyelid no longer drooped and the redness was almost gone. Within a few days his eyesight was restored and the operation was canceled.

It might appear to outsiders that the Vatican would be eager for miracle cases to promote a potential saint’s cause and be happy to approve them. But the reality is that cases sent to Rome for examination have already been analyzed at the local diocesan level very carefully for any medical explanation that might explain a sudden healing. At the Vatican, the examination gets even more scrupulous; experts are called in and most cases are rejected.

"The Third Miracle" explains the tangled, torturous path of the campaign for Mother Theodore’s canonization, its setbacks and triumphs; it is popular history at its most lively and suspenseful.

But even better, it reassures the reader that heroic virtue and courage are not qualities exclusive to the canonized. The men and women who pray for intercession and do not get their prayers answered, but who continue to believe that God is both merciful and caring, are also worthy of our respect and awe.

**Congress**

(From 5)

The Bishops make it clear that abortion is a terrible evil, destroying the life of the unborn, and that we are speaking for the most innocent ones who cannot speak for themselves—the children in the womb in this crucial matter.

As I have done over and over many, many times, I once again encourage all of our Catholics to take a strong stand against the evil that is being done by Planned Parenthood, which is the largest provider of abortions in the USA.
MARRIAGE

(From 7)

authority, including many statements from the U.S. Catholic Bishops, have constantly pointed out the respect that must be shown to every person because of their human dignity, and this same respect must be shown to people of same-sex orientation. They must be respected as persons, and it is an evil to do them harm. This respect must be shown in the basic areas of society, for example, not discriminating in the areas of education and employment.

Marriage, the union of one man and one woman as husband and wife, is a singular and irreplaceable institution, founded on the sacred Scriptures and on the constant Judeo-Christian teaching down through the ages. Only a man and a woman are capable of the “two-in-one-flesh union of husband and wife.” Only a man and woman have the ability to bring children into the world. And along with that ability comes responsibility which society historically has reinforced with laws that bind mothers and fathers to each other and their children. The family unit represents the most basic and vital cell of any society. It is of divine origin and in accord with natural law. No person, no president, can change or redefine the divine meaning of marriage and family.

Obama’s decision goes against common sense, and it is foolhardy to say that there is discrimination when one says a husband and a wife have a singular and unique relationship that two persons of the same sex simply do not and cannot have. Government protection of marriage and family is a matter of justice. DOMA affirms and protects the time-tested and unalienable meaning of marriage. The suggestion that this amounts to discrimination is grossly false and represents an affront to millions of citizens in this country.

Thank God, leaders of Catholic, Protestant and Sikh communities of faith have protested the president’s decision, and have sent a letter urging the U.S. House of Representatives to fight for the defense of marriage in Federal Courts. I add my name to that letter.

We should all be happy to know that already the Speaker of the House, John Boehner, stated that it is the responsibility of the Presidential Administration to defend DOMA. The Speaker said, “But if the president won’t lead, if the president won’t defend DOMA, you will see the House of Representatives defend our actions in passing a bill that frankly passed overwhelmingly.

Obama’s decision is not only a great threat to marriage, but to religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy as well. All Catholics should protest this decision which goes against the clear teaching of our Catholic Church on family and marriage based on the 1st Book of the Bible, Genesis, and the teaching of Christ. This constant teaching, that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman, is enforced in a clear and strong manner in many statements of Pope Benedict XVI, and his recent predecessors. No Catholic in good faith can hold the contrary.

What are Catholics and other people of good will who believe in the sanctity of marriage to do? First and foremost, we must pray. Our greatest power is prayer, and we need to pray that our President will change his decision and that Congress will work diligently to overturn the president’s decision. Then, this is the time to express our belief in traditional marriage by sending letters to the president and his administration strongly protesting his decision and stressing our constant traditional belief in American law, American families, and American values. Priests and pastoral leaders need to teach and preach about this critical issue, encouraging our people to continue to defend DOMA and protect the true meaning of marriage and protest the President’s decision. Also we need to send letters of support to the Speaker of the House, encouraging him and members of Congress to take the leadership in defending DOMA in Federal Courts. And remember, it is not too early to start thinking about making this a major issue in the next Presidential election, which is on the horizon in 2012. Now is the time to stand up and speak out clearly about our belief in traditional marriage, and to work to support candidates who are strong supporters of family life and marriage. This is our moment to put our faith into action.

ACTS

(From 5)

a number of ACTS programs in our Diocese.

I share with you here the report on how ACTS is organized and the organizational chart of ACTS that was given to the Texas Catholic Bishops at their recent meeting by McClure.

How is ACTS Missions organized?

There is a board of directors that oversees the ACTS Mission staff. This staff is composed of eight full and part time people. They support approximately 2500-3000 volunteers each year, who are the people that have taken ACTS to every diocese in Texas and well beyond. In beginning an ACTS program at a parish, ACTS Missions agrees to provide teams to conduct two men’s and two women’s retreats, and then help establish an ACTS core at that parish. The core consists of five men and five women from the parish, as well as a representative of the pastor (or the pastor himself) as liaison. Once established, that ACTS core handles the administrative parts of conducting ACTS retreat, such as arranging for retreat centers, selecting directors, and handling registration for send-off to the retreat. At this point, ACTS Missions becomes a resource to be called upon, but the parish is capable of running retreats. As the ACTS retreat spreads to other parishes within the diocese, it can grow to the point where it is logical to form an ACTS Missions chapter for that diocese. The chapter then does basically what ACTS Missions does from San Antonio, only they do it locally; they organize retreats, send teams to new parishes, help them form an ACTS core, conduct training, etc.

How is ACTS organized within the diocese?

The ACTS core within the parish is like any other ministry in the parish, and therefore is a part of the diocese. ACTS Missions is not a part of the diocese, and is separately incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. We reside in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, but have no formal reporting relationship. The ACTS Missions chapter that is in a diocese reports to ACTS Missions in San Antonio, and is covered under our 501(c)3 charter.

The chapter is provided with manuals, scripts, training information, etc. from ACTS Missions, and helps parishes within the diocese (and occasionally, parishes outside the diocese but geographically convenient) with new and existing ACTS programs. The chapter membership includes a member of the clergy, who can be the liaison between the diocese and ACTS Missions.

Graphically, it looks something like the following: God is at the top of everything we do, the diocese and ACTS missions exist separately, with a “dotted line” relationship to the parishes and the diocese, implying that is not a formal reporting relationship, but a mutual interest and dependency.”

HONDURAS

(From 10)

ication is the most urgent need.

Joan Wilmes, principal of St. Ann’s School, and Marta Moran, principal of San Diego de Alcala Catholic School, had a lot to visit about. Touring the school, which has 267 students, we noted a strong level of education and students eager to learn. Computer and English classes augment the usual subjects. We celebrated the weekly Friday morning Mass with the school community. Teachers will begin communicating by Facebook between the two schools and eventually students will be brought into the communication, as well.

Mike Canon, Midland’s former mayor, contributed greatly to the discussions of effective partnerships with the parish staff. He noted how little the people of the parish of Chamelecon have from a material standpoint, yet how much they can do with it. He also pointed out how much they have from a spiritual standpoint. These were observations with which the whole group of visitors agreed.

We visitors from Midland had the opportunity to meet with all the priests of the Diocese of San Pedro Sula, as well as with Bishop Angel Garachana. There seems to be a great deal of interest among them about how the Hermanamiento (partnership) is developing between our dioceses. We look forward to the Tenth Anniversary of the Hermanamiento, to be celebrated in July in San Pedro Sula.
BISHOP

(para 3)

vida humana y de la gracia. La violencia ha desenfrenado fuerzas inmensas de poder contra los mejores anhelos de los ciudadanos de nuestros países, y ha levantado una dinámica ciclica y agotadora contra los habitantes de nuestras comunidades.

Les corresponde a las autoridades civiles de ambos lados de la frontera dedicar los recursos necesarios para mantener el orden público y el bien común. Nos corresponde a nosotros como pastores animar a nuestros fielos a mantener sus esperanzas en la gracia de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, a ser conjuntamente constructores de la paz mediante acciones que la propicia. Nuestras familias desean paz para criar a sus hijos, trabajar honestamente, y luchar conscientemente para un futuro más justo y sano. Los hijos necesitan de ejemplos de adultos honestamente integrados en la gracia de Nuestro Señor, para construir un futuro pacífico y justo para nuestras familias y comunidades. Lo esencial en este momento es luchar para no dejarnos vencer por el mal; no podemos ceder el bien de la vida a las fuerzas de la muerte. La mejor defensa contra el mal es buscar la gracia del Señor, y con la ayuda de la gracia dedicarnos al bien. El bien que triunfa sobre el mal se inculca diariamente en nuestros hogares familiares, donde, fortalecidos con la gracia de los sacramentos y la oración, trasmitimos a nuestros hijos las virtudes básicas de justicia, templanza y fortaleza y prudencia. Conjuntamente, los recursos espirituales de nuestras comunidades se fortalecen con la plena participación de todos los fieles en la vida comunitaria de la iglesia, particularmente en la Santa Misa.

Muchos nos preguntan, ¿Qué podemos hacer nosotros? Sabemos que al fin y al cabo, los recursos principales de una sociedad son las fuerzas espirituales del pueblo. Necesitamos de estos recursos espirituales, conferidos por la gracia del Señor, para construir un futuro pacífico y justo para nuestras familias y comunidades. Lo esencial en este momento es luchar para no dejarnos vencer por el mal; no podemos ceder el bien de la vida a las fuerzas de la muerte. La mejor defensa contra el mal es buscar la gracia del Señor, y con la ayuda de la gracia dedicarnos al bien. El bien que triunfa sobre el mal se inculca diariamente en nuestros hogares familiares, donde, fortalecidos con la gracia de los sacramentos y la oración, trasmitimos a nuestros hijos las virtudes básicas de justicia, templanza y fortaleza y prudencia. Conjuntamente, los recursos espirituales de nuestras comunidades se fortalecen con la plena participación de todos los fieles en la vida comunitaria de la iglesia, particularmente en la Santa Misa.

Estamos conscientes que construir el futuro que deseamos requiere una constancia heroica. Deseamos, entonces, animar a nuestras familias católicas, a nuestros sacerdotes, religiosas, y líderes laicos en la lucha para el alma de nuestra sociedad. Agradecemos lo que han hecho tantos para el bien de todos, particularmente en la tarea de formar los jóvenes en los valores cristianos. Que seamos todos embreadores de la paz, viviendo y enseñando el camino justo mostrado por Nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

(Para 9)

How often do you hear anyone speaking out? How often do you even engage in a vigorous conversation or debate about our wars?

Let’s face it: How often do most Americans even think about the war in Afghanistan, unless their loved ones are somehow involved?

There are exceptions to youthful indifference. We see many young faces in the annual pro-life marches around the country,try. During the past presidential election, there was reportedly a spike in political interest on the part of the young. But by the mid-terms, that interest waned.

In his poem "The Second Coming," William Butler Yeats wrote: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst /Are full of passionate intensity."

These days, it sometimes seems to me that we’re blessed with a few 60s holdovers who still have passion, while the young, the best and brightest among us often lack conviction.
Vatican: bin Laden death cause for reflection not rejoicing

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- The Vatican said the killing of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, a man who sowed division and hatred and who caused "innumerable" deaths, should prompt serious reflection about one's responsibility before God, not rejoicing.

"The Vatican statement May 2 came the day after President Barack Obama announced that U.S. forces had killed bin Laden in an attack on his hideout in northwest Pakistan. In several U.S. cities, the news prompted street demonstrations and expressions of jubilation. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, released a brief written statement reacting to the news. "Osama bin Laden, as we all know, bore the most serious responsibility for spreading divisions and hatred among populations, causing the deaths of innumerable people, and manipulating religions to this end," Father Lombardi said.

"In the face of a man's death, a Christian never rejoices, but reflects on the serious responsibilities of each person before God and before men, and hopes and works so that every event may be the occasion for the further growth of peace and not of hatred," the spokesman said.

The Vatican missionary news agency, Fides, reported that Christian schools and other institutions were closed and churches put on guard in Pakistan's main cities out of fear of possible repercussions on the Christian minorities there. Pakistani Christians are often identified in extremist literature with the West and the United States.

Paul Bhatti, a government adviser for religious minorities in Pakistan, told Fides that "the situation is tense." "In fact, there are strong fears of reactions -- senseless reactions -- against the Christian minorities. The government is giving the maximum attention to prevention measures," he said.

Father Mario Rodrigues, director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Pakistan, said after a meeting with government officials May 2: "They put us on alert, requesting the closure of our institutes and making available additional police personnel around the churches. The Christians of Pakistan are innocent victims in this and other situations. Any pretext is used to threaten them or launch an attack."

Rodrigues said some experts predicted that bin Laden's killing would weaken the Taliban and their ideologies, which could help diminish anti-Christian persecution in the long term. But he said radical Islamic groups were flourishing in Pakistan, and other extremist leaders could arise.

What is needed, he said, is a serious policy of interreligious tolerance at every level -- cultural, social, political and legislative.