**Political Views Among Catholics**

Conservatives and moderates far outnumber liberals among Catholics, yet slightly more than half of Catholics think government should be bigger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Ideology</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Size</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bigger, more services</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller, fewer services</td>
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<tr>
<th>Protecting Morality</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do More</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too Involved</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do More</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
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<tr>
<th>World Affairs</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active, for future of our country</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrate here at home</td>
<td>43</td>
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**World Youth Day 2008**

‘A tsunami of faith, joy’

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses”
--- [Acts 1:8]

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The papal Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI with hundreds of thousands of youth from around the world on July 20, was described by The Sydney Morning Herald as “a Tsunami of faith and joy.”

World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia brought together pilgrims from 168 nations. The Sunday Mass, the largest held in Australia, was the high point for the Church at the end of the week-long World Youth Day celebrations. During the closing Mass, the Pope celebrated the Sacrament of [WYD/10]

(Please See WYD/10)

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**FALL FESTIVAL DETAILS NEEDED**

**UPDATE:** So that the Angelus can have enough time to publicize your parish’s 2008 festival information, please send in complete details of your event as soon as possible. Email festival information to: jimmylpatterson@grandecom.net

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**SEPTEMBER 2008**

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**Upcoming dates**

1 -- ODESSA, St. Mary – 11 a.m. Mass for Father Francis Frey, honoring his 25th anniversary as Pastor
2 -- SAN ANGELO, Bishop’s House – Dinner for Priests, Sisters, Pastoral Center; Retreat Center Staff at 6 p.m.
3 -- MIDLAND, Drug Meeting at 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Full Schedules, Pg. 4

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**Pro Life Mass set for Aug. 29**

Bishop Michael Pfeifer will hold the annual Pro-Life Mass at the Prayer Garden in Downtown Midland to pray for the unborn on Aug. 11. Details / Pg. 12

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**The Visiting Priest**

A remarkable assembly convened in Philadelphia in the summer of 2008. It was called the “Convention for the Common Good,” and it evoked faint echoes of another summer gathering in that same city in 1787. U.S. founders sought then "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

See “Visiting Priest” / Pg. 3
**Raising a prophetic voice in favor of life**

*By Bishop Michael Pfeifer*

In our contemporary society there are many voices that are promoting a culture of death. As followers of Christ, and as committed Catholics, we are called to raise a prophetic voice in favor of life in word and in deed. In this regard, I share with you some remarks of Bishop Wilton Gregory.

“In the last 30 years, we Catholics, along with many in our society of other faiths and of no faith, have felt obliged to raise a prophetic voice reminding our society that “the least” of our brothers and sisters include those who have denied the first and most fundamental right of conception, when human life begins, to that of natural death, is a being endowed with unique rights by God himself. As with the poor, the immigrant, the sick or the prisoner, having no voice does not mean that the unborn have no place among us, no right to be defended. We are all obliged to defend those rights.”

(Remarks of Bishop Wilton Gregory, President of the USCCB to Congressional Black Caucus, Sept. 10, 2004)

### Monsignor Stern to speak on situation in Holy Land

SAN ANGELO -- Msgr. Archimandrite Robert L. Stern, President of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine and the General Secretary of the CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association), will speak at 3:30 p.m., Friday, Aug. 22, on the current situation in the Holy Land at Holy Angels Parish Hall, 2309 A&M Avenue in San Angelo. The event is open to the public.

Msgr. Stern serves on the editorial board of ONE magazine, is an expert in Catholic Church relationships in the Holy Land and is very knowledgeable of the culture of the people of the Near East.

Msgr. Stern’s appearance is sponsored by the Diocese of San Angelo and the local section of The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem For more information, contact Msgr. Larry Droll at St. Ann’s in Midland, 432-682-6303.

### Blood Drive

SAN ANGELO -- During its annual festival on Labor Day weekend, Aug. 31, St. Marys-San Angelo will act as a community in Christ and conduct a blood drive for four small children in its parish who have been diagnosed with leukemia. If you are interested in participating call the church office at 655-6278.

### Pastoral Studies from Loyola University with a focus on Spirituality

St. Stephen’s Golf Tournament

**MIDLAND** -- Please mark your calendars for October 5 for the annual Knights of Columbus Golf tournament sponsored by St. Stephen’s. Call the parish office at 520-7394 for more information.

### Marital Encounter Weekend

MIDLAND -- A WorldWide Marriage Encounter Weekend will be held at the Midland Downtown Hotel, from 5 p.m., Fri., Oct. 10 until 4:30 p.m., Sun., Oct. 12.

Marriage Encounter is designed to give married couples the opportunity to examine their lives together. A time to share their feelings, hopes, disappointments, joys and frustrations. The emphasis on the weekend is on communications between husband and wife, who will spend a weekend away from the distractions of life to concentrate on each other.

A $50 non-refundable registration fee is required. Please contact Valentin and Maria Gomez, at vgomez@wcc.net or 325.835.7044.

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### St. Ann’s School openings

**MIDLAND** -- St. Ann’s Catholic School has openings for qualified teachers at the elementary and junior high levels and for a librarian and counselor. Contact the principal at 432-684-4863, or visit www.stanns.us.

### Cindy Jordan on YouTube

SAN ANGELO -- San Angelo native Cindy Jordan’s powerful song, “I Took A Life Today” is now on YouTube. Jordan, who wrote and received a Grammy nomination for her country hit, “Jose Cuervo (You Are A Friend Of Mine),” calls her latest song the most powerful she has ever written. Jordan said she decided to share the song on YouTube because “it might inspire someone to make a difference.” It can be found at: http://youtube.com/watch?v=NPSdbO6pJIA

Also visit cynthiamusic.com.

### Diocesan Liturgy Day

**SAN ANGELO** -- The Annual Diocesan Liturgy Day will be held on September 27.

The theme of this year’s Liturgy Day is “Liturgical Ministries: Their Purpose, Meaning and Function within the Gathered Assembly.”

The workshop will be held at Holy Angels Church, located at 2309 A&M Avenue in San Angelo. This workshop is designed for altar servers, ministers of hospitality, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, choir members, ushers, presiders, deacons, sacristans and priests.

Information on the speaker will follow soon. Look for registration forms and additional information in parish bulletins in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions please contact Fr. Ed de Leon, OMI at (432) 682-2581.

### Upcoming Cursillo Dates

**Men (English)** Oct. 23-26, St. Thomas, Big Spring

**Women (English)** Aug. 28-31, CKRC, San Angelo

**Women (English)** Nov. 13-16, St. Thomas, Big Spring

For more information, contact:

Greg Perez, Lay Assistant Spiritual Director
Diocesan Cursillo Movement

Phone: (432) 699-0460 Mobile: (432) 296-0206
Address: 3513 Imperial Ave. Midland 79707
E-Mail: greg7@grandecom.net

### 2008 Festival Schedule

**Dioecesan Pastoral Council**

**September 21**

CARLISLE-BAD STERLING CITY
St. Therese-Carlisle/St. Paschal-Sterling City Festival: K. of Columbus Hall in San Angelo.

### September 27

**MIDLAND**

St. Ann’s Family Fair 60th anniversary: 2000 W. Texas Avenue.

Carnival rides and games offered for 4 days. Thurs., Sept. 25, 6-10 p.m.; Fri., Sept. 26, 6-10 p.m.; Sat., Sept. 27, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sun., Sept. 28, 1-6 p.m.

The Family Fair – with food booths, games for children, bingo, the book booth and grand garage sale – takes place on Saturday, September 27. The day begins with a fun run at 8 am.

### September 28

**KNICKERBOCKER**

Immaculate Conception Annual Fall Festival: Brisket & Sausage Barbeque Meal 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Adults $7/Children $4 Raffle-Auction-Bingo-Games-Entertainment

### October 5

**ST. LAWRENCE**

52nd annual ST LAWRENCE FALL FESTIVAL: Bingo Brisket, homemade German Sausage and all of the trimmings, including homemade desserts. There will be several booths, including area artists and crafters, bingo, auctions and much more. We hope that you and your neighbors will join us as we begin a new “ERA” with our new parish hall!
The Visiting Priest

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

A remarkable assembly convened in Philadelphia in the summer of 2008. It was called the "Convention for the Common Good," and it evoked faint echoes of another summer gathering in that same city in 1787. U.S. founders sought then "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." They preserved those words in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. The Angelus AUGUST 2008 Page 3

The Visiting Priest

The Visiting Priest is a new feature we hope to include on a regular basis in the Angelus. The priests we feature will be visiting only in the sense that they are writing a special column for the Angelus. Those featured will be working priests in the diocese or in some months, syndicated writers from Catholic News Service.

along with two other famous phrases, "we the people" and "to create a more perfect union."

Regarding themselves as "we the people" of the present day, and intend on doing what they can to shape a "more perfect union," 800 delegates -- practically all Catholic, predominantly female and most of them women religious -- responded to a call from Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, a new lay initiative, and NETWORK, a social justice lobby founded by Catholic nuns in 1971, to fill a hotel in Philadelphia in early July to hammer out a "Platform for the Common Good."

The targeted problem is the politics of division, familiar to anyone with ears to hear talk radio or eyes to see televised political commercials. The recommended solution is a national commitment to the common good.

"We want a new vision of governance that is rooted in a moral commitment to human dignity and social justice," said Alexia Kelley, executive director of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, a new lay initiative, and NETWORK, a social justice lobby founded by Catholic nuns in 1971, to fill a hotel in Philadelphia in early July to hammer out a "Platform for the Common Good."

(Please See VISITING PRIEST/13)

Criteria for suitable music for use in liturgy

By Bishop Michael Pfiefer, OMI

Music can do much to enhance and make meaningful the sacred liturgy. The question that needs to be asked, though, is which music is suitable for use in the liturgy?

In their 1972 document Music in Catholic Worship, the bishops of the United States suggest three criteria for judging whether a particular piece of music is suitable for use in liturgy:

▷ The musical judgment: “Is the music technically, esthetically, and expressively good? This judgment is basic and primary and should be made by competent musicians. Only artistically sound music will be effective in the long run. To admit the cheap, the trite, the musical cliché often found in popular songs for the purpose of ‘instant liturgy’ is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule, and to invite failure” (#26).

▷ The liturgical judgment: “The nature of the liturgy itself will help to determine what kind of music is called for, what parts are to be preferred for signing, and who is to sing them” (#30).

“Does the music express and interpret the text correctly and make it more meaningful? Is the form of the text respected? In making these judgments, the principal classes of texts must be kept in mind: proclamations, acclamations, psalms and hymns, and prayers. Each has a specific function which must be served by the music chosen for the text” (#32).

▷ The pastoral judgment: “Does music in the celebration enable these people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture?” (#39).

“All means must be used to promote singing by the people. New forms should be used, which are adapted to the different mentalities and to modern taste” (#40).

From the Editor

New diocesan website to feature more, be updated regularly

By Jimmy Patterson

To be able to announce a new web site for the diocese is something that gives me great joy; we’ve been working on this for quite some time and have enlisted the help of a professional developer along the way who knows what looks good and how to create an easily navigable site.

Anyone can have a web site. Not everyone can make it an essential part of the daily viewing habits of thousands of people.

We hope to be able to make your stopping by our site a habit. Something you need to go to, to find out what’s going on.

The new site (www.sanangelodiocese.org) will combine all the brochure information that has previously been included at the old site (www.san-angelo-diocese.org), including basic information from all the diocese’s parishes, detail on priests, Mass times, etc. and will combine it with new features, including:

▷ A Diocesan Calendar. We’ll start the calendar every month. If you have items to be added, send them to me.

▷ Breaking news. Fortunately, in a diocese there’s not a whole lot of that. But if something important happens (a schedule or location change, the death of a priest, deacon or religious), we’ll have that up on our site as soon as we receive the info.

▷ Reprinted stories from the Angelus. Throughout the month, we will post stories that appear in each month’s Angelus. Plus, as we’ve had since 2000, we’ll post the pdf versions of the Angelus on the web site.

▷ Photos. We probably receive more submissions than anything. We’ll post what we receive and the good thing about that is it will allow us to post additional photos if we can only get one or two in from your event in the Angelus.

We tried a diocesan blog for a number of months but a lack of users led us to discontinue it after eight months of publishing. A web site such as one that serves a diocese can make it an essential part of your daily routine.

Del Escritorio del Obispo

Alzando la voz profetica en favor de la vida

By the Bishop

Por el Obispo
Miguel Pfeifer
OMI

En nuestra sociedad contemporánea hay muchas voces que proclaman una cultura de muerte. Como seguidores de Cristo, y como católicos comprometidos, somos llamados a alzar la voz profética en favor de la vida en palabra y acción. Comparto con ustedes algunos comentarios del Obispo Milton Gregory.

“En los últimos 30 años, nosotros los Católicos, y muchos de otras creencias y no creyentes, nos hemos sentido el deber de alzar la voz profética para recordar a la sociedad que “los más pequeños” de nuestros hermanos y hermanas incluyen a aquellos a quienes se les ha negado el primero y más fundamental derecho a la concepción. Desde su comienzo hasta su muerte natural, un ser recibe derechos únicos del mismo Dios. Al igual que con los pobres, inmigrantes, enfermos o prisioneros, no tener voz no significa que los no nacidos no tienen un lugar entre nosotros o el derecho a que ser defendidos. Tenemos la obligación de defender ese derecho.”

(Comentarios del Obispo Milton Gregory, Presidente de USCCB al Caucus del Congreso, 10 de Sept. de 2004)
‘Right to Life’ the preeminent issue in ‘08 presidential election

All human life has an innate sacredness and dignity as it is made in the very image and likeness of God.

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer

The right to life is linked to all other human rights. All life issues are connected, for erosion of respect for the life of an individual, born or unborn, or groups in society necessarily diminishes respect for all life. There are many important life issues that need to be seriously considered before casting a vote for a presidential candidate. There are life issues that deal with health, employment, the economy, education, marriage and family, housing, the war, poverty, security, the environment and others, but the preeminent life issue is the right to life. The intentional killing of a member of the human family – which is what happens in every abortion – is the most pressing social justice question of our time. The constant teaching of the Catholic Church is that its members cannot take part in or support acts that are intrinsically evil. A clear case is abortion, which ends the lives of more than a million children a year. Human cloning and destructive research on human embryos and euthanasia are also intrinsically evil.

In their document, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, the United States Catholic bishops stress that “The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong, and it is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed.” (No. 28) This moral guidance of the bishops is based on the well known teaching of Pope John Paul II in many of his writings, but especially in his encyclical, Christifidelis Laici. (No. 38) “Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights – for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture – is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights is not defended with maximum determination.”

As regards the issue of the right to life and the evil of abortion, the bishops further state in Faithful Citizenship “Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote. This is why it is important to vote according to a well-formed conscience that perceives the proper relationship among moral goods. A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil such as abortion or racism, if the voter’s intent is to support that position. In such a case, a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil.” (No. 34)

The Bishops go on to say about this critical issue, “It is important for all citizens to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest.” (No. 41) “As Catholics, we are not single-issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. Yet a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.” (No. 42)

As leaders, the bishops want to be clear about Catholic teaching and its implications on public decisions. The bishops ask Catholics to study Church teachings about what Scripture and tradition say about moral issues, and to apply those to what is happening in our lives. Catholics should be shaped more by moral convictions than by a political party, and where necessary, we should try to shape the party in light of moral values, rather than allowing the party to shape us so that we ignore our basic convictions. In this important presidential election year, the question is often asked should Catholics permit candidates who support abortion or immoral stem cell research that destroys a human life to go to communion? The bishops clearly point out that Catholics must live their faith in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

‘Our bodies designed by God

Reflections on chastity by the confirmation class from Holy Trinity Parish in Big Spring

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: In preparation for the celebration of confirmation with the young people from the newly formed Holy Trinity Parish in Big Spring, I received from the candidates a letter expressing their thoughts on the beautiful virtue of chastity. – Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

“Dear Bishop Pfeifer:

We, the confirmation candidates of Holy Trinity Parish of Big Spring, Texas thank you for your letter concerning chastity and would like to share some of our reflections with you.

We are very much aware of the problems that our fellow students who have not followed the life of chastity have faced such as teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and a loss of morals. We agree with you that our society is ‘drenched’ with premarital sex. We see more and more students choose the path of a homosexual lifestyle. We talked about these things as being ‘sinful because they do not fulfill the meaning of sex as determined by God’. We understand that God gives our bodies to us and that as mentioned in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “it (chastity) is a gift from God”. Chastity is not easy as our friends and family are constantly talking about sex and many times we feel pressure from friends and family to not practice chastity.

You tell us that “God has made us sexual beings”, and others tell us that we need to express that nature as we see fit. However, our Catholic faith tells us “our bodies are designed by

(See LIFE/18)

(Please See HOLY TRINITY/20)
Spirit-filled sexuality is part of real Christian mystery of life, love

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo

Every human being, female or male, has two very basic inner drives or needs that are intimately connected with the purpose and meaning of life here and hereafter. The first basic need of every human being is to be loved. The second desire is to love. In accord with this very basic human make-up that comes from being made in the divine image of God, are the two Commandments of Jesus who sums up all that is asked of us in life: “Love your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” (Lk.10:27) To help us fulfill to the fullest the love required of these two Great Commandments is to remember as Scripture tells us—that God first loved us, and has given each one of us a divine energy, which for us as Christians is the love, power and presence of the Holy Spirit which fills our entire being and is manifested in a particular way through our sexuality.

Jesus came into our world to manifest to us and to help us experience and feel the merciful love of our Heavenly Father by letting us share in His Paschal Mysteries—His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension each time we participate in the Eucharist. The life and teaching of Jesus Christ convince us of a most basic fact of the Christian life: our loving God has an immense personal love for each one of us. It is this divine love given to us in the Holy Spirit that empowers us to be people of love, enabling us to fulfill the great Commandment of Jesus: “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12) To enable us to be loving, affectionate and caring people expressed through the gift of our sexuality, God the Father has given us in Jesus the promised Holy Spirit: “The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” (Rom.5:5)

For the eternal Word to become incarnate, to take on human flesh, God the Father invited Mary to conceive Him in whom the whole fullness of deity would dwell bodily. The Catechism tells us “The Divine response to her question, ‘How can this be since I know not man?’ was given by the power of the Holy Spirit. ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you.’” [484]

The Holy Spirit in the Procreative Process

In a similar way, for each one of us to be conceived, to come into existence, there is the action of the Holy Spirit in the human procreative process which creates someone entirely new, meant to live forever in God’s precious design. In God’s loving plan, human sexuality is meant to be creative, to bring about new life, in a physical and spiritual manner. The Holy Spirit dwells in each one and uses the sexual power of each one to bring about something new in our world, to make Christ incarnate in our world according to the vocation freely chosen. “If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through the Spirit that dwells in you.” (Rom.8:11)

Safe Environment

Due care in protecting our children from the dangers of pornography

By Dr. Karen T. Shumway
Assistant Professor of Management
Angelo State University

The right of children to be protected from harm raises significant issues and problems for parents. Many available materials, substances and other influences in our society are legal, but can injure and even kill children if used improperly. One such problem in many households is the availability and use of pornography. Child pornography is the most harmful and is illegal with severe penalties under federal law in the United States. Although adult pornography is legal in the United States, a child’s exposure to it has been tied in numerous publications to long term damage including: 1) increased possibility of becoming a victim of sexual violence; 2) increased possibility of inciting the child to act out sexually against other children; and 3) interference with healthy development and identity including the shaping of attitudes and values toward sexuality. Clinical psychologist Dr. Gary Brooks describes the symptoms of unhealthy sexual attitudes linked to the viewing of even soft-core pornography as 1) obsession with only the visual aspects of sexuality and trivializing healthy psychological relationships, 2) feeling cheated when a spouse is not the “perfect man or woman,” and 3) fear of true intimacy.

Exercising due care as parents takes on several forms. First, we must guard against the misuse of the Internet. The Internet has significantly increased the availability and abuse of both adult and child pornography. Often this pornography is used by predators to lure children into dangerous and abusive situations. Furthermore, testifies that children who view pornography and their recovery from pornography addiction provide a frightening picture. For example, several young men report being on the Internet at ages 10 and 11 when pornography started popping up. Curiosity caused them to continue to explore and download pornographic pictures and then start putting into practice what they saw by becoming sexually active. Some young men even report burning CDs and selling them at school to other children. Internet safety in the household is one of the most critical and effective tools parents can implement to protect their children from the harmful effects of pornography. An important free resource to educate and protect your children against the harms present on the Internet is available courtesy of ISAFE Inc. at www.isafe.org.

Second, we must guard against pornographic cable television and videos. According to Rebecca Hagelin (Overdosing on Porn, www.worldandi.com) as of March, 2004 there were 800 million rentals each year of adult videos and DVDS with 11,000 new adult movies being produced each year. This contributed to Americans spending $10 billion per year on pornography. The New York Times reported in May 2000 that cable companies brought in revenue of $177 million annually from sexually explicit pay-per-view programming (“No Big Surge in Sex Programs is Expected From Cable Ruling,” Jim Rutaner, May 24, 2000). Numerous studies document that many American adults believe that viewing pornography should be protected right, even when these same adults report believing that pornography is wrong. Regardless of such attitudes, the dangers pornography presents to our children through cable television and

ECISD attorney responds to terminating of employees for improper behavior

By Mike Atkins
Attorney-Ector County ISD

I wanted to follow up with my comments concerning the difficulties that school districts often times face when they are needing to terminate employees. All public school districts in the State of Texas are governed by the Texas Education Code, which is, of course, the State law passed by our legislature. Provisions of the Texas Education Code provide that no teacher or administrator may be fired during a school year, no matter how outrageous the alleged conduct, without going through a formalized process that includes the teacher having a right to a Amini trial in front of an independent hearing officer that would be assigned out of Austin. My own experience is that if the conduct is serious enough, most employees will resign rather than face such a process. However, school districts are often put in the position of having to negotiate a settlement by paying an employee who has engaged in wrongdoing several weeks or months of pay. The dilemma is that is often cheaper monetarily to do that than to go through the time and expense of a formal hearing, which could amount to many weeks or months and many thousands of dollars in legal, court reporter, and hearing officer fees. It is a process that is often very frustrating to school districts, and I do not think it is understood by the general public. Indeed, it is this process that often leads to media reports that an alleged perpetrator has been placed on leave “with pay.” Under current Texas law, a school district has absolutely no option except to continue to pay the employee, unless and until they go through the process I mentioned.
Making Sense of Bioethics

‘Safe’ injection sites, tackling IV drug abuse

By Rev. Thad Pacholczyk

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do-called "safe injection sites" are special buildings where drug addicts can go to shoot up illegal drugs without fear of arrest or prosecution. Such a facility has been operational in Canada on the east side of Vancouver for several years, and drug abusers from around the area come to receive clean needles, ampules of sterile water, swabs for cleaning injection sites, band-aids, ascorbic acid powder (to cut the drugs with), and small metal spoon tools. The Canadian government has been funding this site and is in the process of renewing the funding. Other municipalities like San Francisco and New York have also been considering instituting such sites. Many groups are opposed to these drug zones, seeing them as cooperating in, if not directly promoting, a practice that is clearly unethical and highly damaging to society. They argue that taxpayers should not be forced to pay for places where people can use illegal drugs and destroy their lives.

The idea behind the safe injection sites is to reduce the collateral damage from drug abuse. Proponents argue that since addicts have begun to use the safe injection sites, the crime rate on the east side of Vancouver has fallen, and that the rates of HIV and hepatitis have declined because clean needles have been made available. Because nurses can keep an eye on addicts after they shoot up in the facility, they say that deaths by overdose will decline, since ambulances can be called more easily than if drug users were shooting up alone in a darkened alley. They further claim that the needle exchange program allows users to remain healthy until they get help for their substance abuse problem. There is even a priest who has penned a kind of defense of these sites, writing, "Some people would say you're giving them the OK. I disagree with that because I think the implication is that we're dealing with people who can make choices. When they're addicted that's a whole different kettle of fish." In other words, drug users, like fish, have no free will.

While drug addiction certainly puts a major dent in human freedom, it would be false to conclude that an addict can't make choices. The only reason there is any hope left for an addict is because he still has a small and diminishing space of freedom that he can act on, allowing him to decide whether or not to begin a new journey. He can choose to take the first step along the road leading away from addiction towards rehabilitation. Our public strategy for dealing with drug addiction must always show great sensitivity towards that tiny space of freedom that remains in each individual struggling with addiction. After all, it is precisely this freedom that sets us apart from our animal counterparts. Public policy should not contribute to shrinking that space of freedom even further through approaches that enable destructive behaviors and greater addiction.

The widely touted claim that safe injection sites reduce collateral damage from drug abuse is itself dubious. Researcher Garth Davies, at the conclusion of an extensive analysis of the question, notes that safe injection sites are "too often credited with generating positive effects that are not borne out by solid empirical evidence." The claim that crime rates dropped in Vancouver following the opening of the safe injection site may have resulted from the injection of 60 police officers into the area when the facility opened (including 4 officers stationed immediately outside the facility), rather than from the injections occurring at the facility itself. He concludes, "In truth, none of the impacts attributed to the safe injection facilities can be unambiguously verified."

Public funding should be directed towards rehabilitation programs rather than safe injection sites. Some argue that safe injection sites may themselves, on occasion, afford the opportunity to lead addicts towards rehabilitation. Yet there is a contradiction between enabling the addiction on the one hand and promoting rehabilitation on the other.

This contradiction may be seen very clearly in what our society has learned about treating alcoholism. Most of us have seen — even among our families and neighbors — how destructive the addiction to alcohol can be. Not only can it ravage a person's life, but it can also destroy their family, lead to loss of employment, and, even, in some cases, endanger the lives of others through drunken fits or drunken driving. We've also seen how many alcoholics have been helped by twelve step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous, where the accumulated wisdom of millions of former addicts recognizes clearly that the only way they can conquer their addiction is through supporting each other never to have another drink. Imagine that, instead of supporting programs like AA and alcoholic rehabilitation centers, a government were to establish bars where alcoholics could come to get drunk, by providing clean glasses, furniture and bathrooms, healthy hors d'oeuvres and munchies, and police protection so that they couldn't be robbed in dark alleys. Would any of us really think that this would be promoting their rehabilitation? Those who struggle with substance abuse are deserving of public policy initiatives that rehabilitate rather than enable the addicted individual.

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

By Kali Gerber

CUERNAVACA, MEXICO -- I was fortunate enough this May to accompany the Newman Center group on a cross-cultural immersion experience to Cuernavaca, Morelos, located in the country of Mexico. Our host for the trip was Kathleen Long, O.P.D., Executive Director of the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD). The challenge of the immersion trip was to bring our own particular angle on the world to multiple activities and reflections to work together to transform our hearts and minds to explore God in our midst in the deprived town of Cuernavaca.

Reflection is an important part of my personal faith life. Encounters we have in life are brief unless thought about and debriefed in a way to make them personally relevant to our own growth as Catholic Christians. The part of the Cuernavaca immersion experience I have reflected on numerous times is the heroic women who let us visit their community center, homes, and families in “La Estacion.”

La Estacion used to be a train station 30 or more years ago, but now it is the area that thousands of families inhabit illegally. At this time Cuernavaca is trying to move the families they can out of the city owned property. La Estacion is more than just a group of pesky squatters, it also includes the most astounding network of women I have ever seen and been so honored to meet.

The women of La Estacion in my opinion tend to be the Judith’s of God’s story. In the book of Judith the fictional character shows a strong woman of faith and courage that puts all her trust in God’s saving power and she braverly delivers her nation from certain defeat, even though she is merely a childless widow in a male dominated world. The women of La Estacion came from many walks of life, but they certainly fight every day to save their community from the defeats of hunger, shelter, health, and hopelessness.

I was able to work and converse with some of the women who put together a breakfast program at the Community Center. The goal was to make sure that every child received one meal a day. One of the requirements for the children and their families were that the children who came to eat breakfast must go and attend school that day.

Other projects the women were involved in included bringing neighbors together to help each other complete projects in the community, especially for the elderly and most helpless. The Newman Center group took part in this project by building a new room onto a one room house, which had dirt floors and a bathroom outside. This way the new room could accompany a bathroom indoors and allow the elderly couple more than their one room house did at that time (approximately 150 square feet). The work we put in did not do more than start the lengthy project on a list of needs that surpassed the time we had, but the elderly disabled couple were thankful for our interest to help.

Some of the active women in La Estacion invited us to visit their homes. One young woman told her story of a husband who left to find work in America to make enough money to move his family out of La Estacion in hopes of a better life for his sons. An elderly woman talked to us about the importance of education and a better life for her grandchildren. All of these women, although they have struggles and dreams, work together to volunteer to help their community. For me it is an authentication to the power of women to initiate and bring about change for the betterment of their communities and families.

In closing I would encourage the women of the Catholic Christian faith to remember when hearing news or global topics about our neighbors to the South to remember that they are grandmothers, mothers, wives, and sisters in faith that are honorable. The women of La Estacion have given me a glimpse of the trials all Mexican women face and the strength they have to initiate change for the good and well being of their family and community. I personally will never forget the lessons I learned in Cuernavaca to be the strong, faithful, Judith like woman.

Holy Family Parish Center gym provides educational experiences

ABILENE -- The final score was 38-26 in favor of the San Angelo West Texas Rehabilitation Center "Tumbleweeds" wheelchair basketball team, but to the Doctor of Physical Therapy students at Hardin-Simmons the final score didn’t matter, the learning experience was well worth it!

On June 20, Holy Family Church in Abilene opened its Parish Center gymnasium to Hardin-Simmons University so that its physical therapy students could experience an athletic competition in a wheelchair.

Twenty able-bodied PT students rotated in and out of the game every five minutes while the five wheelchair athletes from the Tumbleweeds played the entire 1 1/2 hours to provide a learning experience that will not be easily forgotten.

"Even though my arms have never hurt so much in just 5 minutes and we got 'whooped', I laughed a ton and had a ball!" said Stephanie Byrd, first year DPT student from Hardin-Simmons University.

Others agreed that this was a wonderful way to experience what it is like to rely on a wheelchair as your mobility device.

"The experience taught me to not judge someone by the way they appear" said Lisa Duncan. Ashley Smith added, "They were just as competitive and athletic as any able-bodied person."

Larry Evans, age 61, a wheelchair athlete with just one arm and one leg, says he participates because he likes to show students (and others) what wheelchair athletes can do. Evans, who also is the President of the Concho Valley Disabled Sports Association, enjoys teaching children in wheelchairs to participate in wheelchair athletics. He says "wheelchair athletics help individuals learn to set goals, have fun and build self-esteem." Hugh Beatty added, "just because we are in a wheelchair doesn't mean that we can't give back to the community." This is the second consecutive year that the physical therapy students have played the Tumbleweeds as part of their learning experiences in their Neurorehabilitation course.

"Physical Therapy is a hands-on profession, so experiences like these assist the students in better identifying with their patients," stated Dr. Janelle O'Connell, Department Head and Holy Family Parishioner. "We are thankful to West Texas Rehabilitation Center and Holy Family for assisting us in providing this outstanding learning experience for our students."

Submitted by Janelle K. O'Connell, PT, Ph.D., DPT, ATC, LAT Department Head and Professor Director of Admissions
**Guns and the United States Supreme Court: Dead wrong**

**By Douglas W. Kmiec**
Catholic News Service

The Second Amendment to the Constitution reads, "A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court was asked for the first time since 1939 to apply those words to a law passed by the District of Columbia banning the possession of a handgun by anyone other than a trained law enforcement officer. Before examining what the court decided, allow me to share words spoken through tears over the telephone some 16 years ago:

"Doug," said my wife, Carol, "someone has shot our brother Michael."

The piercing hurt of that moment is still palpable today. The call came as I was traveling from our home in Chicago with my daughter Kloe in Naples, Fla. I was invited by the Notre Dame Club of Naples to address the topic of the right to life. Kloe was scarcely 4 years old, but it was her turn to travel with Dad on one of many trips for the university.

Before the phone rang, we were splashing in the hotel pool. Then came the darkness of that unwanted call. We got on our knees and prayed, "Please, God, find a way to save dear Michael!"

The oldest sibling of an Irish-American family of nine, Michael's 6 foot 5 inch stature was perfectly sized for his kind heart. Years earlier, Mike had taken pity on this overly academic skinny kid who presumed to date (and then marry) his stunningly beautiful sister. The hazing of brothers Pat, Joe, Dan and Chris were simply no match, and we grew close.

I found a Chicago station on the TV back in our hotel room. Suddenly on the screen were those all too familiar yellow "do not cross" police tapes that coarsely rope together the more than 30 shootings and 6 deaths on a typical Chicago weekend. Chicago police reported that a handgun was found discarded at the scene where Michael, 47, was discovered fatally wounded in the back of the head and next to the opened -- and emptied -- safe of his bookstore. The previous day's receipts: about $2,000.

I am a constitutional lawyer, so the words "a well-regulated militia" have an obvious meaning. It pertains to a person's right to possess a gun for the purpose of joining with the other members of one's state in a militia to protect

(Please See KMIEC/16)

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**Sex and the pulpit: something you don’t hear every day**

**By Therese J. Borchard**
Catholic News Service

I don't think I've ever heard from a Catholic priest a sermon on how to have better sex. But the idea is apparently gaining popularity in Protestant denominations. Writer David Van Biema highlights a few church movements in a Time magazine article, which was timely for me, having just seen the movie "Sex and the City" with a few girlfriends.

Sex talk seems to be one strategy of getting the attention of young adults and Gen Xers in the pew. This is because superior sex is something almost all young and middle-aged couples want but are slow to bring up with each other and especially with a pastor or priest.

When New Direction Christian Church in Memphis, Tenn., launched its "40 Nights of Great Sex" program, Rev. Stacy Spencer and his wife distributed daily planners. For example, it would stipulate that on Monday the husband would give his wife a full body massage, and on Thursday the couple would read 1 Corinthians 7 and ask each other

(Please See BORCHARD/16)

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**Starting on the needed study on the inside of the church**

**By Dan Morris**
Catholic News Service

With many parishes stepping up evangelization efforts, it only makes sense that a working document explaining the functional parts of the inside of a parish church be developed and provided to them. Here is a start:

**Pews:** These are sometimes known in the vernacular as "places where people sit during Mass and other times they are in church such as funerals and Christmas plays." In a more technical and precise understanding, pews are organizational devices over-seen by people known as "ushers."

**Aisle-hugger:** A person who sits at the end of a pew. And stays there. No matter what.

**Kneelers:** Designed by torture experts during the Middle Ages, kneelers are usually attached to pews and are typically folded down during Mass, kneeling-prayer times (consult a missal) or when a 3-year-old wants to smash his or her mother's toe in her open-toed shoes. In a down position, kneelers are used by 3-and-a-half-year-olds to make themselves as tall as many 5-year-olds.

**Missal:** A liturgical book that allows 4-year-olds to occupy themselves by turning the pages and pretending to be able to read.

**Pew pencil:** A stubby pencil with no eraser found in specially drilled "pew pencil hole thingies" and assigned to 6-year-olds to use in the o's, p's and b's of parish bulletins during homilies.

**Holy water font:** Stationary repositories for holy water resembling bird baths usually located at the entrance of the church that no one has ever seen filled even though they almost always have water in them for dipping a finger or two then making the sign of the cross.

**Songbook:** A book of songs designed to confuse parishioners with a complex matrix of differing number systems for the pages, the songs and the verses.

(Please See MORRIS/16)
Good-bye, Dolly

Catholic agencies focus on food, water in hurricane’s wake

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Food and water were among the primary needs Catholic aid agencies were trying to meet as thousands of households remained without power and some remained under water July 25 in the wake of Hurricane Dolly.

Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Social Services in the Brownsville Diocese, said her agency had helped more than 1,000 families who had been forced from their homes during the first 48 hours after the storm hit.

“We are mobilizing the staff and volunteers to help people who don’t have electricity and who have been without power for quite awhile,” Sister Norma, a Missionary Sister of Jesus, told Catholic News Service as she took a short break from coordinating aid efforts. “We’re getting food and water to the people.

“Parishes are directing their people to us so we can start to do some case management and do long-term recovery.”

Dolly lashed the Brownsville Diocese, which encompasses Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr counties in southernmost Texas, with 100-mph winds and up to 20 inches of rain. The center of the storm made landfall about 35 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Communities in the northern part of the diocese in Willacy and northern Hidalgo counties bore the brunt of the storm as the eye passed over the region.

Although flooding was widespread throughout the region, waters receded in most areas quickly.

Flooding continued July 25 to affect some sections of the diocese, especially in Hidalgo County, Sister Norma said. U.S. Route 83, a major expressway that parallels the Rio Grande, remained closed in sections of the county making the distribution of supplies more difficult.

Catholic Social Services had established three distribution centers — in San Juan in Hidalgo County, Brownsville in Cameron County and in Willacy County. Supplies were donated by Wal-Mart and Save-A-Lot, a grocery store chain.

Sister Norma was planning to lead a contingent of Catholic officials on an aerial tour of the entire diocese July 26. The group was to include Bishop Raymundo J. Pena of Brownsville and Randi Fertitta, director of disaster response for Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas, which is based in Beaumont.

Catholic Charities USA dispatched a disaster response team July 25 to provide additional support to Catholic Social Services. The team was to include Kim Burgo, senior director of disaster response for the agency, and experts from Catholic Charities of Baton Rouge, La.

A check of several parishes revealed only minor damage to churches and rectories such as torn shingles or downed trees and fallen branches.

Ursuline Sister Miriam Fidelis of Cleveland, who leads a ministry serving poor migrant workers in Brownsville and Matamoros in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas said most people seemed to have dealt with the storm fairly well.

“They just take it, go with the flow and thank God they survived. They know it could be worse. People are doing OK.”

Graduate of SF Catholic school competes in Beijing

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Shannon Rowbury, who was a standout athlete when she attended San Francisco’s Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory High School, is bound for Beijing.

She qualified for the 2008 Olympic track and field team by winning the 1,500-meter event at the Olympic trials in Eugene, Ore., July 6 with a time of 4 minutes, 5.48 seconds.

In May Rowbury, 23, went from being off the radar in the sport to earning a championship title. Her time of 4:01.61 in the 1,500-meter at an outdoor event in Carson, Calif., made her the fifth fastest American woman in that event in history. She was even faster July 18 in Paris, with a time of 4:00.33 in the 1,500-meter.

A statement released by her alma mater said that “while many may be surprised by this 23-year old’s rapid ascent,” the Catholic high school community is “proud and excited to witness such success from an (alumna) of our school.”

“In August, Beijing and the world will get to see this athlete who we were lucky enough to know up close and personal for her four years — 1998-2002 — of high school,” it said.

Rowbury is a recent inductee into the San Francisco Prep Hall of Fame, sponsored by the San Francisco Association of Athletic Coaches and Physical Education Teachers.

“The last two months have been just amazing,” said Andy Chan, Rowbury’s high school coach. “I feel blessed that Shannon and I crossed paths back in 1998 and developed a great athlete-coach relationship.

“What Shannon accomplished in high school was enough to make any coach proud. But the fact she has continued to achieve even greater things is just off the charts,” he added.

Chan and his wife, Malinda, planned to go to Beijing for the Aug. 8-24 Summer Games to watch Rowbury compete. He attended the Olympic trials in Eugene to cheer her on.

Chan’s feelings were expressed on a sign he held up after Rowbury’s qualifying race. It was a play on a popular ad for MasterCard: “Hotel in Beijing — 10,875 Yen. Tickets to the Olympic track meet — $520. Watching the kid you coached in high school run in the Olympics — Priceless.”

When Rowbury entered high school, she

At left, Shannon Rowbury and coach Andy Chan.

(Please See ROWBURY/20)
BISHOP: Pope Benedict appearance, Stations of the Cross two highlights of celebration

Confirmation with 24 young people from countries around the world.

It gave me great joy to be present for this unique and special event. The celebration was attended by many young people from around the world and was held in Sydney, Australia.

Another major highlight of World Youth Day was the Stations of the Cross, which were performed at various sites throughout the city. The Holy Spirit was felt by all and created a new sense of unity among the people who came together from all over the world.

The vesper prayer with Pope Benedict on Saturday evening, July 19, with Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, was the main celebrant. It was an outstanding event in the entire history of Australia.

The Holy Father in his message also stressed the dangers of our contemporaries have built broken and empty cisterns and encouraged us to build a new world based on God's love– "How many of our contemporaries have built broken and empty cisterns [a biblical reference in Jeremiah] in a desperate search for meaning that only God can give?"

During his Sunday homily, the Pope said the Church needed the gifts of a new generation who are willing to bring Christ's message of love, peace and justice, especially to the youth of the world.

The verse above was evident with people clapping and cheering.

The theme on the power of the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will receive the power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses” [Acts 1:8].

Aborigines danced and sang before theliturgy. The prime minister welcomed everyone to the city, and as the orchestra and singers led the mass it was an outstanding tribute to the Young Church.

Dialogues between the Prime Minister and the Pope began with the Mass and continue during the week. The arrival of Pope Benedict XVI at the Barangaroo and his address to the young people, Stations of the Cross, the Franciscan Feast of Unity, the 18 kilometer pilgrimage from Sydney Harbour to Randwick Race Track for the vigil on Saturday followed by the final Mass with the Pope were the highlights of the week.

There were so many moments when I experienced God's presence in the Holy Spirit," said Rachel Mondros, a pilgrim from Odessa. "Some of the biggest highlights was the prayer service led by the Matt Maher's Band. I can't explain what happened, but I found myself singing and enjoying the crowd and I felt at one with all the other pilgrims to God. I can be across the world and still feel that I was with God."

The World Youth experience was amazing," said Rodrigue, of San Angelo. "It was something that I wanted to experience as a pilgrim and youth."
Pro Life Mass

Bishop Pfeifer to hold annual Pro-Life Mass in Midland, Aug. 29

Prayer Garden in Downtown Midland scene of annual Mass to pray for the unborn.

The annual Pro-Life Mass in Midland is scheduled for 9:30 a.m., Friday, Aug. 29, at the Prayer Garden, located at Fort Worth and Illinois streets in downtown Midland.

The Mass at the garden is across from the Midland Planned Parenthood office and is traditionally held on the day of the week that Planned Parenthood conducts abortions.

"Over one million children are aborted every year in the United States alone," Pfeifer noted.

"Some are killed by methods so brutal that society would not tolerate such treatment against defenseless animals. We invite all, Catholics and non-Catholics, to come to this special Respect Life Mass and pray for the unborn and to help bring an end to the tragedy of abortion.

"We ask all to keep in mind, we are all created, loved and redeemed by God, and it should be in each of us to have a respect for all human life."

Both a younger and older attendee at the Mass have been asked to share a reflection with the crowd on how Catholics can take a stronger stand in favor of the unborn.

"More than ever," Pfeifer said recently, "we all need to take a stand in favor of human life.

About 60 people from the Diocese of Amarillo attended last year’s Respect Life Mass at the Prayer Garden. Bishop John Yanta was scheduled to make the trip with the pilgrims but was forced to remain in the Panhandle due to poor health.

In all, about 400 people attended the event, which is closed by a procession to the front door of the Planned Parenthood clinic, where Bishop Pfeifer says a brief prayer.

Papal predictions seen in current state of women's, children's rights

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

CHERRY HILL, N.J. -- The prophetic warnings in Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical "Humanae Vitae" ("Of Human Life") have been fulfilled in the precarious human rights situation around the world, especially for women and children, a speaker at a national conference said July 25.

Marie Smith, director of the Parliamentary Network for Critical Issues in Washington, spoke at a conference in Cherry Hill on "Life, Justice & Family: Partners in the New Evangelization." The conference drew more than 230 leaders of respect life, family life and social justice offices in dioceses around the country.

Smith said women in many parts of the world have been "raised to believe their lives are not as valuable as men's" and said some of those attitudes are because of the "contraceptive mentality" about which Pope Paul warned in "Humanae Vitae."

The encyclical "promotes a much deeper respect for women than they could have ever promoted for themselves," she said.

Specifically, she cited four warnings in the encyclical:

- Fidelity would increase and sexual morality decline.
- Men would lose respect for women.
- Population control would be used as a weapon by governments.
- Men would claim dominion over women's bodies.

Smith said evidence of each of those effects can be seen throughout the life cycle in such practices as sex-selection abortions and infanticide, sexual assaults and domestic violence, women giving birth alone, sex trafficking, courtship violence and dowry murders, the "branding of women" with contraceptive devices such as implants and the patch, elder abuse and euthanasia.

"It's not that men don't experience human rights violations, but women are much more likely to do so," said Smith, whose organization works with governments, non-governmental organizations and pro-life groups to "avert pro-abortion advances" worldwide.

Smith's husband, Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., has been a key figure in pro-life and human rights debates in Congress.

Recent trends in abortion have been toward abortions performed by nurses and midwives rather than doctors and away from surgical abortions in favor of chemical abortions, often self-administered and hidden from view, putting women's health and lives at risk, Marie Smith said.
Communities must ensure resources for healthy living for all citizens

Catholic Health Association

The burden of chronic disease in the United States and in Texas has become overwhelming in the past decade, as seven out of every 10 deaths today occur due to those usually preventable conditions. The most prevalent and costly chronic illnesses include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke.

Not only are diseases deadly, they are debilitating as recovery is often very difficult. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2005, almost half of all Americans lived with one or more chronic conditions and the costs to treat those individuals consumed more than 75 percent of the $2 trillion spent toward medical care in the U.S. In Texas, the economic impact of treatment and lost productivity due to chronic disease was $92.5 billion in 2003 according to the data collected by the Milken Institute.

Through decades of research, health care professionals have concluded that the major risk factors of any chronic disease are unhealthy diet, inactivity and tobacco use, all of which represent behavioral choices. The Texas Department of State Health Services found that in 2001, the two most frequent actual causes of death in the state were related to tobacco (24,899 deaths) and overweight/obesity (18,649 deaths).

Despite the grim statistics, the solution is in our hands and there is much that we can do as individuals and as committees to become a nation free of preventable disability, premature death and high health care costs. As an individual, evaluate your personal health -- with the help of your health care provider -- and make it a priority.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle for your family is critical to a happy and disease-free future. Surprisingly, losing just 10 percent of your weight can reduce your risk for chronic disease. This can be achieved through a combination of healthy eating and at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise most days of the week.

Tobacco use and second-hand inhalation are major contributors to most cancers and damage all systems of the body. Studies consistently show that tobacco use is the single most harmful health behavior humans can engage in and the health benefits of quitting come almost immediately.

Communities must partner with local elected officials and act now to assure that all residents have the resources needed for a healthy lifestyle -- affordable, healthy foods, inexpensive and adequate health care, safe places for physical activity, and transportation to access these resources.

Watch for Mind, Body and Spirit Columns on healthy lifestyle issues, chronic disease prevention and health care advocacy from the Catholic Health Association of Texas at www.chatexas.org.

VISITING PRIEST: Effects of gathering will be felt for long time to come

(From 3)

the Common Good.

Sister Simone Campbell of the Sisters of Social Service and executive director of NETWORK added, "Our goal is to reclaim the best of our country's idealism and demand that elected leaders resolve the most pressing needs of our times in the light of the Catholic social tradition."

That tradition understands the common good as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach fulfillment more fully and more easily" (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, No. 26). Those "social conditions" are debated in presidential political campaigns every four years and await solution through the legislative process at local, state and national levels.

The "platform" (a word chosen with an eye to the planks that both Republicans and Democrats will assemble later this summer to provide for their candidates a place to stand) has many elements. Thinking about the common good, delegates to this Philadelphia gathering highlighted in their breakout sessions: ecology, immigration, war and peace, the economy and health care.

Surprisingly, education was not a breakout session topic despite its importance in eliminating poverty. The life issues came up often in group discussions and special caucuses. A stem-winding plenary session address by Sister Helen Prejean of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaillle (and of "Dead Man Walking" fame) made the case very persuasively for the elimination of capital punishment.

Speeches by U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa.; Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio; AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, and a keynote address by theologian Shawn Copeland of Boston College provided information and motivation for the delegates.

Former Rep. Charles Dougherty, R-Pa.; and John Podesta, former White House chief of staff in the Clinton administration,

WYD: Pilgrims from throughout diocese say they were filled with the Holy Spirit during Australia trip

(From 11)

Holy Spirit was truly a powerful one, and I can honestly say I felt the Holy Spirit within me by the end of the week. The week was filled with so many festivals, events and concerts, that we were exhausted by the end of each day. It was wonderful to see hundreds of thousands of young people gathering for one thing, their amazing Catholic faith. This event showed me that everyday ordinary people can make a difference. We are all called to be saints. I am a changed person and now I am ready to spread the Good News!"

The next World Youth Day will be held in Madrid, Spain in 2011.

Are YOU QUALIFIED?

Are you...

- Unhappy with your current job (underpaid, overworked, blocked from promotion)?
- Currently looking for a new career (sending out resumes, asking about opportunities, unemployed)?
- Facing an uncertain future (downsizing, involved in a family business, in an appointed position)?
- Being paid less than your worth (maxed out in pay, subject to pay limits, can't go any higher)?
- A member of the Knights of Columbus (eligible to join)?
- Personable and outgoing?
- Anxious to earn an income equal to your worth?
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Family

Forgetting important hygiene items can ruin a good trip

By Jimmy Patterson

I am not a good traveler. You should know that about me up front. I love to travel, I’m just not very good at it. Every time I go somewhere, anywhere -- around the block or across the state or country -- I forget something. It’s normally my toothbrush. On those occasions when I do remember my toothbrush, nine times out of 10 it’s as I am walking out the door and so I will just shove it in my back pocket where it will stay for the duration of the journey.

But I remembered my toothbrush earlier this week when I went to Houston on business. I just forgot toothpaste.

I figured, no big deal, I’m staying in a ritzy hotel, they’ll have complimentary toothpaste for people like me. No worries.

Actually, no. No toothpaste at the ritzy hotel. Neither the complimentary kind, or the $10 emergency tube you normally find in hotel gift shops. The hotel where I stayed was undergoing renovations and apparently you can’t sell toothpaste and tidy the place up at the same time. This place actually had no gift shop. So in order to compensate for no gift shop and the fix ups everywhere, they offer all their guests free drinks every night from 5:30-8 as a way of saying “We’re sorry, pardon our mess.” That’s great and all, but if you forgot your toothbrush, well, you know how you’ll smell the next day if you’ve had free drinks. Not good.

But the lack of toothpaste was just the beginning of my worries.

It started with my little dance through airport security Tuesday morning. I packed myself this trip. Bad thing. I was forced to surrender my deodorant, my hair spray (hey, it’s windy in West Texas, something’s gotta hold it down) and my eyeglass cleaner, because those items weren’t in a plastic bag. The security guy asked me if I wanted to throw them away or go check my bag. I looked downstairs at the line to check bags.

“Just toss ‘em,” I said. No way was I standing in that line.

One question I have before we move on: how come I have to keep my deodorant locked in plastic, but it’s OK for my razor to roam freely about my suitcase? Not gettin’ that. Not gettin’ that at all.

When the plane landed in Houston, my phone goes nuts with text messages. One is from my wife.

“Lks like u 4got ur hairbrush,” she wrote, trying to feel 20 again by texting like other 20 year olds.

I texted her back.

Ready for some answers? B is the most correct for 1 and 3, although A and C could be true as well. And it’s only B for 2.

If you’re fortunate enough to have been blessed with cousins, you know what a joy they can be, sharing spilled juice and giggles at the "little kids' table" when you're 5 and reminiscing about those spills and more when you’re 85.

At age 10, a cousin is someone to play with when the big kids don't want you hanging around with them, and you don’t want to be hanging around with the grownups. At age 30, it’s someone to compare notes with on child-rearing tips.

At 50, a cousin is a friend -- a peer -- to grumble with about teens and kids today, recalling, "Back when we were that age we could never get away with ..."

At 70 plus, he or she is a family member who remembers the stories, who knows the names and who understands the medical procedure you’re facing. Like you, your cousin has had more than a few immediate family members leave this world.

And, you both wonder, just how did the two of you get to be this old? How is that possible!

The lesson in all this, Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa? It takes some effort to get the extended family together. Most often, that doesn't just happen. But what you’re giving your children and grandchildren is more than simply a summer reunion or a Christmas get-together. You're helping those youngsters, those cousins, build bonds that can last long after you're gone.

Everyone Has Famous Cousins

The odds are good that you're related to some very famous, though very distant, cousins. But you may never know who they are unless you're running for president.

This spring the New England Historic Genealogical Society noted that Barack Obama's "distant cousin roster" includes President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Gerald Ford, Lyndon Johnson, Harry Truman and James Madison.

Other long-lost cousins were Winston Churchill, Robert E. Lee and actor Brad Pitt.

And, the society pointed out, John McCain is a sixth cousin of first lady Laura Bush.

How can that be?

Go back eight generations and you have 256 great-great-great-great-great-great-grandparents. And they've had a lot of descendants. (Go back two more generations and it's 1,024 pairs!)

On the Web: Third Cousin Twice Removed

Still not sure who's who? This site has a helpful explanation and chart:


ANSWERS


Patterson

Monica and Bill Dodds

Bill & Monica Dodds

The joy of having cousins in the family

Let's begin this column with "The Cousins Quiz."

1. Your first cousin or full cousin is:
   a. Someone who may know very interesting stories about your father or mother that you never heard.
   b. The son or daughter of your aunt or uncle.
   c. A favorite playmate at the family reunions of your childhood when your own sibling was being ... well, you know how your brother or sister could be.

2. The "kinswoman" of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and that woman's son, commonly referred to as "Jesus' cousin," are:
   a. Elizabeth and Philip.
   b. Elizabeth and John.
   c. Liz and Dick.

3. Your second cousin once removed is:
   a. Someone to whom you should never loan money.
   b. The great-grandchild of your great-aunt or great-uncle.
   c. A distant relative.

Don't feel bad for me. As I say, this is all very routine. My reason for coming clean about it is because the next time I go out in public, far away from the comforts of my own home, you'll understand if you see me walking around with a toothbrush in my back pocket. Now, you won't have to ask and it'll save us both a lot of embarrassment if we don't have to actually discuss it.

Jimmy Patterson is editor of the West Texas Angelus.
God gives Solomon wisdom, understanding

Solomon was the king of Israel, but in order to expand his kingdom and its safety, he married the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. At the same time he was trying to build a palace for himself, a temple for the Lord and a wall around the city of Jerusalem.

Solomon loved and obeyed the Lord. One night after he had said his prayers, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask something of me and I will give it to you."

Before Solomon asked for anything, he told the Lord how thankful he was. "O Lord, my God, you have made me, your servant, king. ... But I am a mere youth not knowing at all how to act. ... Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?"

Solomon's gratefulness and humility pleased the Lord. God said to him, "Because you have asked for this -- not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but for understanding so that you may know what is right -- I do as you requested. I give you a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you up to now, and after you there will come no one equal to you."

That promise was enough to make Solomon rejoice, but the Lord wanted to give him even more. "In addition," God continued, "I give you what you have not asked for, such riches and glory that among kings there is not your like. And if you follow me by keeping my statutes and commandments, as your father David did, I will give you a long life."

Then the dream was over and Solomon slept through the night. When he woke he remembered what happened and he went out to show his thankfulness to the Lord. He went and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord and made sacrifices and peace offerings. Then, in order to involve his servants, he ordered a banquet and he invited them to dine with him rather than just to serve him.
Borchard: Some churches open about teaching on married sex

(From 8)

How they could please each other more.
And Paul Wirth, pastor of the Relevant Church in Tampa, Fla., delivered "The 30-Day Sex Challenge," a program featuring a Bible verse a day as well as some form of sexual engagement. Scheduling sex, according to Wirth, is a way of making couples keep that very important piece of their marriage alive and burning.

"My own marriage was in trouble 10 years ago," Wirth explained to Van Biema for the Time article. So the pastor consulted the book "His Needs, Her Needs" by clinical psychologist Willard Harley and decided to design a church program based on the book.

Both New Direction and Relevant Church orient their programs toward Gen Xers because young adults comprise the majority of their congregations. So, while the church programs emphasize the spiritual and emotional aspects of a working marriage, they also include practical aspects of how to have better sex more often, like "nag less, and compliment more."

I applaud the pastors for creating these church programs that offer their congregants some guidance on how to keep the sex good in a marriage. And I think Catholics should copy their successful agendas.

Maybe we might even get some participants to react in the way one congregant did to the New Direction program, saying, "After more than 20 years of marriage, this has been 'a shot in the arm.' "

Or maybe fewer of us would rush off to see "Sex and the City" to hear a foursome of fictional characters talking about real stuff.

Morris: Envelopes, confessional, cry rooms and their definitions

(From 8)

Pew envelopes: Envelopelike paper objects found near missals that can be used to mark songs in the songbook before Mass starts. This helps reduce the time couples argue during Mass about which song is being sung.

Confessional: Telephone-boothlike structures found in the back or side aisles of many old churches used as props in many movies and commercials.

Crying rooms: Steamy-windowed cells somewhere in the church building in which children share noise, the flu and binkies with one another and their parents while Mass is going on nearby.

Stations of the Cross: Fourteen representations of events in Christ's passion often arranged in intervals around a church interior that make for great contemplation during money talks at Mass as long as you remember Simon of Cyrene is not Jesus in No. 5 and that it is Veronica, not Mary, in No. 6. I think.

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

Kmiec: No moral instruction for court's newly expanded gun law

(From 8)

Against external threat and the internal risk of tyranny from one's own government.
Justice Antonin Scalia is an intelligent and good man himself, the justly proud father of a large and thriving family and a Catholic jurist who has made a career of reminding his fellow judges how important it is not to read their own personal experiences or desires into the law. Honoring the law as written honors the democratic process, he would teach time and again. It is indeed the right approach, when it is honored.

Yet when Justice Scalia and four other members of the court decided "D.C. v. Heller," they nullified the District of Columbia's gun law and cast doubt upon the laws of every state.

From their high bench it would not be the democratic choice that mattered, but theirs. Constitutional text, history and precedent were all set aside.

Their long-winded rationalization for their ruling supplies no persuasive reason for misconstruing the Second Amendment to support access to handguns well beyond any militia service or purpose.

As Justice Stevens wrote in dissent, "The court's announcement of a new constitutional right to own and use firearms for private purposes upsets the settled understanding."

It also disregards the long-standing teaching of the American Catholic bishops that "handguns be effectively controlled and eventually eliminated from our society."

No, neither law nor moral instruction justifies a newly minted and expanded gun right that inevitably will contribute to other families losing their Michaels.

Email Kmiecprofkmiec@gmail.com.
Culture

‘Dark Knight’: Dazzling yet complex film still keeps movie-goers riveted

By Harry Forbes
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — As the title implies, “The Dark Knight” (Warner Bros./Legendary) is not your grandfather’s heroic “Batman,” but an emotionally complex vigilante, reviled as much as hailed by a populace he’s risking himself to help.

This tumultuous and technically dazzling sequel to 2005’s “Batman Begins” has the chiropteranlike crusader (Christian Bale), alter ego of billionaire playboy Bruce Wayne, challenged by the Joker (Heath Ledger), an anarchic criminal markedly devoid of the slightest moral code, to reveal his true identity or else turn himself in for his disruptive crime-busting.

Batman is deeply conflicted about the Joker’s threat, especially with popular opinion demanding the caped crusader turn himself in for his disruptive crime-busting.

Meanwhile, Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart), the upstanding district attorney who also happens to be Bruce’s romantic rival for the affections of lawyer Rachel Dawes (Maggie Gyllenhaal) — working in tandem with Lt. Jim Gordon (Gary Oldman), chief of the city’s major crime unit, strives to bring integrity to a deeply corrupt Gotham City.

Both Gordon and Dent — assisted by Rachel as assistant district attorney — must work within the boundaries of the law, but they rely on Batman as their unofficial ally to take a less orthodox approach.

Much of the interest in this film has been fueled by advance word on Ledger’s performance in light of the actor’s tragic death earlier this year. He is indeed electrifying in his last completed role: swaggering, mocking and diabolical. His vibrant turn outshines just about everyone else in the cast, including Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman as Wayne’s impecable butler Alfred and Wayne Enterprises CEO Lucius Fox, respectively; Eric Roberts as gangster Maroni; and Nestor Carbonell as Gotham’s mayor.

Director and co-writer Christopher Nolan brings consummate polish to the creation of a chaotic and brutal milieu, but one at least relieved by underlying decency. A climactic scene involving a moral decision among hundreds of people provides emphatic affirmation, as do other small acts of honor throughout the film.

Despite the skill with which it was made, the film would have benefited from some judicious cutting, while Nolan’s script (written with his brother, Jonathan Nolan) often seems needlessly complex. The competitive factions that make up Gotham’s crime syndicate — all financially tied to an Asian honcho (Chin Han) and ultimately beholden to the Joker — plus the treacheries and turnabouts among even the upstanding characters, become dizzying.

But Christopher Nolan’s bottomless pool of inventiveness and the epic sweep of the story keeps you riveted if, by the end, more than a little enervated.

The film will also be presented in Imax theaters, and six of the masterful action sequences were shot with Imax cameras, a first for a feature film.

The film contains bloodless but intense action violence including shootings, explosions and vehicular mayhem, but virtually no objectionable language or sexual elements. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned.

Collection of letters offers insights on influential Christian author


C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), a British Anglican author and professor of English literature, first at Oxford, then at Cambridge, wrote numerous books that continue to sell not just well but very well more than four decades after his death. The name in the title of this book comes from his nickname, “Jack,” used by friends and family, and which he preferred to his given name of Clive Staples.

It’s no surprise whenever a new collection of C.S. Lewis material comes out in book form, given his continuing popularity. The theme that unites the hundreds of letters in this volume is the author’s experience and practice of the art of spiritual direction.

The editor, Paul F. Ford, organized the letters chronologically, the earliest from 1916, the latest from 1963. An index makes it easier to locate specific topics or themes discussed by Lewis. Students and scholars of Lewis may be well advised to take the index as incomplete, however. Thomas Merton’s name appears in the book, for example, but not in the index.

Nowadays, the meaning of “spiritual direction” is sometimes elusive, depending on the theological orientation or preferences of the one using the term. Ford describes three kinds of letters in this book — letters of spiritual companionship, spiritual discipleship and spiritual direction.

Lewis lived during the first half of the 20th century. As a young man he became an atheist, then converted to Anglicanism, and he was tolerant of the faith of others unless it struck him as narrow-minded or a distortion of the truth.

Indeed, Lewis was not one to withhold praise from a Catholic author such as G.K. Chesterton; indeed, he says in one letter that Chesterton was one of the main influences on his decision to abandon atheism. In a letter dated 1950, he called Chesterton’s “The Everlasting Man” “the best popular apologetic I know.” In 1941, Lewis also heartily recommended — “in small doses” — the 15th-century Catholic spiritual classic “The Imitation of Christ,” by Thomas a Kempis.

Lewis is anything but esoteric in this collection of letters. In fact, he is thoroughly and delightfully everyday and down-to-earth, including comments that may mystify the reader regarding their relevance to anyone’s spiritual direction. One sample: in a 1962 letter he remarks that “it is strange that anyone should dislike cats. But cats themselves are the worst offenders in this respect. They very seldom seem to like one another.”

“Yours, Jack” is a valuable collection of informal observations, off-the-cuff advice and wry remarks from a 20th-century Christian author whose works continue to affect countless readers in our own time.
LIFE: Right to Life is the No. 1 issue in November presidential election

In this important presidential election year, I strongly encourage all Catholics to study carefully all the positions of the presidential candidates on all issues, but especially take into account the candidates’ position on the most important life issue – the right to life. In a most special way, I encourage all to prayer for the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we discern these critical issues.

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SAFETY: Porn a problem not just for men, but over 9 million women, too

For every 10 men in church, 5 are struggling with pornography (“The Call to Biblical Manhood: Man in the Mirror,” July 6, 2004)


34 percent of church-going women said they have intentionally visited pornography websites online (“Internet porn a guy thing? Not really, online rating service says,” Mark O’Keefe. The Charlotte Observer)


20 percent of men and 13 percent of women admitted to accessing pornography at work (Internet Pornography Statistics, Internet Filter Review, 2004)

47.78 percent of families said pornography is a problem in their home (Focus on the Family Poll, October 1, 2003)

57 percent of pastors report pornography addiction as the top issue damaging to their congregation (National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, www.nationalcoalition.org/statisticspornography, July 3, 2008)


Numerous resources are available to help parents recover from a struggle with pornography including psychological counseling, 12 step programs, and spiritual counseling.

Our obligation as parents is to take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the influences that enter our homes are free of factors likely to cause harm. When we fail to carry out this obligation, we are at fault in some way in the damage done to our children. By failing to exercise due care, a parent is acting wrongly by creating an unsafe environment that does not support the long term welfare of the child.

James Crump, Jr., special agent with Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the Department of Homeland Security, contributed to this article.
chaste and life-giving. Holy Spirit’s inspiration and grace are always Reconciliation when we might fail or sin, deeply aware of the Eucharistic power that Baptism and Confirmation. And, we are imaging the very power of God breathing life into one at conception. As Catholics, we stand our sexual energy as divine energy that comes from the gift of the Holy Spirit is the Love between the Father and Jesus Christ. This same love of the Holy Spirit is the empowerment that brings us into God’s love and enables us to share that love with others through the gift of our sexuality.

Sexual energy guided by the Holy Spirit is fully creative
Sexual energy, guided by the Holy Spirit, is fully creative. To look upon the miracle of a newborn child, born of a man and woman, is to see the joyful expression of the divine energy of the Holy Spirit working in God’s children. Every act of creation and creativity through different vocations in life is an expression of the power and energy of the Holy Spirit through the gift of sexuality.

The Church has always taught that the Holy Spirit is the Love between the Father and Jesus Christ. This same love of the Holy Spirit is the empowerment that brings us into God’s love and enables us to share that love with others through the gift of our sexuality.

What is the purpose of my sexual energy?
Each human being must ask himself or herself: What is the purpose of my sexual energy understood as guided by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit? Obviously, the purpose of sexual energy in celibate life is different than its purpose for married couples.

Celibate persons are called to express their sexual energy of the Spirit in an exclusive relationship with the primary focus on Christ and His Kingdom. They are called to express their sexual energy in ways that they and others experience as life-giving. Jesus as a celibate person, guided by the Holy Spirit, manifested this in the highest manner in His ministry. If we read the Gospels from the perspective of Jesus’ human attractiveness, we understand that people were drawn to His magnetism. People experienced the loving power of Jesus’ own sexuality by the way He used this Spirit power to preach, to bring life and hope to the oppressed and suffering, by drawing crowds with comforting words that captured their hearts, by healing the sick, by bringing wholeness and new life to people, by walking on water to show his power and protection, and by drawing both women and men to touch Him and to want to be touched by Him.

How to deal with sexual feelings often confounds many people, especially young people, and sexual energy is often experienced as localized genital activity. The sexual energy guided by the Holy Spirit is meant to be generalized throughout the human body so that we can truly be loving people with all of our human gifts. The Holy Spirit directs through the virtue of chastity the successful integration of sexuality within the person and this brings about the inner unity of a person in one’s bodily and spiritual being.

Spirituality and Sexuality
There is an essential relationship between spirituality and sexuality. The renowned spiritual writer, Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI, states “Sexuality is an all-encompassing energy inside of us—identifiable with the principle of life itself. It is the drive for love, communion, community, friendship, affection, wholeness, consummation, creativity, self-perpetuation, immortality, joy, delight, humor, and self-transcendence. It is not good to be alone—Genitality is particularized, physical consummation is certain privileged constellation. Many of the energies that are contained within our wider erotic energies in one bodily encounter with another person are which we commonly term making love.”

Father Rolheiser also reminds us, “Sexuality lies at the center of the spiritual life. A healthy sexuality is the single most powerful vehicle there is to lead us to selflessness and joy, just as unhealthy sexuality helps constitute selfishness and unhappiness as does nothing else.”

The goal of all Spirit-filled sexuality is to help us achieve true intimacy with ourselves, with our neighbor and God. The goal is respectful integration of all the wonderful gifts that flow from our sexuality and are linked to our entire person and brings true human development into intimacy that is reflected in a wholeness and holiness. Our sexuality ultimately points us to our desire for Heaven.

Spirit-filled sexuality is part of the great Christian mystery of life and love, and links us to many other essential mysteries of our faith. We affirm the truth of one God in three persons, but we also affirm the truth of the man who is also God, of the Virgin who is also mother. In marriage, two become one flesh. In our walk with God, we must die to live, surrender to be free, lose our love to find it. These are not the teachings of a schizophrenic God or a Church gone mad. If they strike us as speaking in a somewhat double manner, it is because we do not think with the mind of God. We are dealing with mystery. We are dealing with paradox. Marriage, sex, and a celibate vocation are much more integrated than we first might think. They are also inter-dependent. We need to give each proper esteem and respect, as the delicate balance among them is maintained. On the other hand, if any of the sacred three—marriage, sex, or celibacy—is devalued, overvalued, or otherwise disrespected, the others inevitably suffer. Sexuality, guided by the Holy Spirit, helps us to live with the tension of paradox where we discover the fullness of truth and how to be people of love. We must find our homes in that tension which leads us each day to the eternal mystical and nuptial love that we will find in God our Father through Christ in Heaven.
HOLY TRINITY: Confirmation class learns importance of abstinence  

(From 4)  

God for healthy, holy and loving relationships and for bringing new life into our world.” It is with this knowledge that we face our friends and family, as we are tempted to engage in pre-marital sex. Our confirmation teachers understand our difficulties and share their stories and the many different ways to overcome temptations. We are reminded that we constantly ask God to “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”  

In closing, we thank you for the “Value Check.” We will take with us the call to reflect, live our answer, pray and remember. We write this “Value Check” in our hearts, and know that there will be trying times ahead. However, we plan on not leaning on our own understanding, but on God and he will make our path straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).  

God’s Blessing’s be with you,  
Confirmation Classes of 2007-08 Holy Trinity Parish of Big Spring.