Man, family escape terrorism in homeland

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

ABILENE — Thaddee Uwimana had a good childhood. He was raised in a Christian family with three brothers, two sisters and a mom and dad active in the Catholic Church in his native Rwanda. His knowledge of the United States came in part from watching John Wayne movies (he has a portrait of The Duke hanging in his living room) and watching the Chicago Bulls play in the NBA Championships in the 1990s. Thaddee, pronounced Teddy, enrolled in a small seminary before opting instead for medical school in Rwanda. After med school he became a doctor in Rwanda and even owned five houses. He was one of the fortunate ones.

(Please See THADDEE/7)
From the Bishop’s Desk

**Holy Mary, Mother of God ... and our mother, too**

**By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI**

Each time we pray the Hail Mary, we greet Mary with the unique and marvelous title, “Mother of God.” “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.” “Mother of God,” is the most unique and greatest title ever given to a human being. All other titles: Pope, Bishop, Emperor, President, Prime Minister, Prophet, Teacher, Scientist, pale in comparison to this title of titles.

The title “Mother of God” flows from clear references to this in holy Scripture and has been a title given to Mary by the Church from the earliest days of Christianity. In the Annunciation scene described by Luke, Mary is told by the Angel Gabriel that she will bear a son, named Jesus who “will be called Son of the Most High.” In the Visitation scene, where we hear about the joyful encounter of Mary and Elizabeth, and the wonderful encounter of the two precious little ones in their wombs, the joyful Elizabeth asks “How does this happen to me that the Mother of my Lord [God] should come to me?” While Christians have held Mary to be the Mother of God from the beginning of Christianity, this admirable title was officially bestowed upon her by the Church at the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD where she was recognized as the Theotokos, the Mother of God. Being the Mother of God is the most unique role in all of human history ever assigned to a human.

(Please See BISHOP/23)

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**DIOCESAN BRIEFS**

**Corpus Christi Procession**

ABILENE — Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Abilene will have its annual Corpus Christi Procession and May Crowning of Our Blessed Mother on Sunday, May 13, 6 pm. All are invited to worship and adore. Everyone is encouraged to participate. Call Valerie Clement at 325-660-2193 for information.

**Marriage Jubilee 2012**

All couples who are celebrating their 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, and above sacramental wedding anniversaries in the calendar year of 2012 are invited to the Diocesan Marriage Jubilee celebration on June 17, 2012, at 2 p.m. in the Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo. Families and friends are invited to accompany our jubilarians to this celebration. Renewal of vows will take place within of the Mass. This celebration will conclude with a reception in the Cathedral gymnasium to which all are invited. For registration information, please contact your pastor.

**Catholic Life Insurance**

Catholic Life Insurance is currently offering two seminarian scholarships to college graduates enrolled or who will enroll in the fall in a Catholic Seminary. The application deadline for the Msgr. Albert G. Henkes and the Msgr. Lawrence J. Stuebben Seminarian Scholarships is June 15, 2012.

Rev. Msgr. Stuebben Scholarship Fund

Students attending Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, Texas, may apply for the Rev. Msgr. Lawrence J. Stuebben Seminarian Scholarship. This scholarship fund was established in 1987, the Msgr. Albert George Henkes Seminarian Scholarship. Since its establishment in 1987, the Msgr. Henkes Seminarian Scholarship has awarded 67 scholarships, totaling $161,602.

A list of criteria and application for both of these scholarships can be found online at www.c.liu.com under “Living Benefits.” Applicants who meet the criteria of each scholarship may apply to both.

**Web site changes**

Parish information on the diocesan web site can only be accurate with your help. When you see changes that need to be made, please let us know. Parishioners of the diocese are invited to visit the diocesan web site (http://www.sanangelodioce.se.org), please send those changes to JimmyLeePatterson@gmail.com.

**Pro-Life Rosary in Midland**

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

**Deacon to speak in Midland**

Greg Hall, a deacon in the Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and an engineering technology graduate of Texas A&M, is this year’s featured presenter at the, “An Evening With ...” fundraiser series, July 20, 2012, at the Midland County Horseshoe. The event will benefit the Midland non-profit, Centers for Children and Families. Hall’s drilling technique was instrumental in the October 2010 rescue of 33 Chilean miners who had been trapped underground for more than two months. Hall’s presentation will include slides of the rescue.

Your servant in Christ and Mary,

Bishop Mike

Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

Bishop of San Angelo

(please see LADY IN BLUE/22)

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**‘Lady in Blue’ Day on June 20**

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

This is a reminder for all the people of the Diocese of San Angelo that two years ago, I issued a special decree proclaiming every June 20 to be the Lady in Blue Day for the Diocese of San Angelo. This year, June 20 will fall on a Wednesday. It was in San Angelo where the Lady in Blue brought together the native people, the Jumanos, with the Franciscan missionaries and laid the foundation for the beginning of the Gospel, the Good News of Christ, in this area of West Texas and beyond, from 1620 to approximately 1631.

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

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

On June 20, 2009, as many people of San Angelo gathered with the Jumano Indians for a historical meeting, I proclaimed that every June 20 in the future would be the Lady in Blue Day for the city of San Angelo and for the entire Catholic Diocese that makes up 29 counties in West Texas. That historic encounter with the Jumanos—to whom the Lady in Blue appeared many times in the 16th century—with the people of San Angelo—took place in an ecumenical prayer service on the banks of the Concho River near Bell Street in San Angelo. The Chieftain of the Jumano Tribe, Gabriel Carrasco, along with many members of the Jumano community, took part in this beautiful ecumenical service. That
May 2012

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In accord with Church policy, on May 18, 2012 as I turn 75, I am sending my resignation as the Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo to our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. What will happen after that? How soon will it happen? These are questions that will be answered eventually by our Holy Father. I do know this, that some time in the future – soon or maybe a little later — a new bishop will be named for the Diocese of San Angelo.

As I await our Holy Father’s reply, I will continue to serve you to the best of my ability as your Bishop, and pray daily for all of you. As the future is somewhat cloudy, I will be writing less for the West Texas Angelus, and reviewing which pastoral commitments for our communities I can accept as we await word from the Holy Spirit through Pope Benedict.

Already, I encourage all the people of our diocese to pray for the bishop who will come after me, and once the new bishop has been appointed, give him your abundant prayers and full, entire support. This is a time to look to the future, and to ask Jesus our Good Shepherd to guide us as we march into the future with a new shepherd.

Please continue to pray for our diocese each day and to pray for me, your servant. What the future holds for me is still uncertain. I trust the good Lord will guide me as the good Lord has guided me throughout my priestly and Episcopal service. I don’t know what the future holds, but I do know whose hands hold the future and that is enough for me.

So, don’t look back to the past, look forward. If we reflect on the past, let us do so with a spirit of gratitude and appreciation for God’s many graces and blessings that we have received through the years of being a diocese. And, as we look to the future, let’s look ahead with much confidence, hope, and trust knowing that our God who has been good and gracious in the past will bestow loving care upon us as we strive to be God’s children and disciples of His Son, Jesus Christ, following the example of Mary. Once a more definite date has been given about the future, I will let you know so there will be time to offer a Mass of gratitude. Thank you for your support and prayers over the past 27 years. God’s peace.

Your servant in Christ and Mary,
Bishop Mike
Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo
Seminarians Step Closer to Ordination

Always pause to take pride in your seminarians

By Deacon Lorenzo Hatch

It was a warm sunny day…the high for the day was 88 degrees. One could describe the weather as "perfect." This day was Wednesday, August 10, 2005. It had not been too long since I completed all the application requirements in applying to become a seminarian. I was sitting in my house doing some reading when my cell phone rang. I glanced down at the caller ID and notice it was the phone number of the chancery, the Bishop’s office. My heart skipped a few beats … I happened to notice the time was 10 a.m. I answered the phone. The caller said to please hold for the bishop. My heart started to race some more…the BISHOP wanted to speak with me. I was both excited and nervous as I heard his voice come on the line. He stated that he was pleased to accept me as a seminarian for the Diocese of San Angelo. I nearly cried with excitement and joy at receiving that most wonderful news! He informed me that he would be traveling to Sacred Heart in Abilene for an ordination of then seminarian, Fr. Ariel Lagunilla to the transitional Diaconate. After the call with the Bishop, I immediately called then Director of Seminarians, Fr. Tom Barley. He said I could ride with him to the ordination.

As we arrived at the Church, I was most impressed with what I saw. Sacred Heart is built in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style…this year we celebrated its 81st birthday! As we were walking up, there was much excitement as people were arriving to celebrate the occasion. The inside of the church was just beautiful and filled with many people from all over the diocese. When Mass began, I saw the procession moving through the church and was just in awe of the glorious music, the smell of the incense, the happy voices singing the praises of our God… and of course, seeing Ariel and the Joy of the Lord on his face as he was procession down the aisle. At the conclusion of the Mass, I went down to the parish hall to greet Ariel and congratulate him on becoming a Deacon. He did not know who I was, but I told him that I was accepted as a seminarian earlier that day. As I left the church, I remember thinking that one day this could happen to me; I could one day have an ordination.

Never in my wildest imagination would I have EVER guessed that seven years later, I would be assigned to the same church, Sacred Heart in Abilene, as an intern and then ordained a deacon here! I recount this story because it had such a great impact on my life. Sacred Heart was my first experience of attending Mass as a seminarian and witnessing my first ordination. A lot has occurred in the seven years since then. Priestly studies are not easy by any means; not only with academics, but also the other “pillars” of formation: Human, Spiritual, and Pastoral. The process is not like going through a cookie cutter… one size doesn’t fit all and priests are not produced all looking the same at the end of an assembly line. Each vocation is just as unique as the individual…and praise God for that!

I have grown in so many ways: spiritually, pastorally, humanly, and academically during these past seven years. Many of you played a big part in this process and for that, I am most grateful. I am also grateful to all those who have nurtured all the seminarians by your support, both financially and especially by your prayers!

Please take pride in your seminarians! They are struggling to become the men that God has called them to be… to lay down their lives for you and be your servants. We need more young men to step forward and accept the call that God is leading them to, and we need your help in not only praying for more vocations, but to encourage those young men around you to listen to their hearts.

I look so very forward to serving the people of God as a deacon and in God’s grace, a Priest next year. Peace and blessings to you all!

By then he had been working in the San Angelo diocese for some time and he talked about the need for more vocations to the priesthood in the diocese. After some thoughts and prayers I decided to give it a try. Fr. Romanus put me in contact with Fr. Barry McLean (the Vocation Director) whose humane and simple heart touched me deeply. In Fr. Barry I saw a bridge of the unnecessary gap between the priests and the laity (seminarians included) which was not easily seen in my culture. In August 2008, I came to America…to San Angelo diocese … entrusting my life into God’s invisible hands. I was sent to Assumption Seminary, San Antonio, the next day for my studies in theology. The journey continues… with lots of adaptations to make. In all these, I see God as the pilot of my life and vocation. He flies the plane, and having entrusted my life totally into His hands, all I do is sit back, relax and enjoy the flight! His invisible hands have been leading, guiding and directing my life’s journey. At birth, I was given the name Uchechukwu which literally means God’s Will. And I see God’s will happening in my life… His plans coming through better than whatever I would have thought of. Although away from the country of my birth, God does bless us with family and friends wherever we follow Him to. His house (the Church) has always felt like a home and has remained a joyful home wherever I am. There is always this feeling of inner peace and comfort which I experience in God’s house: my home, the Church. I am so grateful to God for His uncountable blessings and for calling mortal men to a vocation so sacred and mysterious as the priesthood!

Wishing there could be a better way to show appreciation, I’m deeply grateful to my teachers, formaters, directors, mentors, families, friends and every individual or group that has helped me (and are still helping me) to answer God’s call. Still with lots of learning and growing to do, I count on your fervent prayers! With childlike trust and confidence in the maternal care of Blessed Mama Mary, I pray for wholesome peace to you and yours!

May Schedule of Diaconal Ordination Masses

Sunday, May 5 — ABILENE, Sacred Heart – Diaconal Ordination of Lorenzo Hatch, 6:30 p.m.
Monday, May 14 — OLFEN, St. Boniface -Diaconal Ordination Sam Matthiesen, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 17 — ABILENE, Holy Family - Diaconal Ordination of Innocent Eziefule, 6:30 pm.

Other Masses of Note in May
Friday, May 25 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Priestly Ordination of Brother Martin Mary Hubbs, O.Carm., 11 a.m.
Saturday, May 26 — MIDLAND, St. Stephen’s, Mass for 50th Priestly Anniversary of Monsignor James Bridges, 5 p.m.
Sunday, May 27 — ROWENA, St.Joseph – Mass for 50th Priestly Anniversary of Monsignor Bernard Gully at 9:30 a.m.

FRANCIS

(From 1)

my high school seminary, I entered college seminary at Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Owerri, Imo State.

Close to our college seminary is a Claretian Institute with many foreign priests who left their home countries and came to work in Nigeria. I have always been captivated by their courage and selfless sacrifices as they left their homes, families and friends for the sake of the Gospel. I also read of the sacrifices of many missionary priests and religious who brought and spread the Gospel in Africa. Many of them left their native homes, their families, their friends, their food, their comfort, and many even died of various things in Africa like diseases, etc. They sacrificed all for the sake of the Gospel. I greatly admire their courage. I have always been thrilled by their selfless charity and complete abandonment to God’s will.

Meanwhile, in the final year of my college seminary, my spiritual father (Fr. Romanus Akamike) asked me if I would consider being a priest in a foreign land.
**DIOCESAN DATES**

**Bishop’s Calendar**

**MAY**

12-13 — San Antonio, Première of Fr. Ted Pfeifer’s documentary

14 — Olfen, St. Boniface - Diocesan Ordination Sam Matthiesen at 6:30 p.m.

15 — Abilene, St. Vincent - Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

16 — Big Lake, St. Margaret - Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

17 — Abilene, Holy Family - Diocesan Ordination of Innocent Eziefula at 6:30 p.m.

19 — Odessa, St. Joseph - Confirmation at 7:00 p.m.

20 — Andrews, O.L. of Lourdes, Confirmation, 10:30 a.m.

21 — San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center - Staff Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Staff meeting at 11:00 a.m.

22 — Stanton, St. Joseph - Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

23 — Mertzon, St. Peter - Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

24 — Coleman, Sacred Heart - Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

25 — San Angelo, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Priestly Ordination of Brother Martin Mary Hubbs, O.Carm. at 11:00 a.m.

26 — Midland, O.L. Guadalupe - Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.

27 — Rowena, St. Joseph, Mass for 50th Priestly Anniversary of Monsignor Bernard Gully at 9:30 a.m.

28 — San Angelo, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Memorial Day Mass at 9:00 a.m.

29-30 — June 1, San Angelo, Christ the King Retreat Center - Priests Retreat

**JUNE**

1 — San Angelo, Christ the King Retreat Center - Last Day of Priests Retreat

2 — Fort Stockton, St. Agnes - Confirmation at 5:30 p.m. and Install Father Serafin Avenido as Pastor

3 — Abilene, St. Francis - Confirmation at 9:00 a.m.

4 — San Angelo, Christ the King Retreat Center - Gathering with Lubbock Priests at their Annual Retreat-5:00 p.m.

5 — San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center - Staff Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Staff Meeting at 11:00 a.m.

8 — Midland, Pro Life Rosary in Front of Planned Parenthood at 9:30 a.m.

10 — Colorado City, St. Ann - Confirmation at 10:30 a.m.

11 — Brady, St. Patrick - Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

12-15 — Atlanta, USCCB

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**Christ the King Retreat Center**

**MAY**

17 — San Angelo, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Marriage Jubilee Day Mass at 2:00 p.m.

19 — Wall, Rural Life Mass at 6:00 p.m.

20-21 — Rest and Prayer

24 — Eden, St. Charles - Confirmation at 11:00 a.m.

30 — San Angelo, St. Mary - Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.

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**Ethics Workshops**

**Abilene Deane**

**Monday, May 21, 2012, 6:30-9:30 pm**

— Sacred Heart, Abilene (Nelson Bld)

**Saturday, June 2, 2012, 1:00 am - 1:00 pm**

— Sacred Heart, Abilene (Nelson Bld)

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**Necrology**

**July**

2 — Rev. Bernard Degnan, CM (2001)

2 — Deacon Floyd Franklin

4 — Rev. Msgr. Charles Dvorak (1963)


10 — Rev. Emil J. Gerlich (1969)


22 — Bishop Thomas J. Drury (1992)

26 — Deacon Jose Rosales (2000)

26 — Deacon Abel Campos (2002)

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**Archbishop stresses need to help poor**

**Former San Angelo bishop in town to help Odessa charity**

**The Angelus**

ODESSA — Recalling the message of St. Paul as he delivered the Good News of the Gospel, Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza reminded a packed Odessa County Club April 26 that the poor must always be cared for.

The Most Rev. Fiorenza, fourth bishop of San Angelo, and current Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, spoke before a crowded Odessa Country Club April 26 at the annual fundraiser for Catholic Charities.

“Helping the poor through social and economic justice issues is why we’re here,” Archbishop Fiorenza said. “It’s what we do in the Church. We have to be in solidarity with the poor, it is something that is critical to who we are.

Archbishop Fiorenza called being in solidarity with the poor a “contribution to the common good and a requirement of an essential dimension of the Gospel.”

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**Del Escritorio del Obispo**

**Santa Maria, madre de dios!**

**Por el Obispo Miguel D. Pfeifer, OMI**

Cada vez que recemos el Ave María, y quizás lo rezamos varias veces al día, proclamamos nuestra creencia tradicional Católica basada en el Evangelio de San Lucas que María es ciertamente la Madre de Dios – la Madre de Cristo Jesús, verdadero Dios y verdadero hombre. “Madre de Dios” – este es el título más alto que se ha dado a cualquier ser humano, y en el diseño de Dios Padre, Dios escogió a la humilde jovencita campesina de Nazaret para el papel más grande de toda la historia humana – de ser la Madre de Dios, la Madre del Mesías, nuestro Salvador. Con un espíritu de humildad y de fe profunda, María simplemente se ofreció ella misma para cumplir con el plan de Dios con sus palabras muy conocidas, “Sí, a tu voluntad, Señor, cúmplase en mí lo que me has dicho.”

En el mes de Mayo, honramos a nuestras madres quienes nos han dado vida, y la primera madre que queremos honrar es nuestra Madre espiritual, María, la Madre de Cristo Jesús, Jesús, al morir en la cruz, nos dijo Su propia Madre para que fuera nuestra Madre. Por lo tanto, primero y ante todo, en el mes de las madres, le damos las gracias a Dios por darnos una Madre tan hermosa, y le ofrecemos honor y gratitud por todo lo que hace por nosotros como una amable y amorosa Madre. Una manera especial para honrar a María es por medio de renovar nuestra devoción a ella, especialmente esforzándonos cada día a imitar su vida, en especial su espíritu de fe, esperanza y su entrega amorosa a la voluntad de Dios. Su tema de himno ha de ser nuestra oración constante, “Cúmplase en mí lo que me has dicho.” María, como una Madre amorosa, constantemente le pide a Su Hijo que nos de nueva vida, nuevas gracias, para cumplir con la voluntad de Dios en nuestras vidas. En sus apariciones, María nos anima a rezar el rosario, su oración favorita.

Al honrar a nuestras madres cuando celebramos su día especial, el Día de la Madres, el 8 de mayo, les damos las gracias por darnos vida, y por los innumerables sacrificios que han hecho para ayudarnos hacer quien somos. Este es un día para decirles a nuestras madres, empezando con nuestra Madre Bendita, que las queremos y que estamos agradecidos por todo lo que hacen por nosotros. Y, es un día, si, a rezar con María, pidiéndole a Dios que les colme de muchas nuevas bendiciones. Feliz Día de las Madres para todas nuestras queridas madres, y gracias por todo lo que hacen por sus familias individuales y por nuestra Iglesia.
ABILENE — Imagine sleeping in your own bed one night only to awaken to a loud clatter. You rise and hurry to the sound and find armed men demanding you give them your home and all your belongings. They have a gun pointed at your head so you only have one real option: You tell them to take everything. Within minutes, you are forced out of your home with only what is on your back and for the next several months, you wander with others who have met a similar fate across the desert of West Texas.

One day you pitch camp near Stanton. The next week you seek a shadier place and walk to San Angelo. In the winter you head south to Junction or Fort Stockton because the only way to find relief from the climate is the tent you carry on your back. Water and food are scarce. You want to return to your home and confront the aggressors that took everything you owned, but you can’t. If you do, they will shoot you on sight. And so you become a citizen of whatever moving camp you hook up with. All you do, day in and day out, is roam, trying to survive.

One day, when you decide you have had enough of this lifestyle, you apply to a government agency and ask for political asylum in another country. Five years later, you are approved.

You are free, yes. And you no longer have to worry about being murdered by thugs who have overrun your home. But you are alone and beginning life anew. Forget the degree you received from your country’s university and the fact that you are educated. That doesn’t translate too well in your new home. But you are free.

Now all there is to do, aside from starting your life over, is to pray and worry every waking moment about the wife or husband or parent or child that you were forced to leave behind. Day and night, you fear for their safety and pray for the phone call that they have made it safely to your new country. Except many don’t ever rejoin family. Many are murdered, others simply never make it through the process and never see family again.

This is the story for as many as 600 African refugees in Abilene, one of five American cities that, through the International Refugee Commission,
REFUGEES

(From 6)

accept people looking to stay alive and start anew.

The only silver lining for the refugees who make their way to America is the reception and treatment they receive when they land in America. For those refugees, Abilene has become their safe haven. Of those, about 50 refugees from Rwanda, the Congo, Burundi, and other African nations riddled by terrorism and criminal activity, have found a new home and friends at Holy Family Church, on Abilene’s South side.

Monsignor Fred Nawarskas approved the church’s participation in the refugee effort several years ago. Working through the IRC, many volunteers at the church have provided not only friendship and transportation to and from Mass for the refugees, but in many other aspects of life.

Jane, of Tanzania, came to American less than a year and a half ago, after her husband was murdered by rebels outside their home. The couple had three children together. It is obvious when talking to her she still bears the pain of having her husband taken from her.

Jane speaks seven languages, including French, English and Swahili. In America, she is a laborer, but has a home and connections through the church which provide spiritual formation and support.

The refugees from Rwanda and other countries are often highly intelligent -- one man, Thaddee Uwimana (see related story), was a physician in Africa. Here he is allowed to practice nursing. Another refugee finished in the top 25 percent of her graduating class at Abilene High School, after having been enrolled at AHS for just one year. Another refugee who now calls Abilene home is a pre-med student at Abilene Christian, according to Deacon Gary Rhodes.

While college students who move to America to study can go home to their African nations, refugees who leave their country cannot return home.

“The people who take their land will kill them if they return because the people who took the land do not want to give it back,” said Suzanne Rhodes, Deacon Rhodes’ wife and a helper in the program.

Not only are the refugees intelligent, they are grateful for being given a second chance, and motivated by their faith.

About 50 of the refugees in Abilene are Catholic. They rarely miss Mass and are active in programs such as choir and religious education.

Abilene and Dallas are the two Texas cities that participate in the IRC program.

“It is a reputable way to bring people to our country,” said Mary Kossbiel, one of the Holy Family parishioners involved in helping the refugees.

THADDEE

(From 1)

But when the factions in Rwanda, the Hutus and Tutsis, began warring, Thaddee and his wife and child were forced from their home and lived for five years in refugee camps. They called small spaces under bushes and below trees their new home. They would become refugees in their own country for five years, before fleeing to Kenya and finally to the Ivory Coast where the violence caught up with them again. Thaddee and his family would apply for residency in the United States and finally in 2002 he and wife, Pascaise and their two children moved to Abilene.

It wasn’t until he left Rwanda, though, that the worst part of the journey for the Uwimana family began to unfold. Two of his brothers and one sister were murdered in Rwanda. And then came the cruelest hurt of all.

“My father and mother moved into one of my houses in Rwanda,” Thaddee said. “One day, a rebel came into the house and demanded my father leave, that the house now belonged to him. My father said, ‘No, this is my son’s house.’ They shot him. He was 92.”

Sylvain Uwimana was a Christian, a religious education teacher at his church and a farmer. A good, spirit filled man, Thaddee calls him. So inspirational was Sylvain that Thaddee and Pascaise named their children Sylvie, Sylvia and Sylvain. The younger two children were born in America. Sylvain was born with Down Syndrome. He had open heart surgery as an infant and has continuing heart concerns.

Life has been a challenge for Uwimana. But it is only his later years in Africa that he terms an “extreme ordeal.”

The challenges he and his family have faced here -- including his professional adjustment -- have been manageable compared with watching your homeland turned into a violent killing field and being forced to flee from camp to camp and ultimately country to country.

Thaddee thought he had found a peaceful home in the Ivory Coast until waking up one morning to the sound of gunfire.

The French military rescued the Uwimanas and ultimately they landed in Abilene, where Thaddee said he expected to find cowboys and horses. His vision of Texas was just what Hollywood told him it would be — even from half way around the world.

Thaddee didn’t find those staged trappings, and life in Abilene has been anything but war-torn. He and his family have a new home, and a new family, at Abilene’s Holy Family, has provided the support and friendship the Uwimanas didn’t have in Africa.

Still, Thaddee says, “I miss my country. It is my native country. I hope to live long enough to see it return to a peaceful country where I can return to visit.”

One of the more difficult changes Thaddee was faced with upon arrival in America was being unable to practice medicine as he could in Rwanda and elsewhere in Africa, where he also served as a worker with the International Red

(Please See DOCTOR/19)
How cops-and-robber show depicts the domestic Church

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

Family shows on television, once as ubiquitous as today's "police procedural" dramas, are now high on pieces along with relics such as TV dinners, vinyl records and Hula Hoops.

Instead of watching "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" and "Father Knows Best," a television viewer can put the feet up, relax and routinely watch autopsies at least four or five times a week.

Say "family drama" today and it conjures up programs so sugary sweet as to induce dramatic diabetes. Instead we have police procedurals (i.e., a crime discovered by innocent witnesses never seen again, and police investigations where cops and coroners crack wise over a partially dismembered corpse followed by an obligatory courtroom scene).

Shows such as "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," "Leave It to Beaver" and "The Donna Reed Show" featured a nuclear family: working father, stay-at-home mom, at least two children and one cute pet. The dramatic thread carried little more than who to take to the prom or responding to a bully. They are far out of touch today's family experiences and perhaps were so in their time.

So, it's good to see a family show that can be entertaining while dealing with topical ethical issues and celebrate the family as a unit.

"Blue Bloods," which airs Fridays on CBS, is centered on an Irish-American Catholic family -- the Reagans of New York. The title reflects a somewhat unlikely premise.

Grandpa is a former NYPD police commissioner. His son Frank Reagan is the current commissioner. Frank's three children are in law enforcement: One son is a detective, another son is a rookie patrolman and his daughter is an assistant district attorney. Another son, also a police officer, was killed in the line of duty.

The show contains the usual plots. The difference is that the ethical questions involved in the cases are discussed and integrated into the daily life of a modern typical family.

It introduces values to television without preaching. The family's discussions take place in what is increasingly rare today: around the family dinner table where members gather each Sunday (and even say grace before meals).

Sometimes the fourth generation -- the children of Frank's children -- provoke the discussion. They know their parents are in dangerous professions. They know their parents are called to use firearms.

In one episode, when a close friend of the family is killed in the line of duty, the detective's wife and children worry about his emotional state.

In another, the Reagans contemplate the right and wrong of taking matters into their own hands after a good Samaritan stops a criminal in the subway.

Erin prosecutes a woman accused of killing her husband. The case is investigated by her detective brother. When he takes the stand, things get heated between the brother and sister.

Another plot question: how far to go to protect family members?

Shows such as "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" and "Father Knows Best" are long since consigned to the irrelevant bin. The family dinner -- either nightly or at least once a week -- risks the same fate.

The demise of the family dinner would be missed for at least two reasons: for the celebration of the family as a functioning unit with respect for each other and for the discussion and understanding of values.

The family is the domestic church. It is good to be at the table together.

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Kent, now retired, was editor of archdiocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle.

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Too early to dream of a Vatican team at the World Cup?

By Dan Morris
Catholic News Service

Catholic sports fans, are you up to speed on the juicy stuff going on at the Vatican?

No, no, no. Who cares about "VatiLeaks" with its alleged hints of money laundering and banking fraud and stuff like that? That's old biretta.

We are talking about media-inflamed tension between Vatican offices about the Clericus Cup.

Many non-sports fans think the Clericus Cup is an athletic protective device for clerics, but it is a soccer tournament (now in its sixth year) in and around Rome. It involves priests and seminarians from about 70 countries.

As you probably know, these men form 16 soccer teams from pontifical universities, seminaries and religious orders to compete for the "saturno" trophy. It's about as close to a Catholics-only soccer league as you'll find. The trophy is a soccer ball with cleats and an old-time clerical hat (a saturno, fittingly enough).

For the record, the wide-brimmed saturno is also known as a "cappello romano."

Anyway, the remarkable news is that two Vatican councils -- the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Pontifical Council for Culture -- have been wrongly reported in the media as duking it out over sponsorship of the tournament.

The sports desk of the laity council withdrew its sponsorship. The culture council filled that void with its own sports desk. It's not clear if the culture council created its sports desk for this purpose, but who cares. Let's pretend it did. The Italian bishops' conference still is a sponsor.

The point is that the media love this stuff.

Those of us who have been lobbying the Vatican for years to buy its own major sports franchise (or two) have to be encouraged at this nonexistent but entertaining struggle. It's putting the Vatican and sports on the map.

We have to take more heart from the fact that cardinals have weighed in to the faux fray.

Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the culture council, said, "We are interested in the cultural phenomenon" of sports and that is why his council's new sports desk quickly replaced the laity council's.

Meanwhile, the laity council's sports desk director, Legionary of Christ Father Kevin Lixey, said the laity council pulled out of the tournament because its focus on sports' moral formative potential had been diluted.

To his chagrin, Italian news folks apparently had been telling viewers, readers and listeners that the reason was because fans and players had stooped to unsportsmanlike language and behavior at times. Nope, not the reason, Father Lixey told reporters.

Vatican Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone said some time ago -- around the time of the first Clericus Cup -- he hoped the Vatican could one day field its own team on international competitions.

Bingo! That's what we at the Roadkill Theological Roundtable have been promoting.

What has as much cultural impact as a World Cup contender?

I mean, the international soccer federation FIFA has 208 national associations, while the United Nations only has about 190 member states.

To make things even more media-worthy, Cardinal Bertone also is up to his miter in the "VatiLeaks."

Is it too early to start thinking of what mascot an international Vatican soccer contender might use?

(Comments are welcome. Email Uncle Dan at cnsun-cle01@yahoo.com.)
Catholic Voices II

A journey toward sainthood for founder of Boys Town

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

Growing up in rural Nebraska, our family would sometimes make the long drive to Omaha. From the backseat of the car, we kids would announce "we're getting close to Omaha" when we could see the familiar buildings and farm fields of Boys Town rising in the east.

Omaha has grown around and beyond Boys Town, but the rolling grounds and buildings remain the same: a Nebraska landmark and a tribute to a young Irish immigrant priest who believed "there are no bad boys. There is only bad environment, bad training, bad example, bad thinking."

Earlier this year, Archbishop George J. Lucas of Omaha posted a notice on the doors of St. Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha noting the opening of a cause for sainthood for Father Edward Flanagan, founder of Boys Town.

It was a sunny, crisp morning, and a large crowd -- including plenty of media -- along with a contingent of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, gathered to see the simple announcement.

In 1917, Father Flanagan, a native of County Roscommon in Ireland, first rented a house in Omaha for five boys. He had worked with homeless men, but he became convinced that the place to start saving men was in their youth. Orphans, hooligans, runaways, wanderers, riffians -- he believed he could change their lives, and thousands of them later attested that he changed them.

Eventually, he moved to the large farm that became his famous "town." Although it was rural, it was along Dodge Street -- then, as now, the main drag through town. He wanted to be where boys could find him. When they found him, they were given a simple cot, good food, an education, a chance to elect a mayor and run their "town," and a home where people cared about them.

Father Flanagan's profile was enlarged immensely in 1938 when Spencer Tracy starred as Father Flanagan in the movie "Boys Town," with Mickey Rooney as a challenging young resident. Tracy won an Oscar (now at the Boys Town museum), and the public's imagination was captured by this priest who had a new approach to homeless youth.

If you visit Boys Town, you'll find a thriving program (which now includes girls) and a memorial to Father Flanagan. You can visit his lovely old rectory, which volunteers decorate in typical Irish country style at Christmas.

It seems there are some things most saints have in common. They often come from humble, unassuming backgrounds and they retain that humility while finding uncompromising optimism and confidence along the way.

If you visit the museum, and study the long, resolutely Irish face of the young Father Flanagan, you can't help but sense that simple, uncluttered will to do the right thing.

And saints are usually ahead of their time. Father Flanagan was an early advocate of racial equality. He believed every boy should pray, "but how he prays is up to him."

Just like his simple rectory, many things about Father Flanagan speak to another era, a time before labels like "attention deficit" and "oppositional deviant disorder" got placed on kids barely big enough to shoulder them.

He labored in a field largely free of pharmacology, and would no doubt be amazed to see the paperwork involved in dealing with a child in the social services arena today.

Father Flanagan's life attests to the things that remain the same: the ability to see a great need and the willingness to heroically meet it.

Getting to a child's heart through music

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

As I viewed a PowerPoint presentation on the Fred Rogers Center at St. Vincent's College in Latrobe, Pa., my heart swelled with beautiful memories of my mother.

As a child, I would wake to the smell of garlic and my mother singing as she cooked. At the 50th wedding anniversary party for my grandparents, I remember them singing "Oh Marie" together. I then realized where my mother's love of singing came from.

One of the projects at the Fred Rogers Center is creating songs for children. They are aimed at appreciating daily events. I envisioned a mother at her children's bedside singing, "Now is time to rise and thank God for the day. Let us get up and pray: Thank you for yet another day." Or: "Now we wash and dry the dishes, let us thank God for food that was delicious."

Music wakes the inner spirit, and when it's put into words, the meaning touches our soul. Music also has the power of quieting the soul and generating an orderly peaceful atmosphere.

Early in my priesthood, I decided to teach all eight grades in grammar school so I could experience what it was like to teach. My greatest fear was how to calm energetic first- and second-graders. If you can't control the students, a classroom can become chaotic.

After experiencing a few chaotic sessions, a teacher suggested I start class with a song. This I did and oh the response. To begin class, I would intone a Gregorian chant.

"The word is center and foremost in chant, the purpose of chant is to draw out its depth through melody," he told me.

"Some types of music, when it is over, make you want to stand up and cheer. With chant, you just want to be quiet," he said.

For parents wishing to harmonize their family life better, I would suggest devising and singing a variety of tunes with their younger children, preferably those that enliven the human spirit, those that contain wisdom and those that foster stillness.

Music has enormous powers waiting to make family life more wholesome.

Tip O'neill: Prophet
Making Sense of Bioethics

Our moral obligations: Black and white? Or gray?

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

One widely-encountered idea today is that there is no black and white when it comes to morality, only a kind of “gray area.” This is often taken to mean that we really can’t know with certainty what is right and wrong, allowing us to “push into the gray” as we make certain moral decisions that at first glance appear to be immoral.

The behavior of the semi-legendary figure of Robin Hood is sometimes mentioned as an example of this “gray area” phenomenon, since he was a character who would steal money (morally bad) for the purposes of helping the poor (morally good).

By focusing on the good intentions motivating our choices, and by arguing that morality is ambiguous and mostly “gray” anyway, a person can more easily justify and provide cover for morally problematic actions. When we begin to scrutinize the claim that morality is “gray,” however, we encounter significant problems and contradictions.

The romanticized exploits of Robin Hood, for example, end up providing little more than a “veil of gray” that quickly dissolves when we place ourselves in the first-person situation of being the victim of his thievery, having our own windows broken and our own goods plundered. Those who have been robbed of their possessions will often describe afterwards, in vivid detail, the awful awareness of personal violation, the crushing of their feeling of security, etc. In these circumstances, we see the moral problem with Robin Hood’s depraved actions, and appreciate the direct, black and white character of the universal moral injunction against stealing.

Universal moral prohibitions are clearly at the heart of any discussion about the “graysness” of morality. Many human actions, when freely chosen, will always be unacceptable. These actions, referred to as “intrinsic evils,” are immoral regardless of circumstance. Adultery would be an example of an intrinsic evil. Regardless of how much a married man may desire to be with a new romantic flame, and regardless of how terrible his current marriage and sex life may appear to be, the decision to have sexual relations with someone who is not his spouse will invariably constitute an act of moral depravity on his part. Every wife who has suffered infidelity on the part of her husband, and every child who has seen the betrayal of their mother by their father can attest that there is no such thing as a “gray zone” for adultery. Many people who recognize that an action may be black may still be tempted to think that because their intentions are white, the “gray” action may be done. But good intentions cannot bleach the blackness of a deed.

Acknowledging the existence of intrinsic evils and recognizing the binding character of absolute moral prohibitions is an important part of our own moral growth and awakening. Indeed, morality itself, as an inner determinant of man’s character, is not fundamentally “gray” at all, but is, by its very nature, a code of black and white. In the final analysis, the cult of moral grayness is too easily a revolt against fixed and essential moral values.

Although fixed moral values must always guide our decisions, correctly applying a general moral principle to a particular situation will often require specific knowledge of the circumstances and details of that situation.

For example, I might have to grapple with the question of whether I have a moral duty to get out of bed and go to work in the morning. Whenever a particular set of circumstances prevail (I am healthy; today is a workday; my employer expects me to be present at the workplace; my vehicle is functioning normally), then I would reasonably conclude that I have a moral duty to go to work because of the objective moral commitments I have as a company employee — and, likely, the other employees who would “take up the slack” would resent my absence. Meanwhile, if I am very sick, I might reasonably conclude that I do not have a moral duty to go to work. Of course, deciding to stay in bed all day out of mere laziness would constitute an objective failure in terms of my moral duty.

The question of my moral duty to go to work, then, is not a “gray area” at all, nor a matter of relative morals, but rather a question of careful discernment, weighing of variables, seeking to do the good, and so on.

In sum, the objective lines of our moral obligation may sometimes be difficult to discern, and may even appear gray at first glance, but when we sort out the relevant details and seek to purify our own motives, and become willing to submit to the binding character of absolute moral prohibitions, that gray haze can dissipate, enabling us to see the real moral lines that were there all along.

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

Divine truth, defined Catholic teaching our guide to upcoming presidential election

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

As we approach the presidential and other elections, our ultimate guide in selecting the candidates for whom we cast our vote should be first and foremost Divine truth and the defined teaching of our Catholic Church. Our selection of the candidate for the top office of our nation should be based on biblical and moral principles explained to us by our Catholic Church, and not primarily on party platforms or party affiliation. Sadly, many Catholics put party affiliation and party platform ahead of even the Divine truths that are given to us by God in the Bible and sacred Tradition, and above the defined teaching of our Catholic Church on some specific moral issues.

As a nation and as a Church, we are facing unprecedented challenges that threaten to undermine the integrity of our moral, social, political life and foundational principles of society, and we are letting mere human judgments and laws become the ultimate standards that guide us for voting for political candidates and for formulating laws and policies instead of Divine laws and doctrines of our Catholic Church. We should let our selection of government leaders on all issues be guided by the social justice teaching of our Catholic Church.

To guide us in the political selection of the person that we choose as our president, we must seriously ask ourselves which candidate’s political position is most in accord with Divine truth and defined teaching of our Catholic Church. The socio-political-economic issues before us must be analyzed in the moral framework of these two guiding principles. Guided by these two principles, I present to you the issues that Catholic voters and other people of good will must take into account as they cast their votes:

The No. 1 issue that should guide our vote for the president of our country is our understanding and belief that the unborn human life, from the first moment of conception, is true human life, sacred because it is stamped with the very image and likeness of God and that direct abortion is seriously immoral and a crime. Based on several passages of Sacred Scripture, the Catholic Church holds that a new human being begins at conception, and that this human life must be given the highest respect and protection through pregnancy and throughout the life of this new person until the natural end of life as determined by God. Simply said, our Catholic Church teaches that we are pro-life at every stage of life—from the womb to the tomb. Catholics need to seriously consider which Presidential candidate will do the most to show respect for the precious unborn, to work to overcome abortion, and provide protection for this human life throughout pregnancy and when the new human person is born. Pope John Paul II outlined in his magnificent Gospel of Life, the defined teaching of the Catholic Church as regards the precious life of the unborn and the grave evil of abortion, which is a crime.

A major critical life issue that must be taken into account as

(Please See ELECTION/22)
ARISE group at Coleman’s Sacred Heart completes first year

By Mandy Ridgeway

COLEMAN — For the ARISE Together in Christ group from Sacred Heart in Coleman, our five groups truly became a vision of one. Not only does each group collectively enjoin as one but each is able to envision our parish and community as one in reaching out in our togetherness.

During our first season we grew more spiritually and reached out in service to our community by having a bake sale to help support the victims of the Hi-Rise who lost their apartments due to fire. This is just the beginning of our journey of commitment in serving others. Every week, we remind each other of this commitment, even the smallest action of a smile or handshake to another. Our small groups have given us an opportunity to learn more about our Catholic Faith, the Bible and from each other by our faith sharing stories. We started with five groups within our parish and hope to involve more new comers to join in our next seasons. We did not stop when our seasons ended, and continued to have a Sunday Bible Study reflecting on the Sunday’s Gospel Readings.

ARISE participant Paula Diaz shared her feelings, which are a consolidation of many other comments that are heard each week.

“ARISE has changed me for the better. I feel calmer and at peace with things that are going on in my life. I can deal with them better. Lent this year was more special to me. I looked at it differently. Before it seemed like an imposition to me, something that wasn’t really important. But this year, it was important. It wasn’t difficult for me to give something up or to think more about God and what his Son sacrificed for me. Arise and the group I am in has helped me grow stronger in my faith and I am very thankful to have been given the chance to experience it. I highly recommend it for all.”

What a wonderful journey it has been so far for all of us as members of the ARISE team and group members. We hope that through the grace of God we will continue to bring more people to experience the wonderful gifts we have encountered.

Human personality made harmonious by affirming chastity

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

I share with you here a brief but profound statement on the virtue of chastity given to us by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

“Chastity is a joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centered slavery. This presupposes that the person has learnt how to accept other people, to relate with them, while respecting their dignity in diversity. The chaste person is not self-centered, not involved in selfish relationships with other people. Chastity makes the personality harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace. This purity of mind and body helps develop true self-respect and at the same time makes one capable of respecting others, because it makes one see in them persons to reverence, insofar as they are created in the image of God and through grace are children of God, recreated by Christ…”


Advance Formation completed in Midland-Odessa

The 2010-2012 cycle of Advanced Formation was completed on Saturday, March 10, in the Midland/ Odessa Deanery.

Ten sessions were held at St. Mary Church in Odessa; five were held in Year One and five in Year Two.

The content of the two-year Advanced Formation Process includes Church History, Liturgy, Morality, Mary, Saints and Angels, Scripture and Social Justice.

Participants completing the process this year and receiving a certificate of completion are:

- Big Lake-Good Shepherd — Dora Villarreal and Susan Vargas, St. Margaret.
- Crane — Jose and Teresa Figueroa, and Joshua Figueroa.
- St. Ann, Colorado City — Geneva and Tracy Loyola.
- Sacred Heart, McCamey — Dorealia Ramirez.
- Holy Redeemer, Odessa — Delia Leal, Maria Luna and Zoila Mata
- St. Anthony, Odessa — Elaine Baeza, Marta Evaro, Gloria Medina, Lorene Ramirez, Frances Sanchez, Armando Rodriguez, Elva Rodriguez.
- St. Mary, Odessa — Sharon Denning, Rose Mendez, Phyllis Moralez, Melinda White.
- St. Thomas, Odessa — Patricia Basden and Sara Chavez.

For more information call the Office of Education and Formation at 325-651-7500.
Good Friday, Easter Vigil 2012

SAN ANGELO — San Angelo Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, top photo carrying cross, leads a group of pilgrims on a Good Friday Procession, the day Christians remember the day of Christ’s crucifixion. Above right, pilgrims arrive at the Stations of the Cross at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo.

MIDLAND — Above photos, worshipers at San Miguel de Arcangel celebrate Easter Vigil Mass.

MIDLAND — Above photos, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Midland celebrates Easter Vigil Mass.

(Photos by Alan P. Torre / aptorre.com)
Prepare kids for first Communion with zeal

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Preparing children for their first Communion must be done with both great zeal and moderation, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Around the world, many children receive their first Communion during the Easter season, he told pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square April 22 for the recitation of the "Regina Coeli," a Marian prayer used in place of the Angelus from Easter to Pentecost.

The pope urged "priests, parents and catechists to prepare for this feast of faith well, with great fervor but also with sobriety."

"For many of the faithful, this day continues to be memorable as the moment when, even if in a rudimentary way, they first came to understand the importance of a personal encounter with Jesus," he said quoting from his 2007 document on the Eucharist, "Sacramentum Caritatis" ("The Sacrament of Charity").

He stressed the importance of first Communion and prayed that Mary would help everyone listen to God's word with greater attention and "take part worthily" in Communion in order to become "witnesses of the new humanity."

Reaping from garden takes more than planning

By Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

"Prepare kids for first Communion with zeal"...that’s a good tip. I like the idea of having children (and work) of being married. They teach you about the challenges of parenting. We’ve planted (mostly) according to directions, stepped back inside the house, gotten busy with this or that, and stepped back outside a few weeks or months later to disappointing results.

The truth is we like the theory of gardening more than the actual gardening.

Vine-ripened tomatoes (that taste like tomatoes) and crisp sugar-snap peas plucked from the plant sound lovely. It’s just that they take so much work. So do carrots and lettuce and all those pretty vegetables pictured on the front of the colorful seed packets.

We know gardening doesn’t take a lot of time at one time. We know it requires a little bit of time, many times, over many months. We have a neighbor who has a lovely vegetable garden and we see him out there often and say to one another, "There he is again. Good for him."

And then we turn from the window and think of our garden.

It’s not that we’re lazy. We accomplish a lot: We edit a magazine, write articles and columns and books, run a nonprofit, visit our aging moms and babysit our grandchildren. We also keep in close contact with our children and siblings.

But that patch of dirt by the side gate remains sadly neglected. Soon after a spring planting, that neglect shows.

This year we’ve reduced its size. This year we may skip the vegetables and spread some wildflower seeds, maybe put a tomato plant in a large pot on the patio.

It seems obvious we love planning a garden and planting a garden, but not gardening. Without the gardening, the planning and the planting come to nothing.

That’s also true in many aspects of life.

A couple may like the idea of a wedding and of being married, but not the day-in and day-out challenges (and work) of being married. They may like the idea of having children, of being a mom and a dad, but not the demands of parenting.

We like the idea of being a good son or daughter, brother or sister, friend or coworker, a better Catholic, a more prayerful person. But each takes time and energy. Each takes commitment and perseverance.

No "garden" is immune from weeds.

The diligent gardener, the wise gardener, spots them and eliminates them while they’re still small.

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Bill and Monica Dodds are the founders of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver and editors of My Daily Visitor magazine. Their website is www.FSJ.org. Bill’s latest books are "How to Write Your Novel in Nine Weeks" and "The World’s Funniest Atheist."

Spirituality for Today

In a culture of violence, a little compassion

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

DURING LENT, I was touched again while praying with the Gospels by one phrase that seemed to draw us into the heart of Christ: Jesus "was moved with compassion."

Jesus so loved those he encountered, and so felt their suffering, that he responded with physical stirrings deep within his body. He instructed us: "Be compassionate, as your heavenly Father is compassionate."

This Lent, I was painfully aware of the sufferings of friends who have cancer and with a person on death row with whom I had corresponded for years. He was killed almost three weeks before Easter.

These illnesses and death weighed on me. When I think of my friends’ suffering, I often feel a gut ache. This isn’t entirely compassion on my part.

I know I, too, shall die. When confronted with the illness of others, my reaction may be in part inspired by our mutual mortality. Many people turn away from suffering or avoid the thought of it because it reflects on their vulnerability. The resulting fear can affect us in a physical way, not attributable solely to compassion.

I don’t know what’s ahead but can say unequivocally I don’t fear I will die on death row. So the physical reaction, the sudden illness, I experienced the evening my friend was executed was a "suffering with."

Perhaps in Lent, while awaiting the remembrance of the death of another condemned man, Christ himself, I was allowed to experience the gift and privilege of compassion.

The person I corresponded with maintained his innocence until the end. I don’t know if he was innocent or guilty. I know 17 years of imprisonment transformed him. I know that knowing him implanted in me a greater desire to work to end the death penalty and to bring a greater sense of restorative -- not punitive -- justice to our country.

“We cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing," the U.S. bishops told us in 1994. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI repeatedly have called for an end to the death penalty and praised those who work for its abolition in every country.

Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty reminds us that we live in a coun-

(Please See CALDAROLA/23)
After the crucifixion, apostles are visited

By Joe Sarnicola

The apostles were gathered in one place talking about the events of the past few days. Jesus had been betrayed and brought to trial. He was given a sentence of death by crucifixion. But that was not the end. His tomb had been found empty, and two of his followers had met him on their way to Emmaus.

Then suddenly, Jesus was in the room with them. "Peace be with you," he said.

The men were terrified. They thought a ghost had appeared in front of them. So Jesus asked, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

Jesus held up his hands, then he pointed to his feet to show his friends the nail marks from when he had been crucified. Then they were happy because they knew it really was Jesus and that he was back with them.

"Have you anything here to eat?" he asked.

They gave Jesus a piece of baked fish, which he ate as he talked with them about the Scriptures.

"Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And (behold) I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Then Jesus told his apostles to come with him, and he went with them to Bethany. There he stopped to pray with them. With his hands raised, Jesus said a blessing for his friends. While he was still praying, Jesus was taken up to heaven.

The apostles rejoiced over what they had just witnessed and praised God all the way back home, and they praised God in the temple as well.

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Luke 24
Q&A

1. What were the apostles doing when Jesus appeared to them?
2. What happened when Jesus was blessing his apostles?

BIBLE ACCENT
The most important message of the four Gospels is the life and teachings of Jesus. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he promised his followers he would send a promise from his Father that would give them "power from on high" (Lk 24:49).

This promise from the Father came upon the apostles when they were praying in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit enabled the early Christians to travel throughout the world of their day spreading the good news about Jesus.

The Acts of the Apostles, which was written by Luke, tells us about the ministries of Peter and some of the other apostles, the martyrdom of Stephen, and the exciting conversion and missionary journeys of Paul.

PUZZLE
Use the code provided to change the letters in the following sentence. Then fill in the blanks to make a sentence that Jesus spoke in the story above. ( / = the space between the words.)

Code: r = a; t = e; p = i; w = o; m = u

Puzzle: _ tr_t / _t / _p_ _ / _wm.

(Answer, Page 17)

Try on an alter ego and discover a little about yourself

By Karen Osborne
Catholic News Service

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be someone else? Some of the world's biggest pop stars have.

Adopting an alter ego is common among today's big-name singers and rappers. Nicki Minaj raps a good portion of her brand-new album as her alter ego, Roman Zolanski.

Lady Gaga attended the 2011 MTV Video Music Awards not as herself but as guy greaser Jo Calderone. Back in the 1970s, glam-rocker David Bowie sang concerts and starred in a movie as the glitter-bound Ziggy Stardust. The rapper Eminem got away with quite a bit as his alter-ego, troublemaker Slim Shady.

Artists love adopting alter egos, and for good reason.

People often think a pop star's life is full of fun and freedom. However, artistically, they're far more limited.

Once a star is known for a certain style or kind of song, changing it up means risking alienation of their fan base. And it could limit their profits.

Developing an alter ego allows a pop star to explore musical styles. Sasha Fierce allowed Beyonce Knowles to develop more confidence onstage. Kathy Beth Terry helped Katy Perry connect with a younger fan base.

The desire to explore an alter ego isn't limited to the rich and famous.

Everyone has wondered what it's like to live another life, to have a different personality, or a different family, or a different way of seeing the world.

Teens are especially sensitive to this feeling. The teenage years are a time for discovery, a time to find out who you are and what you're all about. Trying on an alter ego for a while isn't a betrayal of your identi-
Citing doctrinal concerns, Vatican issues reforms of nuns' group

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Citing "serious doctrinal problems which affect many in consecrated life," the Vatican announced a major reform of an association of women's religious congregations in the U.S. to ensure their fidelity to Catholic teaching in areas including abortion, euthanasia, women's ordination and homosexuality.

Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle will provide "review, guidance and approval, where necessary, of the work" of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Vatican announced April 18. The archbishop will be assisted by Bishop Leonard P. Blair of Toledo, Ohio, and Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, Ill., and draw on the advice of fellow bishops, women religious and other experts.

The LCWR, a Maryland-based umbrella group that claims about 1,500 leaders of U.S. women's communities as members, represents about 80 percent of the country's 57,000 women religious.

In Silver Spring, Md., the presidency of the LCWR issued a statement saying it was "stunned by the conclusions of the doctrinal assessment of LCWR by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Because the leadership of LCWR has the custom of meeting annually with the staff of CDF in Rome and because the conference follows canonically approved statutes, we were taken by surprise."

"This is a moment of great import for religious life and the wider church. We ask your prayers as we meet with the LCWR National Board within the coming month to review the mandate and prepare a response," the statement said.

A spokeswoman for the LCWR said its leadership would not be granting interviews until after a wider consultation with its members in May.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said the doctrinal congregation "appreciates that (the leadership of the conference) have so far limited themselves to a single official statement and have not expressed other specific complaints."

But Father Lombardi said the congregation believed that it had been treated "a bit unjustly" with the suggestion that the sisters had been taken entirely by surprise by the assessment.

The LCWR later revised its initial statement, adding that "we had received a letter from the CDF prefect in early March informing us that we would hear the results of the doctrinal assessment at

(Please See LCWR/20)

Inactive Catholics being urged to practice faith again

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A document on the new evangelization from the U.S. bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis exhorts Catholics to do so once again.

"Bishops, eparchs, pastors, catechists and indeed all Catholics reaching out to our missing brothers and sisters must touch the lives of others, interact with them, and show them how the faith answers the deepest questions and enriches modern culture," said the document, titled "Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization."

"The new evangelization is a call to each person to deepen his or her own faith, have confidence in the Gospel, and possess a willingness to share the Gospel," it said.

The document was issued April 16 in an online-only format. It is available on an interactive website -- www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/disciples-called-to-witness.

The document examines what the new evangelization is, its focus, its importance for the Church and how dioceses and parishes can promote it.

Referring to a study of inactive Catholics prepared by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, "Disciples Called to Witness" said: "It is estimated that only 23 percent of U.S. Catholics attend Mass each week. Those 77 percent absent from the eucharistic feast each week are not strangers: They are our parents, siblings, spouses, children and friends."

(Please See SCOUTS/20)
Communion ministers, priest complaints

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Catholic News Service

Q. Recently, I have noticed some people, after they receive holy Communion, take a second host. They seem to receive it in a small container and then place it in their pocket or pocketbook. I assume that they are bringing the host home for a family member who is ill or incapacitated and unable to get to Mass. So my question is: Can anyone do that?

I thought that only a priest, deacon or officially designated eucharistic minister could distribute holy Communion. 
(Central Wisconsin)

A. You may be observing officially designated extraordinary ministers of holy Communion, a practice allowed in appropriate circumstances by the church's Code of Canon Law. "Redemptoris Sacramentum," an instruction issued in 2004 by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, speaks of such enabling circumstances. Paragraph No. 158 explains the most common, which is "when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of the Mass would be unduly prolonged."

Frequently, extraordinary ministers also are recruited by a parish to take Communion to the homebound or to those in nursing homes. They carry Communion in a small gold-colored metal container called a "pyx," supplied by the parish. Extraordinary ministers should be qualified by proven virtue, appropriately trained and commissioned by their pastor in an appropriate ceremony (the church's Book of Blessings provides one). Their names are submitted to the office of the diocesan bishop.

Many parishes hold a commissioning ceremony annually on the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ (formerly called Corpus Christi). In addition to those formally commissioned, "Redemptionis Sacramentum" says that "in cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist" (No. 155).

That may happen, for example, when an extraordinary minister assigned to a Mass fails to appear or when the crowd of worshippers is unexpectedly large. Logically, this would seem also to cover the circumstance when someone is at home recovering from surgery and the spouse asks the priest for permission, that day, to bring holy Communion home.

The priest can give that person a pyx and, without a formal ceremony of commissioning, allow him or her to take a second host when Communion is distributed at that day's Eucharist. If the situation is going to continue on a regular basis, that person should be formally commissioned when a parish ceremony is next held.

Q. Whom do parishioners contact to make a complaint about their pastor?  
(A small city in southeastern Indiana)

A. It depends on the nature of the complaint. Given some of the recent history of the church, it cannot be excluded that the complaint might be of a criminal nature. In such a situation, it is best to bring your concern directly to the attention of civil authorities, who have the staff and the background to investigate most effectively.

Thankfully, most complaints about priests are of a much more pedestrian nature, and it may be best to discuss these with the pastor, as he may be in a better position to solve the problem. If there is no success, then the people can contact the local diocesan bishop, or they may contact the national office of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Just who will be able to get into heaven?

By Father John Catoir  
Catholic News Service

It might surprise you to know that you don't have to be a Catholic to get into heaven. For that matter, you don't even have to be a Christian, but you do have to detest evil. All salvation will come through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. 

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical "Redemptoris Missio," wrote: "The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the Gospel revelation or to enter the church. ... For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace. ... This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his sacrifice."

Does this idea cause you to wonder who can get into heaven?

A lot of people are like the Pharisees, who condemned Jesus for allowing a common prostitute to bathe his feet with her tears. No one but God can judge someone else's level of holiness. Remember the words of Jesus: "The last will be first, and the first will be last."

Caryll Houselander wrote a beautiful book entitled, "The Reed of God."

In the book he writes: "How is it that people who do not believe in any creed, who have no moral standards and who do not recognize charity as a thing necessary for salvation are often conspicuously kind, warm-hearted, and tolerant; whereas professing Christians are often notoriously hard, censorious, and exacting? How is it that a person known to be 'religious' is often the very last person to whom we would go with a burden of shame?"

Given these thoughts, here are some things to ponder:

1. Heaven is a place. There has to be "locus" because we are human beings; we are not pure spirits like the angels. Our bodies require a place to live and walk and be.

2. Heaven is also a state. It is a state of bliss, which comes from living intimately with God.

3. Heaven is a kingdom of justice. Like the angels and archangels, there may be different levels of holiness among heaven's citizens. The difference may be monumental in some cases, such as between Mother Teresa and the last wicked sinner, who managed to repent in time to be saved.

As Luke reminds us: "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance."

Our Holy Father's 2012 Monthly Intentions

MAY

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

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

JUNE

General Intention: Christ, Present in the Eucharist. That believers may recognize in the Eucharist the living presence of the Risen One who accompanies them in daily life.

Missionary Intention: European Christians. That Christians in Europe may rediscover their true identity and participate with greater enthusiasm in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Daily Offering Prayer

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

Answers from Kids Puzzle (Pg. 15)

Peace be with you.
‘Bully’ documentary tells victimization stories of trio of teens

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK -- With the poignant documentary "Bully" (Weinstein), filmmaker Lee Hirsch sheds light on a widespread and tenacious social problem and provides a valuable -- though not unproblematic -- starting point for important family discussions.

Hirsch reveals the victimization of a trio of teens from different parts of the country who have endured verbal and physical abuse from their peers at school. He also recounts, primarily through interviews with their grieving parents, the stories of two other students whose sufferings apparently led them to commit suicide.

Perhaps the most effective part of the movie is that which concerns a Sioux City, Iowa, seventh-grader named Alex. Wisely and effectively, Hirsch and his team simply trail Alex through his various experiences.

Thus we can hear him almost hyperventilating with dread as he prepares for the first day of a new school year. We later witness Alex's fears being cruelly fulfilled as some of the other riders on his crowded school bus hit

(Please See BULLY/21)

Teen's visions of Jesus make for engaging reading


Reviewed by Nancy L. Roberts
Catholic News Service

Some skeptics might call the religious visions detailed by author Immaculee Ilibagiza in "The Boy Who Met Jesus: Segatashya of Kibeho" nothing but the hallmark hallucinations of temporal lobe epilepsy. Others will see them as direct manifestations of the divine in everyday life. In any case, this story of a poor, illiterate Rwandan shepherd boy's spiritual journey is absorbing and sometimes inspiring.

Segatashya came from a pagan family and never had the opportunity to attend school or church or read a Bible. On a summer day in 1982, under a shade tree, the teenager experienced an apparition of Jesus. As he explained, "I saw him (Jesus) and he spoke to me. ... He said he chose me as a sign to show people who don't believe in him -- like pagans and any other non-believers -- that he is not forgetting them. He sees them, he cares about them, he loves them, and he hopes that they invite him into their hearts."

Eventually Segatashya set off on a profound spiritual mission. For eight years before he was murdered in the Rwandan genocide in 1994, he traveled and bore witness to life's purpose: to love Jesus and one's fellow humans, to strive to reach heaven.

Despite sometimes being beaten by those who doubted his sincerity, Segatashya seemed to retain his innate innocence. Ultimately the depth of his spiritual wisdom convinced and comforted many of his critics.

Ilibagiza has also written "Our Lady of Kibeho" (with Steve Erwin), a book about the Marian visionaries whose experiences in the early 1980s made the town a famous pilgrimage site. Unlike their visions, however, Segatashya's were not officially authenticat-ed by the Catholic Church before his death. Ilibagiza recounts in "The Boy Who Met Jesus" how Segatashya once appeared to her in a dream, advising her not to be overly concerned with this: "Isn't telling my story more important than waiting for someone on earth to give my words a stamp of approval? Isn't letting people know about the messages Jesus gave to me the most important thing in the world?"

Ilibagiza, who studied electronic and mechanical engineering at the National University, lost most of her own family in the Rwandan genocide. She met Segatashya about a year before he died; her research sources also include extensive interviews with his younger sister, Christine.

Religious travelogue has an interesting premise: America


Catholic News Service

In a rented Dodge Charger, two sociologists from Penn State University set off on a five-week, 6,904-mile trip to various points across the United States. "Places of Faith: A Road Trip Across America's Religious Landscape" is a glimpse into this journey. Authors Christopher P. Scheitle and Roger Finke invite the reader to join them in "discovering America's rich religious mosaic by exploring some of the most distinctive and important sites within America's religious geography."

Each of the book's chapters focuses on a different destination, with additional short "views from the road." The primary sites are Memphis, Tenn.; Houston; Colorado Springs, Colo.; San Francisco; Salt Lake City; central Nebraska; Detroit; Brooklyn, N.Y.; and central Pennsylvania. The chapters provide some history and a broad religious overview of the area; a site-specific experience of the authors -- often in a worship setting; additional commentary and analysis; and a brief list of related references and further reading.

Though much material and many miles are covered, the book's title suggests a broader landscape than that actually presented. The pieces of a religious mosaic are heavily reliant on Christianity, with a spectrum presented from African-American churches, mega-church
Angelo Catholic students write about importance of Earth, Earth Day

Why does Earth Day Mean to me?
By ACS Fourth/Fifth Grade Class
Earth Day means that everybody needs to protect and clean our planet Earth. God gave us this beautiful planet, so we need to work as a community to clean and help our planet. We should take care of the gift of the Earth, so we can give back to God what he made for us. Earth Day reminds us to recycle and reuse. Earth day means we should respect God's creation.

Why is Earth Day Important?
By ACS Second Grade Class
Earth Day is important because God made the Earth, it is His creation. He made the Earth to show His love for us. We thank God for all the plants: trees, bushes, shrubs. We should respect the Earth. To show respect, we should take care of the Earth. We should reduce, recycle, and reuse. We should make everyday Earth Day.

Why does Earth Day Mean?
By ACS Sixth Grade Class
The Earth is our life, so we need to take care of it. We need to take care of the Earth by not littering and by reminding others to stop littering. The Earth is like a little piece of God, and we are made from it. When we take care of the Earth, we are taking care of ourselves and showing we love God. We should take care of the Earth because God made it to be our home. We should take care of the Earth, because it is a great place to live. The Earth is a gift from God, and we must cherish it.

Why does Earth Day Mean to Me?
By ACS Third Grade Class
On Earth Day, we get to plant things that can help make a better world. We should always try to plant trees and shrubs. We should keep the water clean. We should “go green” and love our plants. Earth Day is one of the best days of the year. Earth Day reminds us to take care of God’s gift to us, the Earth.

DOCTOR
(From 7)

Cross. In Abilene, he is the assistant director of nursing at the Windcrest Alzheimer’s Care Center.

Thaddee made $2 a day as a practicing physician in Rwanda but still, being unable to work as a doctor here feels as though his career has been taken from him, he said. When he applies for jobs in his chosen profession, Thaddee said, he never mentions that he has a medical degree from Rwanda, but his coworkers and bosses soon come to know and realize how intelligent he is and how good of a doctor he would be if allowed to practice.

Thaddee has worked at Windcrest for six months. Pascacie, works as a caregiver at Abilene State School, Thaddee’s previous employer. Born on Easter, Pascacie also came from a Christian home, like her husband. They met in college. Together with their children, they don’t have the words necessary to thank the people who have taken them in at Holy Family, and elsewhere in Abilene.

“The church and the schools have been very supportive,” Thaddee said. “Deacon Rhodes is our youngest son’s godfather. He was born right after we came here.”

Thaddee still has nightmares about things he would want no other person to ever see: babies breastfeeding from mothers that have been murdered and unending streams of the victims of violence flooding into the Red Cross hospitals where he worked, for instance.

“I saw many things. Sometimes I still see those images and cannot forget,” he said. “The cholera was horrible. People using Lake Kivu as a bathroom, and also as a source for drinking water. There are no rules there. It’s like a jungle.”

From 1990 when Thaddee was first forced from his home, he and his family ran from the violence, until 2002. Through it all, there was one thing that kept him going.

“If I didn’t have my faith, I would be gone,” he said. “From when I lived in my big house until I was living in the bush, sometimes we didn’t know if we would survive. It is one day at a time. I had many things in life and I lived many different kinds of lives. It is my faith that saved me.”
After looking into the criticism herself, she told Catholic News Service, "I just don't buy that it's happening."

Kent acknowledged, however, the organization on occasion may end up "associating with people who are associating with people who are not who the Catholic Church would choose to be associating with."

The Girl Scouts of the USA, known as GSUSA, is marking its 100th anniversary this year. It has 3.2 million girl and adult members. An estimated 500,000 Catholic girls and adults in the U.S. are involved in Girl Scouts.

Criticism of the Girl Scouts as an organization has surfaced off and on over the last several years and earlier this year made the rounds again on the Internet.

In response GSUSA has strongly stated "does not have a relationship or partnership with Planned Parenthood and does not plan to create one" and takes no position on abortion or birth control. "Parents and volunteer troop leaders in Catholic churches," it said, "have total control of the Girl Scout programming their girls receive."

Given the large number of Catholics involved in Girl Scouts, such concerns prompted the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth at its mid-March meeting to discuss GSUSA's "problematic relationships with other organizations" and questions about some of its materials and resources.

In a March 28 letter to his fellow bishops, committee chairman Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of South Bend-Fort Wayne, Ind., said some questions may need to be answered at the national level and others at the local level.

Among other actions, he said the committee wants to develop a resource bishops can share with priests, youth ministers, pro-life directors, educators and others in their diocese on Catholic identity for troops and guidance for parents.

Bishop Rhoades said the committee "affirmed the good service" Catholic Girl Scouts have provided and continue to provide to their communities and to the church. "Catholic Girl Scout troops have served girls and young women for many years, and the committee is grateful for this service," he said.

The bishop invited Robert McCarty, executive director of the Washington-based National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry in Washington, and Kathleen Carver, the federation's associate director and communications director, to the meeting to give committee members their perspective on the claims made about the Girl Scouts.

The federation's website, www.nfcym.org, has a question-and-answer section on the issue, and according to McCarty, dialogue between the national Girl Scouts office in New York and the federation has been ongoing.

McCarty told CNS April 9 that the bishops' Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth would convene a group soon to discuss what resources and tools would help create dialogue among church and Girl Scout leaders "more intentionally" and provide clear guidelines for predominantly Catholic troops where "Catholic teaching is honored and at the forefront."

Beyond the church's relationship with Girl Scouts is the bigger issue of "how does the church engage secular organizations?" McCarty stated. "We advocate for church teaching through direct engagement and honest respectful dialogue."

In an earlier interview with CNS, McCarty said he has met with Girl Scout leaders in New York to convey concerns the federation has heard from the field, though he rejected the claim that Girl Scouts promotes Planned Parenthood.

In January, Anna Maria Chavez, a Catholic who has been the Girl Scouts CEO since last November, came to Washington from New York, along with the chair of GSUSA's board of directors, to meet with McCarty.

"For nearly 100 years, we have partnered with the Catholic Church to support the growth and development of millions of girls," Chavez told CNS April 19. "It is a wonderful legacy and we're grateful for the opportunity to participate in the process that will only enhance our partnership."

**LCWR**

**From 16**

our annual meeting; however, we were taken by surprise by the gravity of the mandate."

The announcement from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith came in an eight-page "doctrinal assessment," based on an investigation that Bishop Blair began on behalf of the Vatican in April 2008. That investigation led the doctrinal congregation to conclude, in January 2011, that "the current doctrinal and pastoral situation of LCWR is grave and a matter of serious concern, also given the influence the LCWR exercises on religious congregations in other parts of the world."

Among the areas of concern were some of the most controversial issues of medical and sexual ethics in America today.

"While there has been a great deal of work on the part of LCWR promoting issues of social justice in harmony with the church's social doctrine, it is silent on the right to life from conception to natural death, a question that is part of the lively public debate about abortion and euthanasia in the United States," the doctrinal congregation said. "Further, issues of crucial importance in the life of the church and society, such as the church's biblical view of family life and human sexuality, are not part of the LCWR agenda in a way that promotes church teaching."

The Vatican also found that "public statements by the LCWR that disagree with or challenge positions taken by the bishops, who are the church's authentic teachers of faith and morals, are not compatible with its purpose."

According to the Vatican, such deviations from Catholic teaching have provoked a crisis "characterized by a diminution of the fundamental Christological center and focus of religious consecration."

But the congregation's document also praised the "great contributions of women religious to the church in the United States as seen particularly in the many schools, hospitals, and institutions of support for the poor, which have been founded and staffed by religious over the years," and insisted that the Vatican "does not intend to offer judgment on the faith and life of women religious" in the LCWR's member congregations.

During his tenure as the Holy See's delegate, which is to last "up to five years, as deemed necessary," Archbishop Sartain's tasks will include overseeing revision of the LCWR's statutes, review of its liturgical practices, and the creation of formation programs for the conference's member congregations. The archbishop will also investigate the LCWR's links to two outside groups: Network, a Catholic social justice lobby; and the Resource Center for Religious Institutes, which offers legal and financial expertise to religious orders.

Sister Simone Campbell, a Sister of Social Service who leads Network, told CNS in Washington in an April 19 phone interview from Rochester, N.Y., where she was giving talks, that like LCWR's leaders, she was "stunned and surprised" by the document.

CNS was unable to reach the executive director of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes for comment. The center is based in Silver Spring.

The doctrinal assessment was separate from the Vatican's "Apostolic Visitations of Religious Communities of Women in the United States," a study of the "quality of life" in some 400 congregations, which began in December 2008. The visitation's final report was submitted in December 2011 but has not yet been published.

LCWR was founded in 1956 as the Conference of Major Superiors of Women after the Vatican's Congregation for Religious asked U.S. sisters to form a national conference. The organization changed its name in 1971 to the Leadership Conference for Women Religious.

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

Comparto aquí con ustedes una breve pero profunda declaración acerca de la virtud de castidad dada a nosotros por el Pontificio Consejo para la Familia.

"La castidad es la afirmación gozosa de quien sabe vivir el don de sí, libre de toda esclavitud egoísta. Esto supone que la persona haya aprendido a descubrir a los otros, a relacionarse con ellos respetando su dignidad en la diversidad. La persona casta no está centrada en sí misma, ni en relaciones egoístas con las otras personas. La castidad torna armónica la personalidad, la hace madurar y la llena de paz interior. La pureza de mente y de cuerpo ayuda a desarrollar el verdadero respeto de sí y al mismo tiempo hace capaces de respetar a los otros, porque ve en ellos personas, que se han de venerar en cuanto creadas a imagen de Dios y, por la gracia, hijos de Dios, recreados en Cristo."  
(—Pontificio Consejo para la Familia, "Sexualidad humana: Verdad y significado", 8 de diciembre de 1995)
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TRAVELOGUE
(From 18)
es, parachurch groups, Mormonism, Catholic and Lutheran churches of European and Hispanic heritages, and local "house" churches. A chapter each is given to Islam, Judaism and "Asian religions."

It is not clear how the authors chose the primary destinations for their "carefully charted" course, nor how they determined the status of these destinations as some of the most distinctive and important. Large areas of the country -- New England, the upper Midwest, the Northwest, the Southeast -- were not visited and are not represented. (Christianity's arrival, with the first Mass in 1565, would seem a worthy reason to include, or at least make mention of, St. Augustine, Fla.)

BULLY
(From 16)
him, strangle him, stab him with a pencil and slam his head into the high backrest of the seat ahead of him.

Awkward in manner, and stonily uncommunicative with his parents, Alex unwisely jokes with the boy sitting next to him, at one point, that they are "buddies." He's met with a sadly predictable torrent of foul-mouthed abuse.

That doomed social gambit grows out of Alex's determined conviction that his tormentors are actually his pals. Accepting the truth, of course, would mean acknowledging that he is, in fact, friendless. That's a reality of which we catch a heartrending glimpse as we see Alex engaged in one of his after-school pastimes of choice: standing alone in a vacant lot watching freight trains pull into and out of the local train yard.

Adult administrators who appear on screen seem either indifferent or impotent. Kirk Smalley, the father of an 11-year-old boy who took his own life, by contrast, has become engaged in an energetic initiative: Together with his wife Laura, he has established a consciousness-raising movement called Stand for the Silent.

Considerable debate has been provoked by the Motion Picture Association of America's original R rating for "Bully." While their detractors -- online and elsewhere -- have argued that this classification bars precisely those who would most benefit from seeing the film, the MPAA presumably applied it based on the same objective criteria they use in evaluating every other picture, regardless of its social and aesthetic worth or lack thereof.

The distributors, who originally spurned the R in favor of releasing the film as unrated, have now made the edits necessary to earn their project a PG-13, though whether some of the vocabulary still quoted by the schoolyard barbarians would be allowed to pass in other films with that rating remains open to question.

The new classification stands, in a sense, as an invitation to youthful audiences. Before allowing their teens to accept it, parents should be aware that, in addition to the small-scale brutality on display, the narrative also focuses on the fact that one of those being profiled -- a 16-year-old girl named Kelby -- is enduring persecution in her small Oklahoma hometown for being an avowed lesbian.

We see Kelby embracing the schoolmate she identifies as her girlfriend. But we also learn that she has been expelled from her church, made the target of a slow-speed hit-and-run incident and prevented from participating in the team sports she loves -- and which, she feels sure, would have earned her a college scholarship.

RETIRE
(From 1)
In a letter to the Catholics of the Diocese of San Angelo (see letter, Pg. 3), Bishop Pfeifer admits he does not know what will happen next, or when it will happen. Bishops that serve dioceses around the world are required to submit a letter of resignation on their 75th birthdays, and then wait.

"I do know this: some time in the near future — soon, or maybe a little later — a new bishop will be named for the diocese. As I await our Holy Father's decision I will continue to serve you to the best of my ability as your bishop and I will pray for all of you."

Bishop Pfeifer encouraged all people of the diocese to begin praying for the new bishop.

Conversation as to who will become the sixth Bishop of San Angelo, although it has no doubt occurred, is fruitless as no one, including the bishop himself, has any information on who the diocese's new leader will be. Likewise, there can be not speculation with any certainty as to how long the Vatican will require to begin the transition process.

"This is a time to look to the future, and to ask Jesus to guide us as we march into the future with a new shepherd," Bishop Pfeifer wrote.

Additional information, including Bishop Pfeifer's successor as well as the bishop's future plans, will be forthcoming in future editions of the Angelus.

Spanish programming
Las estaciones de radio en las tres deanerías de la diócesis de nuevo están transmitiendo programas regulares en español cada fin de semana por las mañanas. Las siguientes son las estaciones y el horario donde usted puede escuchar EWTN y otros esfuerzos de programación católicos en español en Abilene, Midland-Odessa y San Angelo:

Abilene – KKKR (106.3 FM) está transmitiendo La Hora Católica de EWTN en español los domingos a las 10 a.m.

Midland-Odessa – Padre Gilberto Rodríguez, el Vicario Parroquial de la parroquia San Esteban (St. Stephen's Church) de Midland, presenta el programa los sábados desde las 5-10 a.m. en KQLM (108 FM) con entrevista cada sábado con el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI a las 8:45 a.m. Además, La Hora Católica de EWTN se puede escuchar los domingos a las 7 a.m.

San Angelo – KSJT en San Angelo está transmitiendo la Hora Católica de EWTN los domingos a las 7 a.m.

EWTN Spanish programming
Radio stations in all three of the deaneries of the diocese are again running regular weekly programming on weekend mornings. The following is the stations and times where you can hear EWTN and other Spanish-programming efforts in Abilene, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo:

ABILENE – KKKR (106.3 FM) is airing EWTN’s Catholic Hour in Spanish, Sundays at 10 a.m.

MIDLAND-ODESSA – Fr. Gilbert Rodríguez, parochial vicar at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland, hosts a Saturday program from 5-10 a.m. on KQLM (108 FM). Additionally, EWTN Catholic programming can be heard Sundays at 7 a.m.

SAN ANGELO – KSJT in San Angelo is airing EWTN’s Catholic Hour Sundays at 7 a.m.
LADY IN BLUE

(From 2)

historic encounter remembered how the Lady in Blue brought Christianity to this part of West Texas through the special visits of the Lady in Blue, who apparently had the gift of bilocation. Also, it is a time when we can reflect on how we can deepen our understanding of the Gospel of Christ and live it in our daily lives by the love and respect we show all people. It is a day to reflect on the gift of Baptism and how we are called today to be “People in Blue” who share the Good News of the Gospel with others. It is also a day to study our history and especially to help the young people of our communities come to understand this beautiful, historical, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions of the Church in West Texas. May this be a day to reflect on how Christianity began in West Texas and beyond as two civilizations blended together influencing our way of life even today.

I ask our priests and pastoral leaders to share this message of the Lady in Blue Day with the people of our parishes, encouraging them to become more familiar with this unique dimension of the history and heritage of the bringing of Christianity to this part of West Texas.

Hopefully many people will learn more about his unique lady who has touched our local history at its very beginning.

ELECTION

(From 10)

one casts a Presidential vote is the issue of the present administration wanting to force Catholics and other Christians to support health care insurance plans to cover practices of contraception, sterilization, and the providing of abortion-inducing drugs. The United States Catholic Bishops have told our President that we cannot and will not comply with this mandate as it is a violation of freedom of religion given to us by the First Amendment, and a serious moral violation of conscience—expecting us as followers of Christ to pay for immoral practices that we hold to be gravely evil and sinful.

A second and integrally related issue to this important principle about when life begins is the Divine teaching given by God in the Bible as regards how we understand the traditional meaning of marriage, from which new life comes. The critical question is which candidates uphold the teaching on marriage that comes from God? There are many today who want to change the Biblical and constant Judeo-Christian teaching about marriage. From the Bible it is clear, and from the constant teaching of our Catholic Church, that a true marriage can only be between a man and woman in the sacred union of matrimony. The idea that marriage should only be defined as a sacred and lifelong covenant between a man and a woman is under serious attack in our times. Sadly, there is a strong movement in our country approved by many present government officials who are using their political office to promote human laws that would give approval to so-called marriages between the same sexes. This is a very critical issue, and Catholics need to study very carefully the Catholic teaching that is involved here. Which candidate will do the most to preserve the Biblical and traditional understanding of marriage? God has clearly determined that marriage can only be between a man and woman, and Sacred Scripture teaches that homosexual acts (same-sex marriages) are immoral and bring about Divine condemnation. No president, no government, no mere human being is authorized to change the Divine meaning of marriage.

It needs to be stated very clearly as we enter the Presidential election process that we Catholics are pro-life at every stage of human life, beginning at conception and until that life is ended as determined by God. Respect for the sacredness of the unborn and the traditional understanding of marriage are central and foundational issues that a Catholic must take into account in voting for a presidential candidate. Which presidential candidate will uphold the Divine truth and the defined teaching of the Catholic Church about these critical basic issues and other important life issues that affect the quality and holiness of human life?

Linked to these foundational life issues is euthanasia and assisted suicide. Based on Scripture, the Catholic Church teaches that only God is the master of life and no human being can usurp the Divine authority as when human life should end. In light of Church teaching, consider carefully the position of political candidates on this issue.

Besides the issue of abortion and the traditional biblical understanding of marriage and euthanasia, there are other vital life issues that need to be looked at very carefully, and we must study how these issues are grounded in Scriptural teaching about the human person and the constant social teaching of our beautiful Catholic Church. Catholics are pro-life at every stage of life, and we must be concerned about respect for human life as regards issues of economy, employment, health, education, housing, racism, peace and environment, and the death penalty.

After considering the issues of the sacredness of the unborn, of abortion and the Divine understanding of marriage, surely in this election year much will be discussed and debated about the economy and the effects that it has on the human person. In the economic system, it should always be stressed that the human person is pre-eminent and not primarily motives for profit and financial gain. At the present time, as we approach the Presidential election, our country is facing critical economic issues. Some 14 million are unemployed, and millions more are underemployed. More than 15 million families live in poverty in our country, the land of prosperity and opportunity. Our President and elected government leaders must assist and protect the poor and jobless as they seek to promote economic growth and fiscal responsibility. The present economic failures have fundamental institutional and systemic elements that have either been ignored or made worse by political and economic behaviors which have undermined the trust and confidence of most people.

As we cast our vote, another critical issue to consider is racism which is intrinsically evil and a follower of Christ can never approve the discrimination of another human being based on color or ethnicity, as this violates human dignity. Another issue to be kept in mind before casting a vote for a person to assume the highest office in the land is the Catholic understanding of human cloning and destructive research on human embryos. Research that destroys human embryos had been defined by Pope John Paul II as eugenic abortion. According to Catholic teaching, this can never be permitted, as it is intrinsically evil as it destroys human life at its earliest stages of development. Which Presidential candidate best represents the Church’s teaching on this critical issue?

As we enter this Presidential election year, there is a loss of the sense that there is a natural law given to us by God to guide us to lead good moral lives. The natural law helps us to understand our dependency on our Creator and basic obligations to one another, helping both them and ourselves to flourish. Morality is the idea that there are standards for life that are ultimately beyond just human opinion or majority vote but come to us from the nature of reality, from the nature of creation as determined by God.

As people of God and loyal citizens of our country, we should all have a great concern that God is more and more being removed from our political and social life. There is loss of the sense that there is a loving Creator and Redeemer, and that He will come to our assistance in the midst of unbelievable challenges and suffering if we put our trust in Him.

Without this knowledge and hope, despair soon follows. How else can we understand the now rapid descent down the slippery slope and openness to such evils as killing the inconvenient and non-productive members of society, if not as a logical result of the widespread despair and loss of love and hope? What is happening basically is that mere creatures are trying to play God.

As we discuss how we can overcome this growing moral decay in our society, the primary solution must be a return to a living faith in an all-loving and all-powerful God and basic moral values and principles. We have to live our faith with total coherence, what we say we believe, we must put into action. Living by example is far stronger and more convincing than a flood of words. In this important presidential election year, a challenging question for all voters is: Will we let Divine truth, and defined Catholic doctrine and Catholic social teaching guide the casting of our vote—or party platform and affiliation and the opinion of fallible human beings?
BISHOP

(From 2)

being by God the Father’s free choosing. For this reason, the Church holds Mary in the highest esteem, and has always given her a most special place in our life of faith. In Luke’s Gospel, we hear Mary proclaim under the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, “From now on will all ages call me blessed.” [Luke 1:48] This is what God the Father has intended for his humble maid servant chosen to be the Mother of God—the God-man, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Mary attributed everything to God’s goodness and favor—“For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness….The mighty One has done great things for me.” [Luke 1:48-49] This is why we give Mary such great honor and a high place in our devotion and prayer life. The early Councils of the Church clarified what is found in Scripture—that Mary is not just the Mother of the human nature of Christ, but the Mother of the person of the eternal Word of God who took on our human nature while continuing to be Divine.

This wonderful Mother of God is also our Mother, the Mother of all humanity. This, too, has been a constant belief and teaching of our Catholic Church since the very beginning, and it indeed is based in Divine Scripture. When Jesus was hanging on the cross as we hear in Chapter 19 of John’s Gospel, shortly before He died, He gave His own Mother to be our Mother when He looked at John, standing next to Jesus’ sorrowful Mother at the foot of the cross, and proclaimed, “Behold your Mother.” It is the constant belief that John represented all of us, and by entrusting Mary to be the Mother of John, Christ was placing all of humanity under the care of Mary’s maternal motherhood. Also, as we hold that as Mary gave birth to the Body of Christ, Jesus, who is the head of the Mystical Body, she also is the mother of all the members of that Body—all of us. This is why she is also called the Mother of the Church, the beautiful title that was given to her after Vatican II. As Mother of the Church, she is also the model for what every member of the Church should be. So when we pray the Hail Mary, proclaiming Mary as Mother of God, we should also in our hearts proclaim her as being our Mother and thank her for letting us be her children.

Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, is also our sister in faith. Like us, she had to believe, and live one day at a time in faith without having all the answers, and put her total trust in the Word of God, believing that God, who asked her to fulfill the most unique role in all of human history, would give her the grace to carry out God’s will. She surrendered her life to God’s plan trusting her loving God to lead her: “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” Like us, Mary had to walk in faith. Like us, she had to live an ordinary human life as she took care of, nursed, fed, taught and cared for the very Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ—true God and true Man. As our sister in faith, Mary is also Christ’s most perfect disciple as she is the one who models in a perfect manner of how to follow Christ in a spirit of faith, hope and love.

Based on Scripture and the constant teaching of the Church, Mary is indeed the Mother of God, our Mother, our sister in faith, and the model disciple. In the month of May dedicated to mothers, it is a splendid time to renew our devotion to our Blessed Mother, as the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, and especially reflecting on how we can imitate her discipleship as we, too, walk by faith and not by sight. As a kind loving Mother, Mary is always there to help us, her children, and intercede for us as she did for the couple at the wedding in Cana. She constantly wants to teach us about Christ, about His love for us, His forgiveness, and our joy of being with Him forever in Heaven. And there is no one who can teach us more about Him than Mary as Christ spent 30 of His 33 years of his life at home with His mother. What were those days like for Mary and Christ and Joseph until he died?

To learn more about Christ, go to Mary, as she knows Him the best. She will teach us about Her compassionate Son, how much He loves us, and how much He suffered to save us, and to give us new life in His resurrection. As Mary is most intimately united to Christ as His Mother, when we pray, we always ask her then to intercede for us, knowing that as she interceded with Christ to help people here on earth with their needs—think of the wedding at Cana—that this beautiful Mother will continue to do the same for us now that she is forever in Heaven with her Son, our God, our Savior, the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

May Mary the Mother of all Mothers fill all our mothers with new love and inspire them to follow Jesus as we celebrate Mother’s Day. Happy Mother’s Day for all mothers!

OSBORNE

(From 15)

Try. It's a great way to break out of the box, discover more about your likes and dislikes, and figure out your future and your values.

Here are a few ways to do it right:

-- Be safe. Don’t have your alter ego do anything dangerous or wrong. Stay away from drugs, drinking, sex and other harmful activities. You want to make your life better, not worse.

-- Get active and get outside. If you're not the athletic type, go out for a sport. If you feel like you have two left feet, take a dance class. Do noncompetitive intramural sports. Try activities such as swimming, tennis or golf.

-- See the world through another person's eyes. Watch movies from genres you won't think you'll like. Eat food you don't normally eat. Step literally into someone else's shoes by wearing clothes your social group considers to be "different."

-- Have new experiences. Go places you wouldn't normally go to. Join clubs you wouldn't normally join. Hang out with people outside your immediate social circle or with people who have different political or cultural opinions. Keep your mind open and nonjudgmental.

Not every foray into alter-ego territory will be successful.

For example, I'm sure Minaj thought her Grammy performance last year (complete with fake exorcism and a fake pope) would be edgy and new. Most people deemed it offensive and ridiculous. But even a misstep can be a potential positive move, even if you find out for sure that you don't like an activity. When you discover where the line you're not willing to cross is located, you've learned more about who you are. That's always good.

Learn what all the top pop stars know: that the simple act of leaving your "comfort zone" will expand your world beyond anything you thought possible.

ANSWERS

(From 17)

nature. "His homilies are boring and too long" is probably the one most frequently voiced.

Certain complaints may have increased in frequency with the shortage of priests: "He didn't visit my mother when she was in the hospital"; "He hardly spends any time in the school or with the youth group"; "Father always seems tired and out of sorts."

In such situations, a parishioner has several options. One is to write to, or seek an appointment with, the bishop or the diocesan director of priests' personnel. Your concerns may mirror those expressed by others. The priest will be called in to the chancery to discuss the opinions voiced.

Another possibility is to contact a member of your parish council and report your concern.

The most upfront and productive thing, in my opinion, would be to speak with the priest directly. Hopefully, most priests would admire your courage, view your visit as a helpful fraternal correction and consider whether any change in behavior might be warranted.

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Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com.

CALDAROLA

(From 14)


To help others see the futility of this violence, we must be willing to suffer with the pregnant mother, the old and ill, the victims of unspeakable crimes and their families, the justly and unjustly convicted.
Scenes from Easter 2012

Abilene
Youths and young adults, above photos, re-enact the Passion of Christ during Holy Week at St. Francis of Assisi in Abilene.

San Angelo
A Mass, concelebrated by Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, Fr. Joseph Choutapalli, and others, at left, at St. Margaret's in San Angelo, is said in memory of Angela Kapeller, sister of Bishop Pfeifer, who died following a lengthy illness in March.