

A monstrance, like the one at right will arrive in San Angelo in August. Story, Page 7



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Midland physician appointed to NRB

Rhode becomes first Texan appointed to national Catholic governing body

By Jimmy Patterson

Editor
West Texas Angelus

appointed to the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The appointment was confirmed in June by the Rev. William Skylstad, Bishop of Spokane, Wash., and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"I am very appreciative and humbled

by the vote of confidence shown to me by this appointment," Rhode told the *Midland Reporter-Telegram* in June. "We would love to see the problem (of sexual abuse) go away. Like any other crime you do the best you can to prevent



Rhode

Please See RHODE/7

MIDLAND. Three years after being asked to serve on Bishop Michael Pfeifer's Diocesan Review Board, Midland doctor Joseph Rhode was

U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Bishops' conference covers much ground, Pfeifer says on return

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor
West Texas Angelus

For the fourth consecutive year, child sexual abuse and the protection of minors were the central topics of discussion at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Spring Meeting.

Michael Pfeifer, Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo, said the body's revision of the charter on sexual abuse will only serve to strengthen the protection of children.

"What we have learned in the past three years since we first published the charter is that we have improved upon it, and we pray that it will be the guiding light for the church in the United States with

regard to the critical question of providing protection for children and young people from sexual abuse."

Pfeifer said the revisions "did not back away from the zero tolerance," which had become a hot media issue.

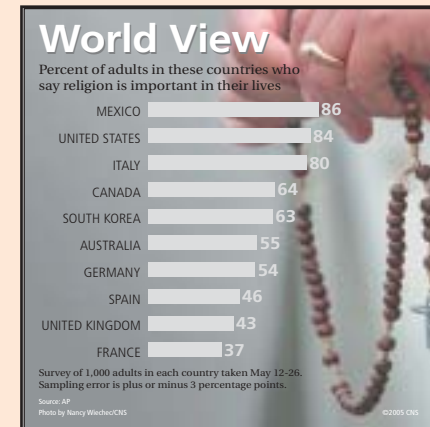
The changes, Pfeifer said, will only serve to strengthen policies and procedures set forth by the late Pope John Paul II, who said that once guilt has been proved against a clergy member accused of sexual assault, "there is no place in the



Bishops from across the U.S. convene for their annual spring meeting in June in Chicago, above. At left, bishops Gregory Aymond, left, of Austin, and David Zubik, of Green Bay, Wisc.

See USCCB/7

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Americans rank high

A recent AP/Ipsos poll suggests that religious attitudes of citizens in the United States are stronger than religious attitudes of their Western European counterparts. According to the poll, 84 percent of Americans consider religion important in their lives. See Story/Page 8

Also Inside ...

► Imagine my shock when an associate walked into my office recently, looked at me, and said, "Catholics aren't Christians." From The Editor/Page 2

► Geographers say that sailors noticed the stillness of the rising, but not blowing, air near the equator and gave the region the depressing name "doldrums." Family life can be like that. Bill and Monica Dodds on Your Family/Page 9

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From The Bishop's Desk

What is the Eucharist? What is Perpetual Adoration?



Bishop Pfeifer

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In this year dedicated to the Eucharist, our Holy Father has asked that we focus our attention on two major goals. First, our Holy Father is asking that we come to a new appreciation of the Eucharist, the Mass, and that we renew our commitment to be faithful to be present for the celebration of the

En espanol/Pagina 3

Eucharist. Second, our Holy Father is encouraging all Catholics throughout the world to take part in the greatest of all devotions: Eucharistic Adoration.

To help us better understand these two major goals of the Year of the Eucharist, I present for your reflection some brief statements as regards what is

the Eucharist, and what is Perpetual Adoration, taken from a recent bulletin of the Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament.

What is the Eucharist?

"At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the

See EUCHARIST/11

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mitting letters.



From the Editor

As a matter of fact Catholics are Christians

My hometown prides itself on its ecumenism. And for good reason. We have good people doing great work together, from efforts as simple as the Midland Association of Churches and ministerial alliance, both with representatives from many denominations, to the elaborate nondenominational projects of Christmas in Action, the Faces of Children and Rock The Desert, and humanitarian and mission work being done in Uganda, the Sudan and elsewhere.

Those are just a few examples of what people here have done by working together.

So with all this togetherness, all this working together for the common good for a common end result -- to bring good and to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven -- imagine my shock when a couple of months ago an associate walked into my office, looked at me, and said, "Catholics aren't Christians."

Catholics aren't Christians.

Three little words working together to destroy any warm and fuzzy ecumenical feelings I might have been holding close. Three

little words that work together to tear apart any notion that we are making any progress. Feelings like this are not confined to Midland. Perceptions that "Catholics are not Christians," sadly, exist throughout the country. But if you'll allow me a few moments of your time, I'd like to right what is simply wrong.

The allegations didn't just stop with those three words. There was the supposed substantiation, proof that the accuser was by golly right. And gems such as these were thrown down:

■ "Catholics are discouraged from reading the Bible."

■ "Catholics don't believe Christ died for our sins and is not the Savior."

■ "Catholics worship Mary."

■ "Catholics don't pray to God."

■ "Catholics believe the only way you confess your sin is through a priest."

Whoa, bubba!

And Wow!

The charges were staggering and, as it turns out, based almost totally and solely in ignorance. The person doing the leveling said she grew up in a Catholic church in the northeast and said that's what she was taught. Not surprisingly, she has fallen away from the church. (I don't believe I'd go to a Christian church

that taught that Jesus wasn't the Savior either.) Perhaps it's churches like hers that have earned the bad reputation for all of the good Catholic churches. Perhaps it is churches like hers where nuns rap students over the knuckles with their rulers. But I'm here to tell you that whatever church this person grew up in is not representative of the greater Church.

I tried to answer for her each charge from merely a parishioner's perspective, a layman's look with no doctrine quoted, only from what I have learned from sitting in a pew and helping out here and there throughout the years.

"Catholics are discouraged from reading the Bible."

Like most of her allegations, I have no idea where this comes from. Apparently it's because Catholics don't bring their Bibles to Mass with them. That's because we have these books called missals. Four readings every week, or every DAY -- and all of them from the Bible. That's a lot of Bible reading for a faith that discourages its parishioners from reading the Bible. Oh, and a lot of weekly Catholic church bulletins print the daily readings. My guess is that's so the faithful can pick up their Bibles at home and read the passages every day.

(Please See PATTERSON/11)

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Blessed Tekakwitha

SAN ANGELO. Bishop Michael Pfeifer has asked all Catholics to be mindful of the Feast Day for the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. A letter sent to all U.S. bishops by Cardinals William H. Keeler, Edward Egan and Justin Rigali ask that the Blessed Kateri's Feast Day, July 14, will be used to bring the cause to the attention of the people to offer prayers for her canonization. Kateri was persecuted for abandoning her ancestral Native American beliefs and escaped to a Christian village in Canada. She died at 24 and in her short life between her conversion and death became known for her exemplary Christian life, marked by prayer, penance and devotion to the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin.

She is the only Native American to be a candidate for canonization in the Church's history. She was proclaimed Blessed in June of 1980 by Pope John Paul II.

To learn more about Blessed Kateri, contact the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, 2012 H St., NW; Washington, DC, 20006.

Fr. Fabian celebration

CHRISTOVAL. Fr. Fabian Maria Rosette, O. Carmelite Prior, will celebrate his 25th year of ordination **Monday, August 15, at 10:30 a.m.** at the **Mount Carmel Hermitage, 7637 Allen Lane, in Christoval.** Fr. Fabian invites all to the celebration.



Fr. Fabian

Loraine Festival

LORAIN. St. Joseph's Catholic Church will host its annual festival, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., July 23, 2005. The fun will include food, games and live music and proceeds will benefit the parish. The festival and church are located at 419 S. Hinson St, in Loraine.

Cursillo Schedule

The Cursillo for the remainder of 2005 is:

► Men's Spanish Cursillo at St. Agnes, June 16-19.

► Women's English Cursillo at

Christ the King, July 14-17.

► Men's English at Christ the King, August 11-14.

► Women's Spanish St. Mary's in San Angelo October 6-9.

► Men's Spanish at St. Francis in Abilene, November 10-13.

For more information on these Cursillos, they can contact:

en Espanol, Raul Castenada, 432-634-8357

or email: rcaste2@aol.com

English, Joey Light, 325-695-0503. Email: jlight@wylie.esc14.net.

St. Margaret's Fall Festival

SAN ANGELO. St. Margaret's Fall Festival is scheduled for August 14, 2005 at the Knights of Columbus Hall. A BBQ brisket dinner will be featured. First prize raffle drawing will be a 4-wheeler. Arts and crafts and an auction will also be featured.

Diocesan Calendar July

14-17 -- Women's Cursillo, Christ the King Retreat Center.
29 -- Natural Family Planning

Seminar, CRKC (see Story, Pg. 7)

August

5 -- Ruben Covos Orientation to diaconate, St. Mary, Brownwood, 7 p.m.

10 -- Ariel Lagunilla's Ordination to diaconate, Sacred Heart, Abilene, 7 p.m.

11-14 -- Men's Cursillo, CKRC

11 - Priest's Pension Plan Mtg, 11 a.m., Pastoral Center

15 -- Feast of Assumption, DOSA Offices Closed.

25 -- Presbyteral Council Meeting, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.

Necrology-July

The Necrology consists of priests and deacons who have died since the diocese was formed. Please pray for them (year of death listed in parenthesis):

2--Rev. Bernard Deagan C.M. (2001)

2--Deacon Floyd Fraksen (1992)

4--Rev. Msgr. Charles Dvorak (1963)

10--Rev. Emil J. Gerlich (1969)

19--Rev. Msgr. Andrew Marthale (1984)

22--Bishop Thomas J. Drury (1992)

26--Deacon Jose Rosales (2000)

26--Deacon Abel Campos (2002)

VIEWPOINTS

‘What you do for others ...’

By Sister Marie Malachy Griffin, O.P.

Michael Hall, a meticulously dressed middle aged man, introduced himself in a mellifluous island voice, as the library supervisor. He explained various offerings of the small, relatively quiet, but hot and humid refuge. As he spoke, several young men looked up from their law research to stare at the visitors. When asked how long he had been involved in this ministry, Mr. Hall answered, "Five and a half years." To an inquiry about how he came to assist his sisters and brothers he simply said, "Fraud, grand fraud."

The San Angelo Diocesan Partnership Team was in the San Pedro Sula, Honduras, penitentiary that houses 2,000 prisoners, 70 of whom are women.

Having completed a security check and turned in either a passport or driver's license, we were guided through what Dante would call the Inferno. However, here the

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punishment did not match the offense. Gang members, murderers, and petty thieves; blue collar, white collar and no collar at all criminals moved freely within the prison walls as their guards patrolled the outside perimeter.

Ministry to the incarcerated was "hit and miss" in our sister diocese until Bishop Angel Garachana, C.M.F. sought out and hired Virginia Alfaro, who was our guide, to coordinate this essential pastoral ministry. The Diocese of San Pedro Sula organized the library, provided resources, and Mr. Hall was chosen as director. He is there to assist prisoners with the legalities of their cases, provide general interest reading, and offer suggestions on a wide range of religious themes which include spirituality, theology, and Sacred Scripture.

Seeing two of the prison dormitories was the most difficult part of

the time spent within the walls. One "room" was occupied by seven men. It was make-shift, dark, incredibly congested, hot, humid, and like the entire premise, had a dirt floor. A bench and a chair were quickly offered to the guests. The occupants were friendly and respectful; they seemed to enjoy visiting. As it turned out, the seven were "lucky ones." Another room held 350 vacuum-packed men.

No uniforms are required so the availability or non-availability of personal money is easily seen; hence Mr. Hall's impeccable attire.

Additionally, the Diocesan Pastoral for Prisons has created a sewing module, candle making/arts and crafts module, a space for literacy classes, and a bakery, where we were invited to sit, relax, and enjoy delicious homemade cake and a cool drink while the aroma of baking cookies and the added heat of the ovens competed for our attention.

See **TEAM/8**

Del Escritorio del Obispo

Que es la Eucaristia?

por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

En este Año dedicado a la Eucaristía, nuestro Santo Padre nos ha pedido que enfoquemos nuestra atención en dos metas principales.

Primero, nuestro Santo Padre está pidiendo que lleguemos a tener una nueva apreciación de la Eucaristía, la Misa, y que renovemos nuestro compromiso de ser fieles a estar

presente para la celebración de la Eucaristía. Segundo, nuestro Santo Padre está animando a todos los Católicos por todo el mundo a participar en lo más grande de todas las devociones, que es la Adoración Eucarística.

Para ayudarnos a entender mejor estas dos metas del Año de la Eucaristía, les presento para su reflexión algunas breves reflexiones en cuanto que es la



Pfeifer

Eucaristía, y que es Adoración Perpetua, tomadas de un boletín reciente de los Misioneros del Sagrado Sacramento.

¿QUÉ ES LA EUCARISTÍA?

La Eucaristía es nada menos que el regalo total y personal de Jesús mismo a nosotros—Cuerpo, Sangre, Alma y Divinidad—bajo la apariencia de pan y vino en la Hostia consagrada. En el Santísimo Sacramento Jesús oculta Su inmensa gloria, belleza y dignidad porque desea que vayamos a El en fe para amarlo por Sí mismo.

¿QUÉ ES LA ADORACIÓN EUCARÍSTICA?

La Adoración Eucarística es la expresión de nuestro amor por Jesús, quien, porque nos ama tanto, nunca se quiere separar de nosotros y por eso permanece día y noche con nosotros en el Santísimo Sacramento. El dice: "He aquí que yo estoy con vosotros todos los días", porque "Con amor eterno te he amado: por eso he reservado gracia para ti." (Mt. 28, 20; Jr. 31, 3)

El Santo Padre Juan Pablo II en su primera carta encíclica *El Redentor del Hombre* dice que la adoración Eucarística es la obligación más esencial en la vida del cristiano y que la celebración litúrgica de la Eucaristía y el culto privado de la Eucaristía se complementan entre sí. El afirma: "Nuestro culto comunitario en la Misa debe estar ligado con nuestro culto personal a Jesús en la adoración Eucarística a fin de que nuestro amor sea completo".

¿QUÉ ES LA ADORACIÓN EUCARÍSTICA PERPETUA?

La Adoración Eucarística Perpetua es sencillamente nuestra respuesta al infinito amor que Cristo tiene por nosotros. Porque lo amamos, queremos pasar regularmente, una hora santa de oración silenciosa en Su Presencia Eucarística una vez a la semana para poder tener exposición permanente del Santísimo Sacramento (siete días a la semana, veinticuatro horas al día). De esta manera, Jesús nunca se queda solo y la capilla permanece siempre abierta para cualquiera que desee visitarlo.

BISHOP PFEIFER'S SCHEDULE AUGUST 2005

August 3

San Angelo -- Diocesan Pastoral Center Meeting of Cursillo and Walk to Emmaus groups at 11:00 a.m.

August 4

San Angelo – Lunch with Priests of the San Angelo Deanery at 12:00 noon at China Gardens

August 5

Brownwood, St. Mary – Diaconal Ordination of Ruben Covos at 6:30 p.m.

August 7

Merkel, Our Mother of Mercy – Closing of Forty Hours and Mass at 10:30 a.m.

August 8

Rankin, St. Thomas – Meet with Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Councils at 7:00 p.m.

August 10

Abilene, Sacred Heart – Diaconal Ordination of Ariel Lagunilla at 7:00 p.m.

August 11

San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Priests Personnel Board meeting at 1:00 p.m.;

Christ the King Retreat Center – Speak at Mens' English Cursillo at 9:35 p.m.

August 13-14

Oklahoma City – Centennial of the Diocese of Oklahoma

August 15

Christoval – 25th Priestly Anniversary of Father Fabian Rosette, O.Carm. at 10:30 a.m.

August 16

San Angelo, St. Margaret's – 6:30 pm. Receive Traveling Monstrance and Mass

August 17

San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Meeting of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.

August 19

Midland, Our Lady of Guadalupe – Installation of New Pastor, Father Edward de Leon, OMI at 6:30 p.m.

August 20

Sheffield, Good Shepherd – 50th Anniversary of Mission – Mass at 2:00 p.m.

August 21

Menard, Sacred Heart (and St Theresa, Junction) – Confirmation, 11:15 am.

August 22-23

San Antonio – Renewal of LNC Vows

August 24

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

August 25

San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Presbyteral Council Meeting at 11:00 a.m.

August 27

Brady, St. Patrick – Closing of Forty Hours, Mass, 6:45 p.m.

August 28

San Angelo, Christ the King Retreat Center – Deacons' Retreat -9:30 a.m. Meet with Deacons and Wives – Mass at 11:00 a.m.

August 29-31

San Antonio – MACC Meeting

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Promoting common good, building the public order

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In the pastoral statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration," the Bishops present a synopsis of the staggering statistics relative to crime, conviction, and imprisonment across our land.

These statistics can seem overwhelming. The predictions of penologists for the future are not encouraging. These challenges alone urge us to a new way of thinking and acting. To help bring about these changes in thinking and in acting, there needs to be more emphasis placed on restorative justice.

Justice involves right order. Restorative justice involves the return to right order, effected through the acceptance of responsibility, the assignment of appropriate punishment, the return or restoration of as many as possible to the human community, and promotes healing and forgiveness in accord with the Gospel.

In varying degrees, we all share responsibility to promote the common good and strengthen a just public order based on restorative justice. I present here some proposals that will help all people of good will help to develop this vision of restorative justice. The proposals that I share here have been taken from the recent letter of the Louisiana Bishops in their statement, "Crime, Punishment, and the Common Good":

- ✓ To support the National Victims Bill of Rights and provide resources for victims of crime and their families (material, spiritual and psychological).
- ✓ To provide opportunities for victims and their loved ones who wish to meet with offenders who are willing to repent and contribute to restorative healing.
- ✓ To offer continuing education and professional training to the dedicated men and women in the corrections system and to ensure that they receive adequate wages.
- ✓ To develop juvenile and youthful offender programs which emphasize education, work skills, counseling and, when possible, restoration to the family and community.
- ✓ To promote creative programs which can reduce the readmission rates.
- ✓ Faith-based initiatives ministering to prisoners, staff and families of staff.
- ✓ Effective drug courts that can oversee the medical treatment of nonviolent offenders with substance-abuse addictions. Rather than treating addiction as a crime society would then view it as a disease. Treatment would include counseling, education, community service and job placement.
- ✓ More rehabilitative opportunities, alcoholic treatment centers and mental health treatment facilities.
- ✓ Increased opportunities for community service by prisoners.
- ✓ Community sentencing, through which courts, rather than incarcerating nonviolent offenders, would place the convicted in a setting which allows for work, counseling and education, with the goal of being integrated back into society. Sufficient resources need to be allocated to ensure adequacy of community supervision.
- ✓ Improvement and expansion of prerelease programs to facilitate the transition from incarceration back into the community.
- ✓ Housing and work for ex-offenders.
- ✓ Realistic review of rehabilitation efforts relative to pardon or parole.
- ✓ To provide for the parole of older prisoners and the terminally ill who have served a significant number of years and no longer pose a threat to other citizens.
- ✓ To plan to eliminate housing of out-of-state prisoners and operation of for-profit prisons.
- ✓ To reject, in the name of the Gospel of Life, the death penalty as an effective and moral way of dealing with crime. There are other more humane ways of dealing with these cases.

As we work to bring about an attitude and way of acting in accord with restorative justice, we need to remember that it is the love of Christ which heals the deepest wounds and transforms our brokenness so that we all may walk aright in his ways.

Five minutes with Bob Leibrecht, Deacon

Deacon Bob Leibrecht heads up the diocese's Criminal Justice Ministry. The effort is being revamped and will see changes and the need for additional volunteers in coming months. Deacon Bob sat down and spoke with us recently.



Leibrecht

Angelus: The Diocese's Criminal Justice Ministry (CJM) was revamped last fall. Briefly tell us what the ministry's main focus is in its new form and has it changed significantly in its revamp?

Leibrecht: The CJM efforts are fourfold in terms of, first, ministry to the incarcerated; second, support for the ex-offender and families; third, assistance to victims and their families and fourth, social justice issues related to the broad area of criminal justice.

Angelus: What are the CJM's long-term goals?

Leibrecht: There is a long-term goal associated with each area of emphasis. First, to provide the incar-

cerated with full access to all sacraments along with proper training to adequately prepare them. Second, to have an effective mentoring program to assist ex-offenders in making a positive return to society. Third, to develop a restorative justice program to reconcile victims, offenders and the community in the midst of crime and, fourth to engage the diocese in social justice efforts that will lead to prevention and control of crime in the future.

Angelus: What about objectives for the next 6-12 months?

Leibrecht: The first objective is to build parish CJM teams with some members involved in ministry to the incarcerated, and to encourage those not interested in prison visitation to help families, ex-offenders and victims in caring for their needs. The second objective is to kick start the recently established CJM council, which will be invaluable in terms of sharing ideas within the diocese through a communication network as well as addressing individual deanery needs. Also, to increase CJM awareness in the diocese, October 15-16, 2005 will become Criminal Justice Ministry Sunday. Activities planned for the weekend are being developed

and will be announced soon.

Angelus: What is the ministry's greatest need at this point?

Leibrecht: The greatest needs are funding and volunteer support. A grant from the Kenedy Foundation has been requested, and if received it would be a big boost to the ministry in terms of providing materials, offering training and holding conferences within the diocese. With a shortage of volunteers, especially those bilingual, the level of Catholic teaching is limited. Also, more priests are needed to offer Mass and confession.

Angelus: Given the size of the diocese, how can you best implement the program to ensure widespread success?

Leibrecht: The CJM council will be very helpful as volunteers around the diocese begin to share ideas and materials being used in the various facilities. In establishing the parish teams, successes, as well as, shortcomings can be shared as other parishes begin to get involved. A good communication network in the diocese should help facilitate broader success if council members are willing to share the good as well as the bad.

THE TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH

'...and in Jesus Christ, his only son'

Part 2 in a series on the Apostle's Creed.

When Catholics begin reciting the Apostle's Creed at Mass, the words they say are certainly a reflection of their beliefs and their very faith, but often some of the phrases hold meaning that may not have been considered or thought of in a while.

"...(We believe) in Jesus Christ, his only son," the second article of the Creed, is an example.

"We take that for granted so to speak and we take it for granted because we have what has been given us from the Bible and down through the ages through sacred tradition," said Bishop Michael Pfeifer. "In the first centuries, there was much discussion whether Jesus Christ was truly the son of God. But we take that for granted now because we have all the experience of history. Some said he was adopted, some denied his divinity. But in those two phrases, the church gives profound teaching to clarify just who Jesus Christ is.

Apologist John Trigilio says the 2nd article is "the basis for understanding who Jesus is, where he came from, what he did and why he did it."

Aside from "believe," the word "Lord" is the key word in the article because it professes his divinity.

Benedict

c. 480-547
feast - July 11

Born to a distinguished Italian family, Benedict studied in Rome. When he wearied of Rome's worldliness, he lived as a hermit. Disciples joined him and he built 12 monasteries, each for 10 monks. Pressure from local clerics forced their move to Monte Cassino, where they built a monastery and Benedict wrote his famous Rule. He is believed to have died there shortly after the death of his sister, Scholastica. Pope Paul VI named this patriarch of Western monasticism patron of Europe, and Benedict XVI took his name as pope in 2005.



Saints for Today

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"Jesus is the son of God and has always been," Pfeifer said. "It is hard for us to understand, but we describe God in three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: they were all there and all eternal and always interacting. It's hard to understand but we express in the best way we can what our faith is."

Diocesan partnerships visit San Pedro Sula

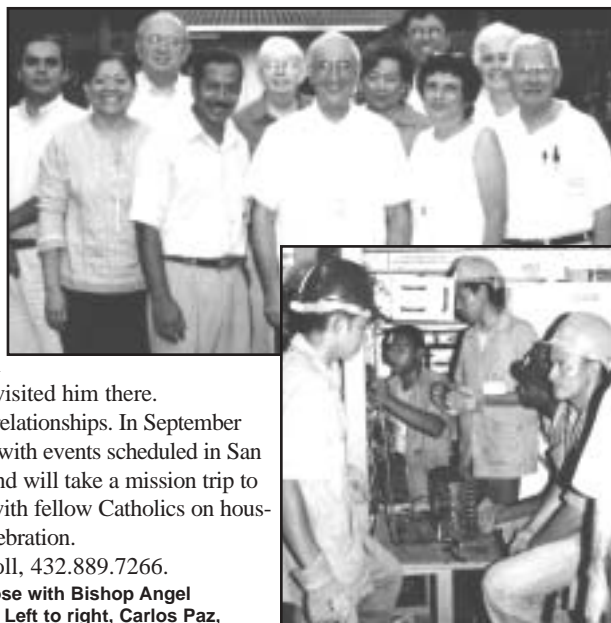
The Diocesan Partnership Teams representing San Angelo, Tyler and San Pedro Sula, Honduras, met in the Central American country, June 13-16, to assess the activities of the relationship and plan for the future.

Urged by the apostolic exhortation The Church in America, dioceses in Texas and Honduras are working together in a number of ways. Fr. David Herrera, of the Diocese of San Angelo, served for nine months at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Cofradia, Honduras. Many of his friends have visited him there.

Plans for the future involve continue to develop relationships. In September 2006, the partnership will mark its 5th anniversary, with events scheduled in San Angelo. In July, 10 members of St. Ann's in Midland will take a mission trip to Chamelecon, a barrio of San Pedro Sula, to work with fellow Catholics on housing projects and to share the faith in prayer and celebration.

For more information, contact Msgr. Larry Droll, 432.889.7266.

In top photo: Members of the Partnership Team pose with Bishop Angel Garachana at the Centro de Capacitacion San Pedro. Left to right, Carlos Paz, Leticia Velasquez, Msgr. Larry Droll, Jorge Paniagya, Sr. Malachy Griffin, Bishop Garachana, Waldina Munday, Deacon Ruben Natera, Guadalupe Natera, Jane Manley and Fr. Bernard Gully. In bottom photo: Students learn the mechanics of refrigeration in a tech school operated by Sacred Heart Parish in Puerto Cortez, Honduras. The school, Centro de Integracion Juvenil y Enseñanzas Laborales Federico Ozanam, provides training for marketable jobs.



Patterson named Director of Communications

Jimmy Patterson, editor of the *West Texas Angelus* since May, has been appointed to the position of Director of Communications for the Diocese of San Angelo. Patterson assumes the position left vacant by the retirement of Pete Micale.

Patterson also serves as editor of the *Angelus*, the diocesan paper which serves 18,000 families throughout West Texas. As Director of Communications, he will oversee all public relations matters, media contacts and questions, marketing efforts and radio-television contracts.

"Jimmy brings much experience and professionalism to the ministry of communication," said Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, in making the appointment. "Jimmy has already demonstrated the good quality of his work with the recent publication of the *Angelus*. Communication is considered by the Church to be a ministry, and it is a way of serving our people, keeping them informed and enlight-

ened about so many issues that affect our Church and our world. I am very happy that we have a man of the caliber of Jimmy Patterson serving in this special ministry, and helping me as I continue to try to communicate with all the people of the Diocese."

In his role as Director of Communications and *Angelus* Editor, Patterson will office from Midland, but will travel to San Angelo and other points around the diocese as needed.

"The opportunity to serve the Church in this capacity is, for me, a distinct privilege as both a Christian and a journalist," Patterson said. "I consider it more a ministry than a job. To be entrusted with the responsibility of helping disseminate the Church's message and God's word to the West Texas faithful is one that does me great honor. I look forward to working closely with Bishop Pfeifer, the diocesan staff and the numerous clergy, religious and faith-

ful throughout West Texas."

Patterson was educated at the University of Texas at Arlington, raised in Irving and has lived in Midland since 1988. He was employed by the *Midland Reporter-Telegram* for 12 years, first as a sports writer, and finally as a religion editor and columnist. His newspaper work has won him awards from the Associated Press, the Texas Association of Broadcasters and the Hearst Corporation.

Since leaving the *Reporter-Telegram* in 1999, Patterson has worked in the non-profit community in Midland, serving as Director of Marketing and Communications with the United Way of Midland and most recently as Director of Public Relations with the Midland Chamber of Commerce.

He and his wife Karen have three children: Jennifer, 19; Kelsey, 16, and James, 11

-- *Les Maiman, Chancellor
Diocese of San Angelo*

¡Ven, espíritu Santo!

por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

Hace unas semanas hemos celebrado la gran fiesta del Espíritu Santo, Pentecostés, que nos hace pensar en la presencia y inspiración del gran Espíritu de Dios que vive en nosotros por medio del sacramento del bautismo y la confirmación.

En el primer Pentecostés leemos, "todos quedaron llenos del Espíritu Santo, y proclamaban las maravillas de Dios". Cada día, por medio del amor y los demás dones del Espíritu Santo que poseemos, nosotros debemos proclamar las maravillas de Dios sobre todo por nuestra manera de vivir. El Espíritu Santo siempre está dispuesto para ayudarnos con todas las situaciones de nuestra vida. Nuestra oración diaria debe de ser - Ven, Espíritu Santo! Levántanos, por que a veces estamos caidos y llenos de medio. Renuévanos, porque a veces estamos encerrados en nosotros mismos.

El Espíritu de Dios nos ofrece muchos dones para vivir nuestro compromiso a Cristo y poner en práctica cada día su evangelio. Ahora comparto un breve reflexión sobre como podemos vivir los dones del Espíritu Santo cada día tomados del Misal Mensual de mayo 2005.

¡VEN, ESPIRITU SANTO!

Para que nos comuniquemos el gusto por las cosas de Dios, a las que cada día les encontramos menos sabor porque las cosas de aquí abajo nos han estragado el paladar (don de Sabiduría).

Para que nos comuniquemos un conocimiento mas profundo de las verdades de la fe y luego no nos enreden con su predica los que no creen en Cristo...(Don de Entendimiento).

Para que nos enseñe a darle a las cosas terrenas su verdadero valor de medios y no de fines (Don de Ciencia).

Para que nos ayudes a resolver con criterios cristianos los pequeños o grandes conflictos de nuestra vida y a saber discernir lo que está bien y lo que no lo está. ... (Don de Consejo).

Para que sepamos relacionarnos con Dios como verdadero Padre nuestro y sepamos amarlo y confiar en el como verdaderos hijos suyos, porque a veces creemos equivocadamente que Dios está esperándonos a la vuelta de la esquina para darnos nuestro merecido...(Don de Piedad).

Para que nos impulse a huir de cualquier cosa que pueda ofender a Dios, no porque nos puede mandar al infierno, sino por ser el quien es (Don de Temor de Dios).

Para que despiertes en nosotros la audacia que nos impulse al apostolado con entusiasmo y podamos superar el desaliento, la crítica y el miedo a meternos en líos por defender los derechos de Dios y de los demás (Don de Fortaleza).

Y LLENANOS DE TUS DONES.

St. Lawrence prayer group returns from trip to Morelos, Mexico

Submitted by Willie Sosa

ST. LAWRENCE. The St. Lawrence Prayer Group has done it again ... This time, we went to Morelos, Mexico, for a weekend retreat. Talk about praying hard to get \$15,000 worth of musical equipment across the American border and back again.

It was an incredible weekend of healing and deliverance but the best part was that people's faith was being renewed, revived and truly becoming a vibrant living faith. Talk about a hunger for God. People throughout Mexico are hungering for God and there are few to feed

them. The church where the retreat was held had never had anything like it. The group "Los Redimidos de Cristo" has for several years been playing in many locations through West Texas and then in May in Morelos.

A few years ago, I went to Mexico with a Protestant group. Why are Protestants so successful? They are organized and on the move; we're not. Our priests and nuns cannot do it alone -- they don't have the time and there are not enough of them. We need to just get out there and do it!

As much as 90 percent of our growth is directly related to the way we take on responsibility for reaching out

to our friends, neighbors and even our own family. Bottom line: we are the people of God and we need to get out of our comfort zone and get out and beat the bush. Living in our comfort we do not realize the importance of evangelization. There is a great need in the world today -- all around us -- for the word of God. People are hungry for something real in their lives. They are hungry for the life that comes in Christ Jesus. There are some, however, that are realizing this and are moving to reach out. Don't wait for a training program or for someone to teach you ... just go do it. Move out in faith!

U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Education plays 'vital role' in church mission

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — "Catholic schools play a vital role in the evangelizing mission of the church," the U.S. bishops said June 17.

On the second day of their June 16-18 meeting in Chicago as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the nation's Catholic leaders issued a 17-page statement, "Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium."

Adopted by a vote of 224-10, the statement says, "Our young people are the church of today and tomorrow. It is imperative that we provide them with schools ready to address their spiritual, moral and academic needs."

We are convinced that Catholic schools continue to be the most effective means available to the church for the education of children and young people. ... We must work with all parents so they have the choice of an education which no other school can supply — excellent academics imparted in the context of Catholic teaching and practice," the statement says.

It urges clergy and laity to "market and support Catholic elementary and secondary schools as one of our church's primary missions."

"Our vision is clear: Our Catholic schools are a vital part of the teaching mission of the church," it says. "The challenges ahead are many, but our spirit and will to succeed are strong."

The statement points out that Catholic schools form 30 percent of the private schools in the country and have 2.4 million students,



Promgoers from St. Bede Academy receive Communion from Benedictine Father Michael Calhoun during a late-night Mass in Peru, Ill., in early May. The service has been tradition at the Benedictine-run school for more than 30 years. All couples at the prom are expected to attend the Mass, even the dates who are students at other schools. (CNS photo by Nellie Williams).

accounting for 48 percent of all students in private schools.

"In cities and rural areas, Catholic schools are often the only opportunity for economically disadvantaged young people to receive an education of quality that speaks to the development of the whole person," it says.

The statement notes that according to government, Catholic and independent research, "Catholic schools make a major impact in closing the achievement gap for poor and minority students in inner-city environments."

"Wherever possible," it says, "Catholic schools should remain available and accessible in all areas of a diocese for children who are from poor and middle-class families who face major economic challenges. In addition, Catholic schools should be available to stu-

dents who are not Catholic and who wish to attend them."

Studies have shown that the Catholic school dropout rate is lower than that of other private schools and far below that of public schools, it says. It adds that among those who enter the 12th grade in Catholic high school, 99 percent graduate "and 97 percent go on to some form of post-secondary education" — rates well above the average for public or other private high schools.

On the other hand, the statement notes that more Catholic schools have closed than have opened in the past 15 years. It says there are currently 7,799 elementary and secondary schools, about 10 percent fewer than there were 15 years ago. Catholic schools have suffered a net enrollment loss of 170,000 students since 1990, it says.

Highlights of the USCCB Spring Meeting in Chicago

CHICAGO (CNS) — During their June 16-18 spring meeting in Chicago, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

- Approved a revised "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."
- Adopted, subject to Vatican approval, a revised version of "Essential Norms" implementing the charter in church law.
- Urged continuing support for the nation's Catholic elementary and secondary schools.
- Called on all Catholics to participate in the church's mission to proclaim the Gospel to the world.
- Adopted the first revised U.S. Program of Priestly Formation in 13 years, subject to Vatican approval.
- Rejected a proposed 4 percent increase in the diocesan assessment for conference activities in 2006.
- Agreed to commit up to \$1 million for a study on the causes and context of clergy sexual abuse of minors.
- Tabled action on a series of U.S. adaptations in the liturgy until a later date.
- Elected a conference treasurer and doctrinal committee chairman.
- Revamped their committees on sexual abuse and on priorities and plans to give them a stronger role in the conference.
- Renewed their commitment to support and correct one another on full implementation of their child protection charter.
- Discussed a developing document on lay ecclesial ministry in preparation for a debate and vote in November.
- Agreed to prepare a statement opposing use of the death penalty, to be voted on in November.
- Agreed that every diocese should sponsor an annual day of prayer for priestly vocations.
- Marked the centenary of the Catholic Church Extension Society with a Mass and a banquet.

Priestly formation program raises bar on theological preparation

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — After some debate over tougher seminary academic and formation standards, the U.S. bishops June 17 adopted a revised Program of Priestly Formation by an overwhelming margin, 231-3.

If approved by the Vatican it will replace the fourth edition of the program, which has set the norms for U.S. seminary programs and seminary admission policies since 1992.

Most of the debate centered on language in the new document calling for a minimum of two years of pre-theology studies for new seminarians who got their college degree outside the seminary system.

The discussion also drew new attention to a long-expected Vatican document on the admission of homosexually oriented men to seminaries, raising speculation among journalists at the meeting about when that document may appear and what it will say. The discussion arose out of a statement in the new program that U.S. seminaries will follow Vatican guidelines in

that area.

Bishop John C. Nienstedt of New Ulm, Minn., chairman of the bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation and of the subcommittee that drafted the fifth edition of the Program of Priestly Formation, introduced the proposed new document to the bishops June 16 and guided the debate before the vote the following day.

Like earlier editions, the program will set national norms and principles that must be applied in all U.S. seminaries once it is approved by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, which oversees Catholic colleges, universities and seminaries around the world.

Bishop Nienstedt said at the Vatican's request the bishops would seek to make the new document effective for a five-year period, anticipating that revisions will be in order following an approaching Vatican-supervised visitation of all U.S. seminaries to assess how well they form future priests in celibacy and related areas.

Like the fourth edition in 1992, the fifth edition of the program speaks of four dimensions of formation that seminarians must develop and integrate in their years of preparation for priesthood: intellectual, pastoral, spiritual and

human. Those dimensions were spelled out by Pope John Paul II in "Pastores Dabo Vobis" ("I Will Give You Shepherds"), a 1992 document on priestly formation issued only months before the fourth edition was adopted.

One of the major insights in the papal document was its emphasis on "human formation" — the social, psychological, psychosexual, emotional and relational maturation of the seminarian — as an integrating factor for the spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation on which seminary programs traditionally focused.

Human formation gets stronger, more detailed treatment in the new document than it got in 1992. The main section on formation for celibacy, for example, came under the heading of spiritual formation in 1992, but it is treated mainly under the human formation heading in the new edition.

While the 1992 edition focused more on the theology of celibacy, the new document places more emphasis on the concrete skills, attitudes, behaviors and supports needed to build an effective, mature commitment to a chaste, celibate life.

Besides giving fuller treatment to the different types of formation in seminaries, the fifth

edition significantly expands its discussion of admission requirements.

One new element is the statement, "Any evidence of criminal sexual activity with a minor or an inclination toward such activity disqualifies the applicant from admission."

The admission norm is reinforced with a formation norm that says, "Any credible evidence in the candidate of a sexual attraction to children necessitates an immediate dismissal from the seminary."

The 1992 program made no specific mention of homosexuality, but the new one says, "With regard to the admission of candidates with same-sex experiences and/or inclinations, the guidelines provided by the Holy See must be followed." The Vatican has been working for some time on developing such guidelines. Bishop Nienstedt told the bishops that in earlier drafts the writers of the new document tried to spell out cautions and guidelines on the admission of homosexuals, but the Catholic education congregation suggested it would be better simply to link the U.S. standards to the forthcoming Vatican policy, which should be applied around the world.

Monstrance due in San Angelo for August Mass

Tour of vessel will help promote Eucharist, priesthood, religious life

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor
West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO. A monstrance blessed by Pope John Paul II will arrive in San Angelo in August and will hold the Body of Christ during a special Mass to encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Making a year-long trek through the U.S. and Canada at dioceses under request of local bishops, the monstrance is one of six blessed by John Paul II. The others are on display similarly on the five remaining populated continents.

A monstrance is a vessel in which the consecrated Host is exposed for the adoration of the faithful.

"Pope John Paul II, in November of 2004, came up with idea to bless monstrances at the Vatican and send them out to all the continents,"

said the Rev. Michael P. Pfeifer, bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo. "We will have a Mass to receive it and encourage people to come if they can. It will be a way of appreciating the Eucharist while building up priests and women religious."

The monstrance is scheduled to arrive in San Angelo on August 16, prior to an opening Mass at St. Margaret's at 6:30 p.m. Previous to its stop in San Angelo, the monstrance will have made stops in Harrisburg, Penn., and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Fr. Edward Burns, executive director of the Secretariat for Vocations and Priestly Formations for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the goal of the monstrance's journey through different areas is "to promote prayer services centered around adoration of the consecrated host."

Bishop Blase Cupich, of Rapid City, S.D.,

said he felt the monstrance will "Create great synergy in the country.

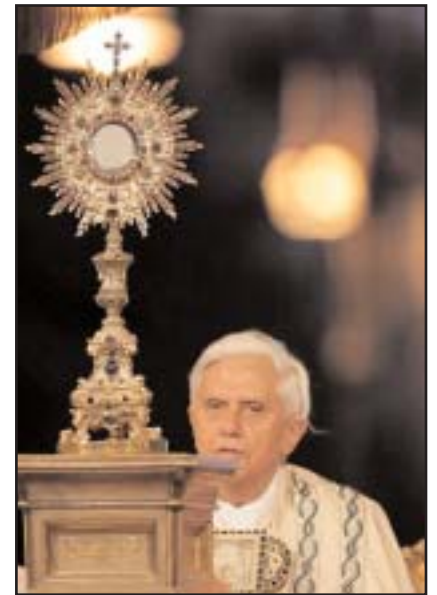
"This will be an opportunity to raise up the minds of the faithful that the need is not only to pray but also to create a culture of vocations."

"I think this was a splendid idea Pope John Paul II had," Pfeifer said. "The priesthood and Eucharist are intimately connected and as soon as I heard the USA Council of Serra International was going to be overseeing this, I made sure San Angelo was on the list."

The inaugural stop for the monstrance was at the Crypt Church, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in Washington, D.C.

The monstrance will remain in San Angelo through August 19.

Pope Benedict XVI, right, with a monstrance, in Rome.



St. Ann's parish in Midland mourns passing of Fr. Cliff

SAN ANTONIO. Fr. Clifford J. Blackburn, parish priest at Midland's St. Ann's from 1978-1985, died May 5, 2005. He was 85.

Born in New Rochelle, NY, his first assignment was as a professor at St. Anthony Minor Seminary. An oblate, in 1963, he was appointed director of St. Joseph's Retreat House, now the Oblate Renewal Center, in San Antonio).

"The impression of Fr. Blackburn shared by our parishioners is that of a gentle and effective pastor," said Msgr. Larry Droll, currently parish priest at St. Ann's. "He gave very personal attention to his people and wise oversight to the parish. During his time, the Parlor-Rectory Building was constructed.

"I remember Fr. Blackburn as the perfect gentleman, a fine priest. I visited him in San Antonio two days before he died, greeted him on behalf of the parishioners, and prayed for God's blessing upon him."

A Memorial Mass was held for Fr. Blackburn at St. Ann's Parish on May 9. Fr. Ray Wilhelm, OMI, joined Msgr. Droll in presiding at the Eucharist.

Natural Family Planning seminar highlights awareness week

By Rev. Dr. John Gonzales
Castro, O.M.I.

Director, Christ The King
Retreat Center



To emphasize the importance of Natural Family Planning (NFP) Week, July 24-30, 2005, Christ the King Retreat Center will host a symposium entitled "NFP As A Lifestyle" on Friday, July 29, 2005. The Department of Family Life of the Diocese of San Angelo will sponsor the event.

Beginning with the Eucharistic

Celebration at 5:30 p.m., the workshop will also underscore two sessions directed by Mr. John and Mrs. Bonnie Rangel, Mr. Carl and Mrs. Amy Perez and Mrs. Lupe Blackwood, credentialed NFP instructors for the Diocese of San Angelo. The get-together will also include a light supper and conclude at 9 p.m.

Diocesan NFP programs are the vehicles through which the Roman Catholic Church helps married couples to live out their conjugal love responsibly. These programs provide classes for the engaged and married. In addition, diocesan NFP programs also serve as resources for information on issues affecting human sexuality such as infertility, sexually transmitted

diseases and contraception.

In his Letter to Families (1994), Pope John Paul II cited ministry to the family as one of the Church's essential duties. The family is the place where husband and wife love each other. It is also the place where children are welcomed and nurtured. As part of the overall programs that the Church provides to support marriage and family life, NFP holds a foundational place in the diocese.

Everyone is welcome to the NFP As A Lifestyle gathering. Pre-registration is required by July 25, 2005. For more information, call Margie Schillo at (325) 651-5352.

RHODE: Appointment historic for Texas Catholics

(From 1)

it and act upon it when it occurs."

Bishop Pfeifer, who appointed Rhode to his Diocesan Review Board in 2002, spoke highly of Rhode's appointment to the NRB.

"I am very proud of him and the appointment speaks highly of his qualities and of the service he gave the Diocesan Review Board. I think he is an outstanding member to have on the board. He is a Catholic Christian who is committed and he brings a lot of experience from his own field

and he adds good balance to the NRB.

Rhode's appointment is the first time a Texan has been named to the NRB.

The functions of the National Review Board are to provide advice and guidance to the USCCB; approve the report on the implementation of the Charter in each diocese and eparchy; formulate recommendations that emerge from this report; commission a descriptive study on the "Nature and Scope" of the problem of sexual abuse of children and young people in the Catholic Church, and

commission a study on the "causes and context" of the crisis of sexual abuse of children and young people in the Catholic Church.

Rhode received his M.D. from the University of Virginia and is currently President of Midland Family Physicians. He serves as Chairman of the Credentials Committee for Midland Memorial Hospital, where he also established the hospital's Ethics Committee. He is a Knight in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Dr. Rhode is a father of seven, married to Caroline Creighton Rhode, M.D.

USCCB: Bishops encourage establishment of Day of Prayer for vocations

(From 1)

priesthood for that person."

Pfeifer said the Catholic Church stands "significantly ahead of any other institution as a body addressing this issue."

The bishops adopted those documents by respective votes of 229-3 and 228-4.

The revised charter and norms are to take effect for five years.

While several other abuse-related items were also on the bishops' agenda, they also took time to approve other documents and projects, vote on financial matters, discuss the growing phenomenon of lay ecclesial ministry and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Catholic Church Extension Society.

Another item upon which a great amount of time was spent, Pfeifer said, was priestly formation.

"It was probably the longest document we dealt with," Pfeifer said. "It covered the entire gamut, from when a young man should be approached about entering the seminary, his background, and the way we would look at and work with that person.

It was the fifth time revisions had been made by the USCCB to the document pertaining to priestly formation, something US bishops do periodically, Pfeifer said "in

accordance with the latest teaching of the Church."

Pfeifer said the urgency of the priest shortage in the Church was so deep that the bishops established a National Day of Prayer, to be set within individual dioceses.

Next month: A look at the bishops' discussion on the importance of Catholic schools in the 21st century.

Catholic News Service contributed to this report.

NATIONAL

Police officer says raising 4-year-old daughter is his top priority

By Theresa Laurence
Catholic News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- When Nashville police officer Pete Lynch was shot in the line of duty last summer, a lot of thoughts ran through his head. Instead of dwelling on the pain or worrying that his life might be in danger, he thought of his little girl.

"I thought about Kaylee, that I need to make it through, to get home and see my daughter. She needs her dad," he told the Tennessee Register, Nashville diocesan newspaper.

Lynch, a 1992 graduate of Father Ryan High School in Nashville, is a single father with full custody of his 4-year-old daughter. While he loves his job as a uniformed patrol officer, "if it ever conflicted with her, I'd give it up," he said of Kaylee. "She's a lot more important to me than my job."

Lynch followed in the footsteps of his grandfather and great-grandfather to become a police officer and relishes the variety and excitement of the job. The six months he was off the streets after being shot above the kneecap last July "was killing me," he said. He recently underwent another surgery, but planned to be back on full duty in mid-June.

He said he will begin working as a field training officer, teaching rookies "how to put to use on the streets" what they learned in the police academy. Lynch is also looking forward to working as a counselor this summer at the Fraternal Order of Police overnight camp for underprivileged children in Mount Juliet.

When he was injured last summer, after pursuing a suspected car thief on foot, doctors originally told Lynch that he would never be able to run again and would not walk without a significant limp. But "I've already proved that wrong," Lynch said. He can walk up and down stairs and is determined to



Pete Lynch is a Nashville, Tenn., police officer and a single dad raising his 4-year-old daughter, Kaylee. He has spent a lot of extra time with her this past year while recovering from a gunshot wound in his leg.

regain the full use of his leg.

While Lynch has always known that his job is inherently dangerous, being in several car wrecks and being shot "does make you re-evaluate," he said. "I'm not as aggressive as I used to be."

However, he has no plans to change careers anytime soon. "I don't really see me doing anything else but police work," said Lynch, who works from 10 p.m.-7 a.m. patrolling the East Precinct. "It's rare to find someone who loves going into

work," he said, and "this is something I really love."

When he's not on the job, Lynch is usually at home taking care of Kaylee. On a recent Monday evening, he watched as she brought her stuffed animals and dolls to the living room, quickly abandoning them to find the family cat, then went to the kitchen for a snack. He smiled, shaking his head at the combination of her short attention span and high energy. "I was like that when I was her age," he said.

Until April, when Lynch's father passed away, both his parents lived with him and Kaylee. His mother remains "really great" about filling in the gaps between day care and his work schedule, Lynch said.

"On the rare occasion I go on a date," he said, his mother will baby-sit Kaylee. "I think she'd like to see me get out more often but I'd rather spend that time with Kaylee. I don't want to look back and say that I missed all that time with her."

Kaylee sees her mother one weekend a month and "she and I work pretty well together," Lynch said. "When parents split up they tend to put the kids in the middle but we make decisions on what's best for her," he said. "I believe in family; it's very important."

With only a handful of friends who have children, Lynch takes his single fatherhood duties in stride. He said he does see single dads becoming more prominent, as well as more stay-at-home dads. Lynch's brother and his wife are trying to adopt a child and he plans to stay home when that comes through, Lynch said.

"This is not something I had to do," Lynch said about agreeing to have full custody of his daughter. But it's what worked best for him and Kaylee's mother, who has four other children at home.

Kaylee, Lynch said, "is by far the best thing that's ever happened to me."

TEAM: San Pedranos take to heart sharing in suffering of imprisoned

(From 3)

Tattoos were seen on many of the prisoners. Removal projects are also part of the diocesan outreach. This together with the learning opportunities, provide the incarcerated with needed skills that serve them well during and after their sentences and, in the process, alleviate boredom and its contingent problems.

Hidden behind walls advertising Pepsi and other Latin American beverage favorites and rife with heat, humidity, crowding, filth, and lethargy, there are rays of hope, possibility, care, concern, and love emanating from the men and women of the Diocese of San Pedro Sula who minister here.

This is and is not "faith based incarceration." The prison is not run by the Catholic Church. Its ministers do not bribe the inmates with food, cigarettes, and prizes, or with threats of eternal damnation. The prisoners are free to participate in diocesan offerings whether or not they accept Jesus, baptism, and salvation. Like Jesus, who invited his contemporaries to follow him, the diocesan team members also issue an invitation and "sometimes they use words." (St. Francis of Assisi) The author of the Letter to the Hebrews commends the recipients for sharing "in the sufferings of those in prison." Our San Pedrano brothers and sisters have taken the message to heart.

Religious attitudes in U.S. differ from Western Europe

By Mark Basola
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- A recent AP/Ipsos poll suggests that religious attitudes of citizens in the United States are stronger than religious attitudes of their Western European counterparts.

According to the poll, 84 percent of Americans consider religion important in their lives, compared to 37 percent in France, 43 percent in the United Kingdom and 46 percent in Spain. Only Mexico (86 percent) and Italy (80 percent) had similar percentages.

Leslie Tentler, historian at the University Center for American Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, found the poll "interesting but not surprising."

Tentler pointed to several reasons for the differences in religious attitudes.

"I think it has something to do with our long history of a religiously neutral government," Tentler told Catholic News Service.

She noted that both France and Spain, countries where the Catholic Church was once the established church of state, now rank among the lowest among countries where religion is important to the citizens.

In both countries, republican forms of government were established despite

► See Graphic/Page 1

church opposition. Consequently, Tentler added, "you'll find numerous Frenchmen and Spaniards today who feel in their bones that being religious and being good republicans is a contradiction of terms."

In the United States, by contrast, Tentler observed, "the Revolution had the blessing of most clergy," nearly all of whom were Protestant. In the United States, because one religion never became associated with the government, to be a good citizen and to be religious are not mutually exclusive, she noted.

Another reason Tentler gave for strong religious attitudes in the United States that it is an immigrant nation. "For a great many immigrants in the U.S., religion was the principal means by which the old identity was preserved. Many, in fact, became more rather than less religious after they emigrated."

Tentler suggested that the extreme individualism of American culture factored into the important place religion has in Americans' lives. "There aren't many sources of solidarity in our society. For many Americans, I think, religious belief and belonging is a way of creating solidarity -- or at least the illusion of it," she said.

Sociologist Dean Hoge of Catholic University agreed with Tentler that the discrepancy in religious attitudes could be rooted in the founding of the United States.

According to Hoge, "Basic differences in American culture are found in the Protestant and deist points of view (of the founders). All were anti-aristocratic, anti-established church and wanted a more democratic country. The founders did not want a replay of Europe."

One statistic in the AP/Ipsos poll showed that 37 percent of Americans thought religious leaders should try to influence government decisions. While a seemingly small percentage, it was higher than that of any other nation polled. The closest was Italy, where 30 percent of respondents said they agreed with that statement; the figure was around 20 percent in most other nations. In France, only 12 percent of citizens said they thought religious leaders should influence politics.

Some might find it interesting the United States had a percentage on this question given the fact that, according to Hoge, "the Founding Fathers didn't want denominations endorsing candidates."

Regarding the religious makeup of countries, 26 percent of the poll's respondents in the United States said they were Catholic.

FAMILY/YOUTH

From the Easy Chair

On lost Boy Scouts, teen drivers and lots of prayer

By Jimmy Patterson

Like thousands of others, I watched my television anxiously as searchers combed the mountains northeast of Salt Lake City, Utah, looking for 11-year-old Brennan Hawkins. Like others, I watched a mother and father shaking with fear and my heart went out to them as they spoke with TV reporters while their son was ... out there somewhere.

We've seen it all before: a child goes missing and soon after an Amber alert is issued. Then, what happens all too often is that the child's body is found. And any parent feels the anguish and heartbreak of the parent that has to face life ahead without a part of them -- their child. Imagine not only the death of a child, but the fear that the child must endure in the hours after he or she is abducted or alone, as was Brennan's case. It's a horrible feeling watching from afar. I cannot imagine experiencing it firsthand.



Patterson

So we watched, and prayed, and heard the cable news outlets begin speculating that a crime may have been committed in the case of Brennan.

Our family watched with particular trepidation because as Brennan remained missing in Utah, our 11-year-old Tenderfoot son was to leave on a 7-day Boy Scout summer camp in Oklahoma in less than a week. We became particularly worried about sending our son to Scout camp -- could there be something amiss at the camp that we don't know about that might befall our son as had maybe befallen -- according to CNN -- Brennan?

And then a simple miracle happened. Brennan stepped out of the woods onto a trail as a searcher drove up on his ATV. And suddenly tragedy turned to triumph and the nation smiled collectively at the news of the boy's rescue.

When Brennan's mother stood before cameras, she thanked God. When his uncle talked to the Today Show, he said it was the family's faith and belief in Jesus Christ that upheld them through the four-day ordeal.

Karen and I again felt good about letting James go away to camp, although in spite of the Utah rescue we had difficulty dealing with the fact that our son would be gone for seven days.

On a seemingly unrelated note, but one that is actually very much on topic, I tend to freak out when I hand over the keys to my car to our 16-year-old daughter, who received her driver's license and has been driving less than a month. When she drove me home from work one day she plowed clean through a red light in downtown Midland. A knot tightens slightly in my stomach and feelings of helplessness and doom can descend on me.

Not my wife. Karen has an uncanny knack for dealing with issues that she says are too big for her.

It's out of my hands, she will say. If you just give it to God, you'll be at peace.

I must admit giving it to God is not always easy, but as she so often is, Karen is right: if you can't take care of something personally and the outcome of a situation depends on someone else other than you, turning it over to God -- as Brennan's family did during his ordeal -- will bring a sense of peace and resolve otherwise unattainable. You might try it sometime. It's worked wonders for me.

Jimmy Patterson is Director of Communications for the Diocese of San Angelo. His book of family humor, "Sticky Doorknobs," is available at www.amazon.com or www.bn.com. He and his family live in Midland.

YOUR FAMILY

Battling the summertime family doldrums

By Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

Geographers say that sailors noticed the stillness of the rising, but not blowing, air near the equator and gave the region the depressing name doldrums. Family life can be like that.

It seems such a long time from that good place you once were. It seems it will take so long before you reach the spot where you want to be:

■ Ah, the past, when you and your spouse fell in love; the new job was so exciting and challenging; the children were little and their problems small.

■ Ah, the future, when the children will be older and demand less of your time so that you and your spouse can more easily get away together; when you get that promotion, that raise, that new house.

Meanwhile, the days click by, neither

wonderful nor awful. It's the same old same old -- physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Life has lost its tang, its zip. Ever listless seems to have become the family motto.

Assuming the root cause is not related to clinical depression and this is just a case of the blahs, what can you do to help your family and yourself? A few suggestions:

■ Give your life a little shake. Nothing monumental. A different cereal in the morning. A different route home from work. A new arrangement of the living-room furniture.

■ Try a new (or long dormant) physical or mental activity. A short walk at lunch. A crossword or jigsaw puzzle in the evening. A bike ride or swim on the weekend.

■ Consider a new devotion or form of prayer. A weekday Mass. The Liturgy of the Hours. A tape or CD of spiritual songs.

■ Do something to help the less fortunate. Clean out the closets, then make a donation to St. Vincent's. Spend a few hours helping at the local food bank. Read up on world issues, and make a contribution to Catholic Relief

Services.

■ Thank God that you and your family aren't facing any catastrophes. As we get older, we better realize that a boring day can be a very good day.

■ Don't lose sight of the fact that, at some future point, these will be the good old days. Practice spotting the good now and enjoying it!

This is the day the Lord has made. Rejoice and be glad.

Recreational sailboaters talk about seeing the wind when they're on a large body of water. Telltale ripples and waves let them know there will be great sailing over there. Getting there is another story. It's a matter of rowing, paddling or motoring to reach the spot where the wind finally fills the sails and the craft lurches forward. Sometimes in our family doldrums we're able to see where we want to be thanks to the Holy Spirit. But getting there is another story. More often than not, God hands us the paddles and expects us to do some work to make it happen.



Bill and Monica Dodds

A note from the publisher:

I share with you these wonderful inspirational reflections from a letter I received from the Confirmation Class of St. Lawrence Church in Garden City. During their beautiful Confirmation Mass on May 4, 2005, I read back to them the following parts of their letter.

-- Bishop Pfeifer

'We can now choose Christ and his church for ourselves'

Dear Bishop Pfeifer,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We, the 10th grade class of St. Lawrence CCD, are eager to receive the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation.

At Baptism, we all received the great virtue of love. In the last 2 years, we have seen how the sacrament of Confirmation is making that love grow.

With loving hearts, we have performed works of

mercy--both physical and spiritual:

We have visited the sick in the hospital at Big Spring.

We have helped to clothe the naked at St. Vincent de Paul.

We gave "Barnabas bears" to children in need in the Midland community.

We picked up pecans for Deacon Mark Reeh when he was sick.

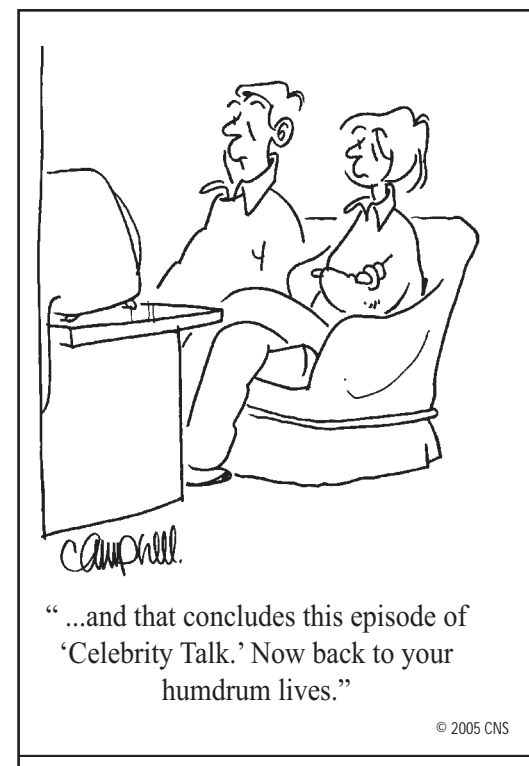
Our class seemed to show the most love when

we reached out to others spiritually.

All year we prayed for the conversion of prisoners on Death Row. During every class, we prayed for each prisoner by name, and we also raised money to have 3 Masses said for them.

Our next project was to adopt an unborn child who was in danger of abortion. We prayed for this child everyday, asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Protector of the unborn.

Please See YOUTH/11



DIOCE-SCENES

Farm/Rural Life Mass -- June 9, 2005 -- Stanton



2005 Confirmation, Big Lake



2005 Confirmation, Crane



2005 Confirmation, Iraan



Bishop Michael Pfeifer, middle, with Anise Morales, left, and her grandmother, Ramona Morales, making the announcement of "Serengeti" Vacation Bible School at Our Lady of Lourdes in Andrews.



More than two hundred attended the Farm/Rural Life Mass, June 9 near Stanton. Among them were County Judge Corky Blocker and Mayor Lester Baker, Bishop Michael Pfeifer allowed them to say a few word during the service. Also attending were, three county commissioners: Sonny Garza, David Pribyla, and Bobby Owen Kelly, Agriculture Extension Agent Lee Howard, Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Services Leticia Ezell, USDA Farm Service Agent; Nestor Hernandez and representatives from Lenorah Four Way Gin and Farmers Coop Association. Also attending were Chamber President Melissa Villa, Councilman Steven Villa. Some came from St. Lawrence and Rowena, and all enjoyed a Bar-B-Q dinner provided by the Knights of Columbus. In bottom photo, Bishop Pfeifer is photographed with County Judge Charles Blocker and his wife, Sarah, at left, and Mayor Lester Baker and wife, Jim.



Fr. Arturo Pestin, left, parish priest at Our Lady of San Juan Catholic Church in Midland, prepares the Eucharist during an outdoor Mass June 4. About 125 members of the congregation celebrated Mass at Midland's Hogan Park before enjoying a church picnic.



Mary was crowned by the Blessed Trinity, hence the crowning of the statue of Our Lady, May 22, 2005, by the women of St. Charles parish in Eden on the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity (at top and below). Father Romanus Akamike, aka "Father Thank You Jesus" thanked God for giving us Mary the mother of Jesus as our mother.

Mary Castanuela and Angie Torres carried the statue of Our Lady and led the procession into the church (top). Below, the women of the church in Eden.

The commemoration of the crowning of our Blessed Mother concluded with a pot luck dinner to celebrate the gift of motherhood of the Christian Mothers of St. Charles Parish.



Bishop Michael Pfeifer, at right in photo above, helps dedicate the new church at Rankin, seen in the photo at right.



Zhanae Fox, third from left, and Andrae Vaden, right, lead a group of Vacation Bible School students in singing at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, in Odessa.

PATTERSON: We can't seem to grasp Freedom of Religion

(From 2)

"Catholics don't believe Christ died for our sins and is not the Savior."

Well, if that's not Jesus up on the cross in every Catholic church in the world, who is it? Perhaps this notion is because a lot of times we name our churches after Mary or some other worthy saint that spent his or her life in total worship and devotion to Christ. But again, every Catholic church you walk into has a crucifix hanging on the wall. It's a requirement handed down by the Vatican. Which brings up another misconception: the image of Christ on the cross does *not* mean Catholics don't believe Jesus rose in three days. We just see as important the suffering Christ endured for us on the way to his death. If Christ didn't endure the pain and heartbreak before his crucifixion, what would his death and resurrection mean? He could have come and died quietly in his sleep, but my guess is the impact of his death would have been greatly diminished.

"Catholics worship Mary."

Uhh, no. We think quite a lot of her and we hold her in pretty high esteem, given what all she did for Christianity. And we figure if God had enough confidence in her ability to carry and give birth to the Savior of the world, she must be a pretty OK person. And so we think so, too. If God thinks that much of

her, so too shall we.

"Catholics don't pray to God."

I'm gonna guess that most of our prayers during Mass begin with the words, "Heavenly Father." The others start out, "In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Perhaps people think we don't pray to God because we practice something called intercessory prayer, or we ask saints to pray for us. Saints were pretty good people. Not infallible, but pretty good folks. Mother Teresa is not a saint yet, but likely will be soon. She is the one example that most people can understand in terms of what a saint is like: total devotion to God and, in her case, to the poor (a lot like Jesus). So on occasion, we ask saints to help us by praying for us to God. Kinda like when you ask a friend to pray for your mom when she's sick. But saints are dead, you say? Well, chances are they're in heaven and, being saints, they have God's ear.

"Catholics believe the only way you confess your sins is through a priest."

Another good one. But wrong. At every Mass, we recite the "Our Father," or the Lord's Prayer as Protestants call it. We have not taken out the line, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We talk to our priests about our sins because unloading the burden of sin on another

human who can listen to us is great relief. It makes a person lighter and subsequently closer to God. We've cut back a little on the confession requirements, but many Catholics still practice the sacrament regularly. But again, it makes a sinner feel better when he or she can talk about what they've done wrong. Kinda like talking to a friend about something you wished you hadn't done. It may not be called confession in the non-Catholic world, but people confess their sins to other humans every day.

I hope that answers any questions. I'm fairly sure the Church would never publish any of my explanations, but I hope it clears up a few things, especially to any non-Catholics that may stumble upon this.

That said, only one thing is left to stick (and stay) in my craw: We are living in the 21st century. We have technology to get us things faster and make our lives simpler. With the exception of war and violence and assorted lesser evils, America is a better place to live than it was when it was founded over 500 years ago and when we drew up the paperwork making us a free nation in the 1700s. As you likely remember, part of all the red tape when forming our country was something called Freedom of Religion.

So why is it that 200 plus years after all those fine Americans signed the Constitution, we still seem to be having a problem with that one?

EUCCHARIST: Jesus not an idea, feeling or memory, but living person

(From 1)

Eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 47).

The bread and wine at Mass, "By the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1333). The Eucharist is Jesus! The Eucharist is nothing less than Jesus' complete and Personal gift of Himself to us-Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity-under the appearances of bread and wine in the consecrated Host, the Blessed Sacrament.

"Jesus is not an idea or a feeling or a memory, Jesus is a living 'person' always present among us. Love Jesus present in the Eucharist." The Eucharist, in the Mass and outside of the Mass, is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ,

and is therefore deserving of the worship that is given to the living God, and to Him alone" (Pope John Paul II, September 29, 1979, Phoenix Park, Ireland; cf. *Mysterium Fidei*, 55). The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life" *Lumen Gentium*, (Vatican II document), 11. Jesus hides His immense glory, beauty and dignity in the Blessed Sacrament because He wants us to come to Him in faith that we may love Him for Himself.

What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Eucharistic Adoration is visiting and spending time with Jesus in the Sacred Host. It is an expression of our love for Jesus, who loves us so much that He never wants to leave us and stays with us day and night in the Blessed Sacrament. He says: "Behold I am with you always," "I have loved you with an everlasting

love, so I am constant in my affection for you" (Mt. 28:30; Jer 31:3). "The visit to the Blessed Sacrament... is a great treasure of the Catholic faith. It nourishes social love and gives us opportunities for adoration and thanksgiving, for reparation and supplication. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament [is] ...in full accord with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council" (Pope John Paul II, Phoenix Park, Ireland, 1979).

What is Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration?

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration is when a parish sets aside a small room, or chapel, that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with permanent exposition* of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist. It is simply our response to Jesus' love for us, whereby each person is willing to spend a quiet holy hour of prayer in His Eucharistic Presence once

a week, so that Jesus is never left alone, and the chapel is always open for anyone to visit Him.

* Exposition is when the Holy Eucharist is placed in the Monstrance-a sacred vessel designed to elevate Jesus in the Sacred Host, so that people may look upon and adore Him. When we visit Jesus exposed in the Blessed Sacrament, we can talk with Him "face to face," as a friend. Pope John Paul II describes Adoration as looking upon the face of Christ. He says, "Eucharistic adoration strengthens Christian life... I exhort you to continue along this adoring path, putting before the gaze of Jesus Christ the anxieties, the hopes, the worries and even the sins of all humanity. Before Him everything takes on a new face" (Rome, March 25, 1996)

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YOUTH: Teen group battles difficulties, has memorable year

(From 9)

There were other spiritual works of mercy performed that were not planned by our class:

In the last two years as we prepared for the sacrament of Confirmation, our class lost a loving father--Douglas Plagens.

We have lost a devoted grandmother--Alberta Halfmann.

We have lost a close and wonderful friend--Todd Weishuhn.

We have lost our awesome CYO leader--Deacon Mark Reeh.

We have lost our Pope, John Paul II, who had such a great love for the youth.

Over and over, we found ourselves comforting the sorrowful. Our hearts were full of pain, but each time we found our hearts full of love to give to our family and friends.

What is this LOVE, and where does it come

from? We have learned that the HOLY SPIRIT is the LOVE between the Father and the Son. This is the love that we received in Baptism and are about to receive a new outpouring of in the holy sacrament of Confirmation.

As we grow into adults, we will be taking many new steps. But confirmation will be one of the most important steps of them all. When we were born, it was our parent's decision to baptize us into the Catholic Church. Since then, we have been strengthened through the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation. Now we are ready to take the next step: Confirmation.

As young adults, we now have the chance to choose Christ and His church for ourselves. We are ready to make this step to become more like Christ and to stand up for our faith. We are ready to live the sacrament of Confirmation by bringing Christ to the world in word and action. We will have the tools to

do this when the Holy Spirit and His gifts are strengthened in us. At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit will renew in us certain gifts that will help us to know God's will and certain gifts that will help us to do God's will. The Holy Spirit will help us to "walk the talk" and to become true disciples of Jesus.

We also have confidence in our patron saints that we have picked to help support us on our journey to heaven.

The First Reading from the prophet Isaiah tells us that the Spirit of the Lord is always with us and we were put on earth to spread our faith with others. So many things in this reading describe what we tried to do as a class for the past 2 years. We brought glad tidings to the lowly and healed the broken-hearted. We released the prisoners by praying to release their souls from sin. Because the Spirit of the Lord was upon us, we gave comfort to the mourning. The "oil of gladness" that Isaiah speaks

about reminds us of the Chrism that we will be anointed with in Confirmation.

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us the Beatitudes which we studied in class. We learned that if times are tough, just remember that you will someday have treasures in heaven. It also reminds us to be peacemakers and to show mercy to everyone. We can be God's hands and feet, and be a channel of His blessings to others.

In conclusion, we would like to end with a prayer that was in our textbooks, written by St. Richard of Chichester. Through the sacrament of Confirmation, we hope to fulfill the words of this prayer:

O most merciful Friend, my Brother, and my Redeemer, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day, day by day. Amen.

Sincerely,
The Confirmation Class of 2005
St. Lawrence Catholic Church

THE BACK PAGE

The gospel according to Harry Potter

LOOKING FOR GOD IN HARRY POTTER, by John Granger. Tyndale (Carol Stream, Ill., 2004). 193 pp., \$16.99.

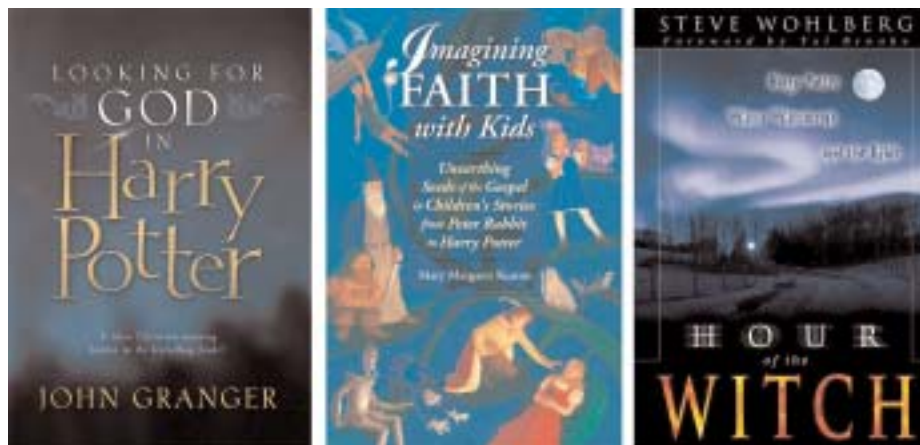
IMAGINING FAITH WITH KIDS: UNEARTHING SEEDS OF THE GOSPEL IN CHILDREN'S STORIES FROM PETER RABBIT TO HARRY POTTER, by Mary Margaret Keaton. Pauline Books and Media (Boston, 2005). 282 pp., \$19.95.

HOUR OF THE WITCH: HARRY POTTER, WICCA WITCHCRAFT AND THE BIBLE, by Steve Wohlberg. Destiny Image (Shippensburg, Pa., 2005). 216 pp., \$13.99.

Reviewed by Jean Gonzalez
Catholic News Service

The sixth installment of the Harry Potter series — “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” by J.K. Rowling — will hit U.S. stores July 16. But not everyone is wild about Harry. Three new books offer insight about the young wizard’s tales: two for and one against. The “pro” books will have Potter fans racing for highlighters to underline insightful passages, tips on talking to children about the books and keys to symbols in the series. The single “con” book could be boiled down to: “Read Deuteronomy 18.”

“Looking for God in Harry Potter” by John Granger asks on the cover, “Is there Christian meaning hidden in the best-selling books?” His answer is “Yes.” Granger is the “Harry Potter Professor” at Barnes and Noble University, a free, online offering of courses and reading groups where he has taught a course on using the series in children’s literature classes. He guides readers seeking the spiritual messages in the books and uses Bible passages to back up his notions. Granger sees in the Potter books such Gospel values as the ultimate triumph of love over evil, loyalty,



These are the covers to “Looking for God in Harry Potter,” by John Granger, “Imagining Faith with Kids: Unearthing Seeds of the Gospel in Children’s Stories from Peter Rabbit to Harry Potter,” by Mary Margaret Keaton, and “Hour of the Witch: Harry Potter, Wicca, Witchcraft and the Bible,” by Steve Wohlberg.

friendship and the good or bad consequences individual choices have on an entire community.

Granger finds it significant that Potter, like the characters in the “The Chronicles of Narnia” by C.S. Lewis, uses incantational, not invocational, magic. “Incantational magic is about harmonizing with God’s word by imitation,” Granger explains. “Invocational magic is about calling in evil spirits for power or advantage — always a tragic mistake.” It is invocational magic that is contrary to Scripture, he says. Thus, concern that the books might lay a foundation for occult practices is “misplaced” because Potter magic is not “demonic.”

Potter fans will love the insight Granger has about the Potter symbols and scenarios, especially the chapter on the historical and spiritual significance of alchemy. Throughout the book are highlight-worthy passages.

Don’t put that highlighter away if you grab Mary Margaret Keaton’s “Imagining Faith with Kids,” subtitled “Unearthing Seeds of the Gospel in Children’s Stories from Peter Rabbit to Harry Potter.” Keaton looks at how the messages of Gospel stories, fables and literary classics can enrich children’s lives. The voice behind the prose is someone who loves to read and values storytelling. When Keaton, who is a journalist, scholar, catechist and mother, mentions a book or story, readers will want to pick it right up and read it. Keaton includes both an index and reference lists of age-appropriate stories.

Keaton suggests ways parents and catechists can look for “seeds of Gospel messages” within stories and spark conversations with children about those messages. In one example, Keaton parallels “The Little Engine That Could” to the parable of the good

► CULTURE

Samaritan. In another, she shares how the Dr. Seuss classic “The Lorax,” with its hopeful message of replenishing the forest, helped her son resolve his fears following Sept. 11, 2001.

Keaton says that parents who discuss with children the seeds of the Gospel in the Potter books will find more in the series than just the comfort that “at least Johnny’s reading a book.”

Steve Wohlberg’s “Hour of the Witch: Harry Potter, Wicca Witchcraft and the Bible” desperately tries to warn readers of the sinful and even devilish nature of the Potter series. Wohlberg, director of Endtime Insights radio and television ministry, admits he never liked what he calls the idea behind the novels — glorifying witchcraft.

Wohlberg’s basic conclusions are that the Potter series is bad because it might inspire readers to learn more about Wicca, which is bad, and Harry Potter makes sorcery look good and cool, even though the Bible states sorcery is bad. Wohlberg points to Deuteronomy 18 as a biblical passage in which sorcery is seen as evil.

Potter fans might have a hard time with the prose, which reads like a preacher stating the same things over and over until you believe what he says. Frustrating — yet popular — phrases in chapters 1 through 9 are “more on that later,” and “explained more in chapter 10.”

The author goes so far as to imply that perhaps the devil inspired Rowling — unbeknownst to her — to write the Potter series and to get it published. He says parents turn a blind eye to that notion because “at least Johnny’s reading.” Wohlberg’s interesting proposition is delivered in a condescending, single-minded, doom-and-gloom tone.

Gonzalez is projects editor for *The Florida Catholic newspaper in Orlando, Fla., and a parent.*

Children’s books guaranteed to chase away summer doldrums

Reviews by Barb Frazee
Catholic News Service

The following children’s books are guaranteed to chase away summer doldrums.

HELP WANTED STORIES, by Gary Soto. Harcourt Inc. (Orlando, Fla., 2005). 216 pp., \$17.

This book has a multifaceted appeal to middle-grade readers: First, it’s great story-telling! The main character of each tale is of middle-school or high-school age and faces a problem common to teens, from feeling too gangly to appeal to girls (“Teenage Chimps”) to feeling ashamed of siblings and parents (“Sorry, Wrong Family”). Most stories include Hispanic characters and Spanish phrases, and the book includes a three-page translation list in the back. Stories are told from the perspective of girls and boys, yet the problems cross gender lines. The short stories make the book easy to read in short spurts — a fine competitor to TV and computers. (Ages 11-14)

THE PRAIRIE BUILDERS: RECONSTRUCTING AMERICA’S LOST GRASSLANDS, written and photographed by Sneed B. Collard III.

Houghton Mifflin Co. (Boston, 2005). 72 pp., \$17.

This latest in Houghton Mifflin’s “Scientist in the Field” series features scientists and their work at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in central Iowa. Collard’s photography captures multiple aspects of refuge life: a controlled burn, animal activity, workers, wildflowers and butterflies, to name a few. His text tells a good story, but the nature and people photography will open many readers’ eyes to a whole new world. (Ages 8-12)

MY VERY FIRST BIBLE, by James Harrison, illustrated by Diana Mayo. DK Publishing Inc. (New York, 2005). 80 pp., \$12.99.

Mayo’s colorful illustrations make this book, but special children’s features add to its charm. Large-font story type blends well with the pictures, but some pages contain even larger type with simple phrases or sentences for beginning readers. Each story has a Bible citation on which the tale is based, and some stories have small matching or sorting games for nonreaders. For example, “How many colors can you see?” is under the illustration of Joseph’s coat of many colors. The book works especially well if older readers read along or read aloud. (Ages 3-8)

RUNNER, by Carl Deuker. Houghton Mifflin Co. (Boston, 2005). 216 pp. \$16.

From the opening paragraph, this first-person tale of a teenage boy fighting poverty and an alcoholic father will draw in the reader. Deuker addresses additional issues of friendship, survival and values with realism. A compelling plot will keep teens turning pages as they see how Chance Taylor finds his way. (Ages 12-15)

PLEASE BURY ME IN THE LIBRARY, by J. Patrick Lewis, illustrated by Kyle M. Stone. Gulliver Books (Orlando, Fla., 2005). 32 pp., \$16.

This is possibly the most clever book of poetry I have ever read in my life! From acrostics to haiku to rhymes to free verse, Lewis proves himself to be an accomplished wordsmith with an unlimited imagination. Each poem has something to do with reading, books or stories. Stone’s colorful and humorous paintings make this book, to steal the title of one poem, “Ab-so-lu-tas-ti-call!” It is billed as a book for beginning readers, but, as Lewis writes, “A children’s book is a classic/If at six, excitedly/You read it to another kid/Who just turned sixty-three.” (All ages)

