Bishop sees Benedict making important changes

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor, The Angelus

Bishop Michael Pfeifer of San Angelo said he sees Pope Benedict XVI making changes during his pontificate, as well as continuing the church’s ecumenism that Pope John Paul II set forth. Pfeifer even hinted at a change in the priesthood.

“I think we’ll see more open doors for involvement in the ministry,” Pfeifer told The Angelus in August. “I think we’ll see that. And I think we’ll see he’s going to make a real effort to build bridges of peace and understanding between the east and the west. I think overall he has done a marvelous job and is trying to pick up on the vision set forth by John Paul II.”

Pfeifer did not elaborate on what steps he felt Benedict would take to open more doors to the ministry.

Evacuee lands on his feet in Big Spring

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

BIG SPRING Kim Costella hunkered down in his two-story house in Chalmette, La., as the big one passed over. Katrina, he says, has changed his way of thinking. In fact, the monster storm changed his life and much that comes with it.

“Before Katrina, I knew who ran the house. Now, I’m the one. I’ve learned that I am strong. I had no idea I was capable of doing things. Before Katrina, I knew who ran the show: God, and karma,” Costella said. “But since Katrina, I have eliminated karma.”

Costella, a detailer in a body shop, stayed in his house for several days following Fr. Diorio’s healing service.

From The Bishop’s Desk

Human life must always be loved and defended

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

The theme for this year’s Respect Life Program, which began on Respect Life Sunday, October 2, 2005 is “HELP BUILD A WORLD WHERE HUMAN LIFE IS ALWAYS AS LOVED AND DEFENDED, EVERY FORM OF VIOLENCE BANISHED.” This title comes from Pope John Paul II’s prayer to the Virgin Mary on December 8, 2004.

This year’s Respect Life Program looks at cultural attitudes hostile to life, such as individualism, moral relativism, materialism and utilitarianism. These attitudes are leading to acceptance of “medicalized” euthanasia of the disabled and dying, as well as the destruction of human embryos for research.
Flying with the pope and other insights

WASHINGTON, D.C. As a member of the entourage covering the pope, Catholic News Service Vatican correspondent John Thavis is a member of a club twice as exclusive as the United States Senate. Only 50 travel with the pontiff, and Thavis began his coverage of the church’s Holy Father before even Pope John Paul II.

Thavis spoke to a gathering of Diocesan Communication Directors last month at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at Catholic University, in Washington, D.C.

Much has been said about Pope Benedict’s off-the-cuff statement upon hearing of his election as pontiff, Thavis said.

“The pope said, ‘I prayed that I would not be elected pope,’” Thavis said. What was eliminated by the Vatican was the remainder of the new pope’s statement: “Apparently God wasn’t listening that day.”

“It gave insight into the pope’s gentle sense of humor, but the Vatican thought it wise to delete that particular portion of the statement for the good of the many.”

Thavis said the Catholic News Service released word of Pope John Paul II’s death in an email. Short, and to the point, much like the “President Dead” Flash transmitted to news organizations by UPI and AP following the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. Despite the brevity of the initial transmission, what followed was an avalanche of information on modern times’ most beloved pope: CNS moved 475 stories and 900 photos and graphics about the life of Karol Wojtyla. CatholicNews.com’s hits doubled in the days following his death.

Thavis said Benedict XVI was elected pope in part because of his writings as Cardinal Ratzinger. His credentials, Thavis said, were well established, his influence and character preceded him.

Pope Benedict, Thavis said, very much dislikes applause at the Mass and considers it “performance liturgy.”

Thavis said that on Day Three of the conclave to elect a new pope, two high-placed Cardinals approached him and told him the exact same thing: that Ratzinger had already secured 40-50 votes. “Then Cardinal McCarrick said, ‘I knew he had it locked up when I read it in the newspaper,’” Thavis said.

Thavis said five months into his pontificate, he can say with certainty four things about Benedict: “He is better one-on-one than in a group, he will stick to the basics and keep it simple, there won’t be much talk of the Magisterium, but more talk of Scripture and the church, and he has indicated that the church must be present in broader society,” Thavis said.

All of which are positive steps for the immediate future of the faith.

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Jimmy Patterson is Director of Communications for the Diocese of San Angelo.
Ex-offender spends time helping others now

By Kay Garrett Womack

In August of 1999, I was convicted of Felony Theft by Check with Intent to Deceive. Although it was my first felony conviction, the Judge denied probation and sentenced me to serve 540 days at Woodman State Jail in Gatesville, Texas. When Bishop Pfeifer held Christmas Mass at the Tom Green County Jail in December of 1999, I was an inmate. I was also a Baptist. Even though I was not Catholic, I was acquainted with Bishop Mike because we had met through a mutual Catholic friend in 1996. Before Bishop left the jail, he prayed with me. He blessed me through the power of the Holy Spirit. Bishop also suggested that I consider my incarceration an opportunity to grow spiritually and discover how God wants to use me in my life. He also offered to correspond with me. To this day, I am utterly amazed that Bishop Mike wrote a letter to me almost every week for the entire eighteen months I was incarcerated.

Four months after my incarceration began, my mother died. Grief and shame overwhelmed me, and I felt worthless and alone. Bishop suggested I begin praying to Mary, Our Blessed Mother. Because of my protestant background, I had previously resisted praying to anyone but Our Father, in the name of Jesus. I was in such emotional distress, though, I was willing to try anything. So, I began praying the Hail Mary. Shortly afterward, I learned to pray the Rosary. Then I began reading scriptures to learn about Mary’s life. Mary’s endless faith and unwavering ability to accept God’s will has helped me to understand how my determination to pursue self-will was destroying my life. When I began to sincerely ask God for help, Bishop sent me the “Catechism of the Catholic Church.” While I was reading it, I learned that man is created by God for God; and, I fell in love with the Roman Catholic Church. I asked Bishop many questions regarding Protestants converting to Catholicism. He thoroughly explained the RCIA program to me.

Bishop became my spiritual advisor, mentor and friend. Each letter he wrote helped me learn more about myself and what type of action I needed to take to change my future. Several weeks before I was released, Bishop suggested I make a detailed list of long-term goals and send him a copy. I still keep my original handwritten copy in the Catholic Bible the late Father Kelley gave me while I was locked up. When I am confused about the future, I reread the goals I listed while confined to a prison cell and become extremely grateful for the Grace of God.

Before I was sent to prison, my main concerns in life were all about me. In my opinion, God used Bishop Mike to raise my level of understanding. Now, I am interested in contributing to the greater good by helping other women overcome the wreckage of their past through spiritual growth, 12-step recovery programs and higher education.

Regardless of how many character defects I possess or how many times I express moral rebellion, Bishop Mike acknowledges my progress. He consistently demonstrates the unconditional love of Jesus Christ by accepting me for who I was, where I was and what I had become; and, for also having the willingness to help me become the woman I am today...one day at a time.

Jo Micale, wife of former West Texas Angelus editor, dies

SAN ANTONIO. Josephine Anna Micale died with her loving family at her bedside Thursday, Sept. 22, 2005, at Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio.

Josephine Nesti was born in Pisa, Italy, on April 24, 1929. When Jo was six months old her family moved to the Bronx, N.Y., where Jo and her brother were raised. On April 24, 1954, she married Peter N. Micale. Together, they raised five children while traveling the world during her husband’s 27-year Air Force career. They settled in San Angelo in 1977.

Jo was an active member of Holy Angels Catholic Church. She enjoyed playing bridge and mah jongg with her dear friends. She found the most joy in her role as mother and grandmother.

BISHOP PFEIFER’S SCHEDULE

November 1 — San Angelo, Sacred Heart Cathedral – All Saints Day Mass at 12:00 noon
November 2 — San Angelo, Calvary Cemetery – All Souls Day Mass at 11:00 a.m. Midland, St. Ann – Presentation to RCIA Groups at 6:30 p.m.
November 4-6 Houston –Wedding
November 20 - Rowena, St. Joseph - Mass at 9:30 a.m.
November 20 - Rowena, St. Joseph - Mass at 9:30 a.m.
November 9 — McCamey, Sacred Heart – Confirmation, 6:30 p.m.
November 10 — San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Joint Meeting of the Diocesan Finance Council and Presbyteral Council for Annual Audit – 11- a.m.-2 p.m.
November 13-17 Washington – Meeting of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
November 19 — San Angelo – Convention Center – Diocesan Youth Event; Christ the King Retreat Center – Criminal Justice Workshop
November 20 - Rowena, St. Joseph - Mass at 9:30 a.m.
November 24 — San Angelo, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Thanksgiving Day Mass, 9 a.m.
November 25-27 — Rest and Prayer

Del Escriptorio del Obispo

La vida humana debe ser siempre amada y defendida

por Obispo Miguel D. Pfeifer, O.M.I.

Este año el tema del Programa Respetemos la Vida, que comenzó el Domingo Respetemos la Vida, el 2 de Octubre de 2005 es “A YUDANOS A CONSTRUIR UN MUNDO DONDE LA VIDA HUMANA SEA AMADA Y DEFENDIDA SIEMPRE Y SE DESISTIERA TODA FORMA DE VIOLENCIA”. Este título viene de la oración a la Virgen María por el Papa Juan Pablo II el 8 de Diciembre de 2004. Este año el Programa Respetemos la Vida reflexiona sobre las actitudes culturales hostiles a la vida como el individualismo, relativismo moral, materialismo y utilitarismo. Estas actitudes nos guían ala aceptación de “medicalización” y de “imponer” sus valores en los demás.

Mientras Terri Shiavo moria, cuando un juez de Florida encarceló a un ranchero por el delito de no dar alimento a su ganado. El ranchero enfrenta hasta 5 años de prisión por cada cargo de delito grave por crueldad contra los animales. Por que nuestro sistema legal trata como un delito el dejar sin comer a los animales, pero no considera que es incorrecto ordenar que a un ser humano con discapacidades severas se le niegue nutrición y hasta una gota de agua?

1. Por que nos hemos convertido en una sociedad en la cual a personas discapacitadas y desahuciadas se les ayuda no a vivir plenamente, sino a morir 10 mas pronto posible, a menudo con el consentimiento de su familia? l. Por que tantos ciudadanos creen que esta bien matar a embriones humanos vivos con el fin de aprovechar sus células madre para una investigación especulativa? l. Por que creen que esta bien obligar a los contribuyentes a pagar el sacrificio personal de amar y cuidar a una familiar que necesita asistencia especial? l. Por que creen que la pena y evitar el sufrimiento a todo costo. Al reflexionar en esto, podemos ver que nuestra sociedad ha absorbido muchas actitudes hostiles a la vida sin siquiera darse cuenta.

2. Muchas personas piensan que la pregunta de que es moralmente correcto depende de las propias preferencias y circunstancias, que no hay una medida moral objetiva como los Diez Mandamientos. En el nombre de la tolerancia, se dice que algunas personas tienen el derecho de usar su propia moralidad personal, excepto en casos extremos como torturar a niños o estrellar aviones contra edificios ocupados. Después de todo, ¿quién tiene el derecho de “imponer” sus valores en los demás?

3. El deseo de nuestra cultura de evitar el sufrimiento-incluyendo el sacrificio, las privaciones y hasta la inconveniencia-lleva a muchos aver la muerte como una forma de libertad. Muchos se oponen al sacrificar personal de amor y cuidar a una familia que necesita asistencia especial. Los niños no planificados son abortados para escapar de las interrupciones y sacrificios que conlleva la crianza de un hijo. Y cuando ya no podemos disfrutar de la vida que una vez tuvimos-como la pugilista de la película “Million Dollar Baby” que no podía soportar una vida sin las multitudes que comían su nombre-la muerte es vista como una manera de eliminar el sufrimiento psicológico.

4. El camino alejado de la cultura de la muerte y hacia el seguimiento de Cristo a la vida eterna se lleva por el camino de la Cruz, que significa amar a otros hasta el punto de morir en nuestro orgullo personal y nuestro egoísmo, en nuestra tendencia a ver a los otros como obstáculos 0
I'll Fly Away: Freedom and the Christian Life

Author’s Note: Bishop Pfeifer asked me to write my personal thoughts on freedom and the Christian life. Borrowing a quote from my essay below, “In my experience in ‘the real world,’ I have encountered people who equate Christianity with a lack of intelligence, a penchant for self-denial, or pie-in-the-sky thinking. But with freedom? No way.”

By Sharon Denning

This piece has been challenging and ultimately liberating to write.

Americans revel in our freedom. At intervals we salute it, give speeches about it, and boast about it.

Sometimes we may even appreciate it, approaching a realization of the sacrifice and bloodshed of others who laid the foundation for a form of government and a way of life that was unheard of less than 250 years ago.

At other times our bragging rights are twisted for political purposes and shameless self-interest. As a 21st-century American, I have more freedom than the Founding Fathers ever dreamed of.

In our increasingly secular society, the boundaries of personal freedom grow more elastic with each passing decade. Behaviors once universally condemned as immoral — promiscuity, cohabitation, homosexuality — are now commonly referred to as “alternate lifestyles.”

Americans are encouraged to spend money we don't have so we can live large. We are urged to live and let live, look the other way, and look out for number one.

We have public education, public libraries, public parks, and a free press that serves up more information than we can possibly consume every 24 hours. With cell phones, laptops and wireless Internet access, the world is at our fingertips.

Still, we battle juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, and escalating violence. Our thriving prison industry is often portrayed as a boost to the economy. We live behind locked doors, but domestic violence and child abuse mean that for far too many, even home isn't the haven it's supposed to be.

Yes, Americans have an abundance of freedom, but we also seem to have an abundance of fear. In a land of plenty, why are so many people running on empty? Shouldn't all this freedom bring peace and a sense of purpose?

The men who signed the Declaration of Independence found peace and purpose — freedom and courage — in God. They knew they might be signing their own death warrant. After all, they were committing an act of treason. Haven’t read the text of the Declaration lately? Take another look at the colonists' in-your-face list of grievances against a sovereign nation.

Nevertheless, these men were resolute in their cause, and their final sentence proclaimed “a firm Reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence.”

Our Founding Fathers felt strongly that Church and State should be separate entities, but they were by no means estranged from God. They affirmed that their Creator had endowed all men with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In their eyes, freedom was a gift from God.

Years have passed, and Western civilization has walked away from that viewpoint in droves. So many have swallowed the idea that religion — more specifically, Christianity — is just a set of rules that restricts their freedom.

In my experience in “the real world,” I have encountered people who equate Christianity with a lack of intelligence, a penchant for self-denial, or pie-in-the-sky thinking. But with freedom? No way.

But the Bible has a lot to say about freedom. From the opening passages of Genesis, it is clear that God created man in His image. He also gave man the freedom to accept or reject this participation (See DENNING/14)
Celebrating Diamond and Golden Jubilees are eight Dominican Sisters of Houston. Sisters Eleanor Cresap, left, Sheila Hackett; Mary Kay Bailey, third from left, of St. Therese Church in Carlsbad; Jo Rita Fertitta; Mary Ann Giardina; Mary Alice Calbajal; JoAnn Niehaus, and Veronica Borski. Sr. Mary Kay serves as Pastoral Coordinator at St. Therese Church, Carlsbad, and St. Paschal, Sterling City. She celebrates 50 years of religious life.

The Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo proclaims OCTOBER 2005 as CZECH HERITAGE MONTH

In the Diocese of San Angelo

In recognition and appreciation for the significant and lasting cultural, religious and social contributions that the Czech people have made to the State of Texas And the Catholic Church, and in particular to the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, I, Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, am very happy to proclaim October as Czech Heritage Month.

May God bless all the Czech people.

Most Reverend Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

EDICTAL SUMMONS

The tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo to Dolores Franco Alvarez (Montoya) and her whereabouts unknown.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, 804 Ford St., San Angelo, Texas. 76905, on or before the 31st day of October, 2005, to answer the Petition of Juan Jesus Moreno, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled “JUAN JESUS MORENO VS. DOLORES FRANCO ALVAREZ (MONTOYA) Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage” said Petition being identified as (MORENO-ALVAREZ (MONTOYA) Protocol No. SO 04/37, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the first day of October, 2005.

Reverend William R. DuBuisson, OMI, MCL, JCL Judicial Vicar
Texas Bishops Statement on human embryos, human cloning

The following statement was adopted by the Catholic Bishops of Texas in May 2005, including Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, Bishop of San Angelo.

The State of Texas has been one of many states in the forefront regarding the debate of human cloning and human embryo research. The Catholic Bishops of this state share the belief of most Texans that all human life, regardless of development, is made in the image of God and therefore has intrinsic value. As such, it is imperative that Texans not waver, even for the noblest of goals, from the commitment to protect every innocent human being. The fact is that human life is sacred and to intentionally and gratuitously destroy innocent human life for medical research purposes is ethically unacceptable.

As it has become painfully obvious, many embryos created by the joining of sperm and egg through in vitro fertilization are either abandoned or left in frozen storage. Many in the scientific community have been asking to use so-called “spare” or “excess” embryo from fertility clinics since they believe that they better serve humanity by being reallocated to destructive research. We disagree. The truth is that the value of the lives of these “spare” embryos is not affected by whether these embryos are wanted or abandoned, but rather for what they actually are -- human beings at the earliest stages of development. Today, many in the scientific community ask us to use both these “spare” embryos and to be allowed to use cloning technology, also known as Somatic Cell Transfer (SCNT) to create a supply of human embryos. Some in the scientific community have argued that these SCNT embryos are either “pre-embryos” or not even embryos at all, but rather “cells” in a Petri dish that have no chance of fully developing because they were not fertilized. This argumentation is misguided. It is an established fact that medical science has argued that the life of an individual does begin at conception with a complete genetic code, regardless if the embryo is created through fertilization or asexual (cloning) methods. Life DOES NOT begin at “implantation” as some in the scientific community would have us believe, but rather begins at conception as biology has proven. This is a biological fact, not just a religious belief. We urge the Texas Legislature to pass laws that prohibit the killing of human embryos, however created, for research purposes. We also oppose any bill that would fund the killing of these human embryos for research and urge the legislature to pass laws that prohibit state funding of the intentional destruction of human embryos. We also urge the legislature to pass a law that bars all forms of human cloning. Simply put, the Catholic Church opposes human therapeutic or reproductive cloning for any reason and we will oppose any legislation that would allow any form of human cloning that creates life.

Let us be clear: we are not opposed to stem cell research, only that stem cell research that kills human embryos. We fully support adult stem cell research since it does not take the life of the donor and we ask our legislature to pass laws that prohibit state funds from being used to destroy human embryos.

Our late Holy Father Pope John Paul II discussed these issues in an address to the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences, Nov. 2003, when he stated: “Any treatment which claims to save human lives yet is based on the destruction of human life in its embryonic state is logically and mutually contradictory as in any production of human embryos for the direct or indirect purpose of experimentation or eventual destruction.

World Youth Day ‘awesome’ experience for Midlanders who made Germany trip

Submitted by Paul Downing & Megan Crocker

PAUL: Words can not express how awesome of an experience we had at World Youth Day. From the beginning of the pilgrimage to the last day, we could not have asked for a better time. Granted not everything went exactly as was hoped or planned, it was still a great experience and something we learned from and will never forget.

After the extremely long day of traveling to Braunsfeld, all we wanted to do was to take a shower and get some rest. This attitude changed when we saw all the faces of the beautiful host families to greet us in their town. We were filled with excitement for the upcoming pilgrimage. It was so emotional, all of them were so excited to see us and welcome us into their homes even though they had no idea who we were. And by the end of the four days we spent with them, we felt as if we were family, and wanted to stay in contact with them in the future to see how things are going.

MEGAN: When I was at their house talking with their 12 year old daughter and she was talking more about her culture and I about ours, I was so excited to learn that I did not even realize that I was 10-years older than she was. It was as if age did not even matter, or does not matter. There is so much to learn from everyone no matter who they are and that is so exciting. I can not wait until the day she could possibly come to the states so I can show her about our culture in person.

PAUL: It was a great experience for me to live with a host family. They are so proud of their culture and history that they willingly share everything they know and have with you.

Once we got to Limberg to the real first WYD event with about 15,000 the pilgrimage only grew to be more exciting. You would not believe how many people there were and how so many of us were excited to be there and so prideful of our own countries yet, no hate at all. It can be contrasted to the Olympics where everyone there is rooting for their own country, but here we are from different sides of the globe but yet we are united rooting for one faith, that is the same no matter what country you are from. Nothing is more exciting than that. Mass was amazing because even though we all speak different languages and are from all parts of the world, everyone knows exactly what is going on because it is all the same throughout the world.

Walking around the cities was a unique experience as well. Most of the time when you travel, you want to fit in and not stick out as an outsider. However, at WYD, we wanted to stick out and show everyone where we are from by carrying our flag up high, and shouting and greeting other WYDers. We had such a great time seeing all the (See WYD/14)
October: A month to express our faith in action

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The month of October provides us with many opportunities and occasions to express our faith in action—to be just not hearers, but doers of the Word of God. Here I highlight some of the occasions as regards when and how we can express our faith in action.

With the close of October, we will end the beautiful Year of the Eucharist that was proclaimed by dear Pope John Paul II which began with the big international Eucharistic Congress that was held in Guadalajara, Mexico in October, 2004. I had the privilege of being present for that unique celebration. In the final days of this special Year, we continue to thank Christ for the greatest gift He has left the Church—the Eucharist—and we should all make a new commitment to be always faithful to attendance at Mass and to receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus in Communion. Also, we constantly need to express our love to our Eucharistic Lord by paying frequent visits to Him, making time to pray before the Blessed Sacrament that is reserved in all of our churches.

October 2: Respect Life Sunday—This Sunday, dedicated to professing the sacredness and dignity of all human life is also the starting day for the annual (Please See OCTOBER/15)

Points from the Holy See’s decree on the Eucharist

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

As I did last month, I share with you important questions about what is proper or improper concerning the celebration of Mass which I have extracted from the Holy See’s recent Decree on the Holy Eucharist:

[69.] "In Holy Mass as well as in other celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy, no Creed or Profession of Faith is to be introduced which is not found in the duly approved liturgical books."

[76.] "Furthermore, according to a most ancient tradition of the Roman Church, it is not permissible to unite the Sacrament of Penance to the Mass in such a way that they become a single liturgical celebration. This does not exclude, however, that Priests other than those celebrating the Mass might hear the confessions of the faithful who so desire, even in the same place where Mass is being celebrated, in order to meet the needs of the faithful."

[80.] "as for the Penitential Act placed at the beginning of Mass... it lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance, and cannot be regarded as a substitute for the Sacrament of Penance in remission of graver sins."

[81.] "... anyone who is conscious of grave sin should not celebrate or receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession...”

[87.] "the First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental confession and absolution. Moreover First Communion should always be administered by a Priest and never outside the celebration of Mass..."

[93.] "The Communion plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling."

[94.] "It is not licit for the faithful ‘to take... by themselves... and, still less, to hand... from one to another’ the sacred host or the sacred chalice."

[104.] "The communicant must not be permitted to inti net the host himself in the chalice, nor to receive the intincted host in the hand."

[107.] "... whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ must be entirely and immediately consumed by the Priest or by another minister, according to the norms, while the consecrated hosts that are left are to be consumed by the Priest at the altar or carried to the place for the reservation of the Eucharist."

[110.] "... Priests should celebrate frequently. Indeed, daily celebration is earnestly recommended by the Church."

[117.] "Reproved, therefore, is any practice of using for the celebration of Mass common vessels, or others lacking in quality, or devoid of all artistic merit or which are mere containers, as also other vessels made from glass, earthenware, clay, or other materials that easily rust or deteriorate."

[130.] "‘the Most Holy Sacrament is to be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is noble, prominent, readily visible, and adorned in a dignified manner’ and furthermore ‘suitable for prayer’ by reason of the quietness of the location, the space available in front of the tabernacle, and also the supply of benches or seats and kneelers."

[133.] "A Priest or Deacon, or an extraordinary minister when an ordained minister is absent or impeded in order to administer it as Communion for a sick person, should go insofar as possible directly from the place where the Sacrament is reserved to the sick person’s home."

[134.] "both public and private devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist even outside Mass should be vigorously promoted..."

[136.] "The ordinary should diligently foster Eucharistic adoration, whether brief or prolonged or almost continuous, with the participation of the people."

[137.] "Before the Most Holy Sacrament either reserved or exposed, the praying of the Rosary, which is admirable ‘in its simplicity and even its profundity’, is not to be excluded either."

[138.] "... the Most Holy Sacrament, when exposed, must never be left unattended even for the briefest space of time."

[140.] "It is highly recommended that... the diocesan Bishop should designate a church building for perpetual adoration; in it, however, Holy Mass should be celebrated frequently, even daily if possible, while the Exposition should rigorously be interrupted while Mass is being celebrated."

[157.] "The practice of those Priests is reproved who, even though present at the celebration, abstain from distributing Communion and hand this function over to laypersons."

[158.] "Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest or Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged.”
By Antoinette Bosco
Catholic News Service

Amid so much destruction and horror, God is there, just a little harder to see

New Orleans Archbishop Alfred Hughes comforts a displaced senior at a shelter after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast and New Orleans, August 28-29.

The pain of the devastation brought by Hurricane Katrina will long be with us. Yet, for all the destruction and personal anguish, there was an inspiring story in what we all saw. It was about the goodness of people who came to sites of destruction, ignored their own discomfort and extended a hand to help the suffering. It may have looked like a person’s hand, but I saw each one as the hand of God.

Long ago, when I was a student at the College of St. Rose in Albany, N.Y., I learned that God works through us. During my freshman year retreat, the priest told us a story that became fixed in my mind. It was about an American soldier in France when World War II ended. When the young soldier came upon a small French town’s Catholic church, there was a statue of Jesus lying on the ground. He picked it up and saw that it was intact, except for one thing: The hands of Jesus were missing.

In Katrina’s wake, I found myself remembering what our president, John F. Kennedy once said. He spoke of the hands of people who come to sites of destruction, ignored their own discomfort and extended a hand to help the suffering. “One night in November,” said Lincoln, “a shower of meteors fell from the clear night sky. A friend standing by was fright- ened. But I looked up, and beheld the falling stars I saw the fixed stars behind shining seraph in the firmament, and I said, ‘Let not the meteors, let us keep our eyes on the stars.’”

I knew when I heard this story that those stars are the hands of God, always reaching out to give us light we need to see the painful shadows caused by a Sept. 11 or Katrina.

One night in November, said Lincoln, “a shower of meteors fell from the clear night sky. A friend standing by was fright- ened. But I looked up, and beheld the falling stars I saw the fixed stars behind shining seraph in the firmament, and I said, ‘Let not the meteors, let us keep our eyes on the stars.’”

New Orleans Archbishop Alfred Hughes comforts a displaced senior at a shelter after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast and New Orleans, August 28-29.

A Message from Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes to Evacuees

Greetings in the Lord Jesus to all of you.

It has been nearly a month since we have had the comfort of our own homes and the familiarity of our own archdio- ceses. As the Archbishop of New Orleans, and a fellow evacuee, I share in your suf- fering. I want to be present, and want to serve you in your needs. We are not alone from the Archdiocese of New Orleans owe great gratitude to the host com- munities whose hospitality has been so generous. The Catholic Charities of New Orleans is accomplishing in conjunction with Catholic Community Services of Baton Rouge and other organizations. We have worked to return as many parishes and schools as possible to service. Even if you are not fortunate to have a home, I share the pain of the devastation brought by Hurricane Katrina has caused enor- mous suffering in the overwhelming loss of life, homes, churches, schools and way of life. Our first concern has been for people: their rescue, their basic needs, medical care, and communica- tions with loved ones. I rejoice in the extraordinary work that Catholic Chal- litans of New Orleans is accomplish- ing in conjunction with Catholic Community Services of Baton Rouge and other organizations. We have worked to return as many parishes and schools as possible to service.

At the present time, all of the churches and schools in St. Charles, St. John, Washington and almost all of St. Tammany have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of norm- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal- nality. By early October, I expect most parishes and schools will have resumed activity. This marks a move toward bringing Catholic life closer to some degree of normal-
A fond farewell to a good friend, a coach, a mentor

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed: the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

-- 2 Timothy 4:6-7

By Dan Bertleson
Special to The Angelus

Having lived in West Texas for the last twelve years, I have become a connoisseur of sunsets. It has become my favorite time of day. The withering summer heat is gradually replaced by the cool of night. Occasionally, at the end of a cloudless day, the western sky turns pink and the eastern sky turns black and the in between is various shades between the two and the stars begin to peak out. To me, this signifies the end of another perfect day.

While enjoying the sunset at the airport, I got the call. Word was going out throughout the country to “His Boys” in California, Texas, Michigan, and the East coast. His Boys were now Doctors, Lawyers, and respected businessmen. He had died the day before on Father’s Day, surrounded by his six kids, numerous grandchildren, and his wife. He quietly slipped into the next life at the age of 83. He was a World War II vet, winner of the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts and a terrific family man who led an amazing life. But that is not what I honor him.

He was a dentist and out of respect, we called him Dr. Smith. Though he truly was our coach, he was never addressed as such. I met him the first day of baseball practice when I was 13. A growing subdivision, a new league required someone to coach an expansion team of only 13 year olds in a 13- and 14-year-old league. He was the only volunteer and never had much help from the other parents. We were not very good.

There were numerous experiments; for a while, I was a shortstop until he figured out that a good arm and no wheels was not a good combination. Gradually, that first year, he made us into a quasi-respectable team.

We loved his practices. We would be milling around, or warming up when we would hear his tires squeal on his Mustang as he rounded the turn into the field. Gravel would fly, as he skidded to a stop and he would jump out barking orders. His youngest son Clayton was his favorite whipping boy followed by anyone else within earshot. And practice would begin. God forbid that you miss a ground ball under your barehanded to ensure we got our hands under the ball. Miss a fly ball and you were likely to get six in a row until you caught them all.

He loved the game and he loved us. He taught baseball and we learned life. Touch all the bases. Keep your eye on the ball. Keep your head in the game. Be aggressive, support your teammates. Prepare to win. Working hard is just the foundation. Look sharp; be sharp. Respect your opponents. Don’t embarrass the team. Know the count. Keep your head up after a strikeout. Run out all your hits. We discovered failure wasn’t fatal, but quitting is. We learned the power of persistence the next year when we were the power house and we even learned once that over-confidence was a setup for a fall.

Through it all, we dealt with changing girlfriends, haircuts, braces, voices that inexplicably went low or high, rivalries, fights, stitches, broken bones, and just growing up. During that turbulent, crazy time baseball and Dr. Smith were constant and always a joy.

We kept in touch, through the years and I will never forget his teary-eyed bear hug, still strong and firm, at my mother’s funeral.

But mostly, I will remember fondly the love we both shared for a kid’s game and how he turned a band of wild boys into young men. And, I reflected, how 32 years later he still touches my soul. Over his 16 years of coaching, how many other middle-aged men are pondering the loss, laughing at old times and reflecting on a life well lived?

I am told that he died, surrounded by his kids and his wife while the grandkids played in the backyard. They all said their farewells. As I looked out the airplane window, the sun retreated behind the horizon, leaving the sky a pinkish rose, signifying the end of a perfect day and the end of a great life. So long Dr. Smith. And thanks again from Your Boys.

Dan Bertleson is a parishioner in Midland.
Cursillo Movement Marks 300th Milestone At Christ the King Retreat Center

By Greg Perez

Forty-five Roman Catholic women and a team of 20 women and four men lived Cursillo No. 300 at Christ the King Retreat Center in July.

The diocesan community which received the ‘new Cursillistas’ at St. Joseph’s Parish, following the completion of the three-day Cursillo heard testimonial words such as: “Awesome! Unbelievable! Indescribable! The best three days of my life!” in their attempts to fully describe their encounter with God.

This experience which is now commonplace in our daily lives has an interesting history. The “Cursillos in Christianity Movement” originated in Spain in the early 1940’s as a part of various spiritual and pastoral movements of renewal in the Church which preceded the Second Vatican Council and which in fact laid the groundwork for the birth of the Council itself.

“Cursillo” which in Spanish means, ‘a little course’ or ‘a short course’ (in Christianity) was brought to the United States by two airmen from Spain, Bernardo Vadell and Agustin Palomino who were training with the U.S. Air Force.

The first Cursillo was held in Waco in 1957. From Waco, the movement moved with the Airmen to Mission and then spread to Laredo and Corpus Christi. By 1959, the movement had spread throughout Texas and Arizona and by 1960, weekends were being held in the Eastern United States as far as Ohio and New York City. By 1980, almost all of the 160 dioceses in the U.S. had introduced the Cursillo Movement. Today, it is a worldwide movement. (Source: “The Cursillo Movement Booklet: What is it?” Published by the National Secretariat)

Until 1961, all Cursillos were held in Spanish but that same year, the first English Cursillo was held in our own diocese, at St. Joseph’s Church in San Angelo. The Cursillos are numbered by each diocese as they are conducted and the Diocese of San Angelo has now completed its 300th Cursillo weekend over those 44 years with two more planned before year’s end.

An explanation of what the Cursillo is to someone who has never experienced it is at best, difficult. Even to those who have experienced it, it remains somewhat mystifying but that is only because God is a mystery and He touches each individual in a special and unique way.

The Cursillo Movement is a movement of the Church. It is intended for Roman Catholics who are interested in developing a deeper understanding of what it means to be fully Catholic and how they may influence and change their environments by their daily activities.

We invite and encourage all Roman Catholics of the Diocese who have not yet experienced this unexplainable encounter with God to do so in the future. The next two Cursillos for 2005 are as follows: Women’s Spanish at St. Mary’s Parish in San Angelo, 6-9 October; Men’s Spanish at St. Francis Parish in Abilene, 10-13 November. For more information you may call Mr. Raul Castaneda at (432) 550-4514 (Diocesan Director of Spanish Cursillos) or Mr. Joey Light (325) 695-0503 (Diocesan Director of English Cursillos). “DE COLORES!”

Annual RCIA training begins at parishes throughout diocese

Many Catholic churches began the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) last month.

RCIA is a process by which adults learn the Catholic faith, ultimately leading to be joined to Christ in His Mystical Body. Those who attend RCIA receive Christian instruction and participate in various “Rites” – that is, ceremonies and prayers – in which the progression of the spiritual journey is signified as one ascends from one level to the next. Participants experience acceptance by the Church at the parish level, then, acceptance by the Church at the diocesan level, when they are received by the successor to the apostles: Bishop Pfiefer. The process culminates at a two-hour Easter Vigil Mass when they are initiated by the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist in the presence of the church on earth – the parish – and the church in heaven – Christ, along with all the angels and saints.

The practice of such Rites extends back to early Church when Catholics were persecuted by the Roman empire for practicing the faith. At that time, it was against the law to take oaths (Latin: Sacramentum), thereby binding oneself to someone (God) other than the Caesar, who was considered the living God. Restoring the ancient practices for instructing and initiating adults into the faith was decreed by the Second Vatican Council.

One change since the early days of the church is that there are many different Christian sects that have formed in the past 500 years that perform a valid baptism, which is an initiation rite. As such, the RCIA program is open to both catechumens (those who have never been baptized) and candidates (those who have received baptism).

RCIA classes continue to grow in size in many parishes. At our parish last Easter, five people were Baptized, and 29 were Confirmed, including several adults who returned to the Catholic faith. Those who returned to the faith did so as a result of an active outreach to those who were raised in the Catholic Church, but who had fallen away and therefore lacked Christian formation as an adult. The response is heartwarming as it provides a homecoming to those who wanted to return to the church, but were either embarrassed by their situation or simply did not know what to do.

A typical RCIA class at our parish has a diverse range of participants: people who were raised in the Baptist, Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Charismatic, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Jewish and other traditions. Last year and entire family of Episcopalian entered the church as well as a woman in her 70’s who returned to the Church after 50 years and was Confirmed.

Anyone interested in RCIA should call their church office for days and times of meetings.

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OK, so what if there are glittery beads hanging in my car?

I t must have been three years ago when our oldest daughter and I shared a car. It was an ugly green Ford Explorer and it had seen better days. But I drove it and when I was done with it I shared it with our then 17-year daughter who proceeded to leave her empty soft drink containers in the cup holder until dad came along and cleaned them up. We had an agreement: she messed up my car, I cleaned up the car.

I digress for a moment, but she owes me this. One of my favorite stories is when our oldest got in the car for the first time after earning her learner’s permit. She adjusted the mirror, checked for oncoming traffic and traffic from behind, turned on her blinker, put the car in gear and started to pull out from the curb in front of the house.

She went nowhere. The car wouldn’t budge. And she had tried so hard to make sure everything had gone right I kind of felt sorry for her.

“Ummmm .... before the car will go anywhere my dear, you’ll need to, uh, start it. It’s the little key thingy up there on the steering wheel. You might remember putting the keys in a few moments ago.”

But back to the story at hand. The adolescent female for some reason needs to adorn a vehicle with their, shall we say, stuff. When our oldest took over part-time driver status of my car, she put a statuette of a male hula dancer in the window. Next came some dangly things from the rear view mirror. And the last straw, I’m almost embarrassed to report: a friend of mine, who I had shared this story with, had taken the liberty to come over one night and present our daughter with a pink fuzzy steering wheel cover.

This friend was, at the time, the Senior Minister at Midland’s First Christian Church, and I thought his action incredibly beneath him. But he laughed his way through my living room and left me with a pink fuzzy steering wheel cover that my daughter absolutely loved and I simply loathed.

Our oldest is now away at college with a car of her own that she has been jeweled in all manners bling.

I, too, have a new car. And ... another daughter. Who drives. And I hopped into “our” car the other day ... and hanging from my rear view mirror: lace, tinsel and Mardi Grass beads. Very pretty, all, but pretty is not the impression I hope to leave with everyone. I was hoping for something a little more, oh I don’t know, INVISIBLE. Something no one will ever notice as I (we) drive down the street.

I am blessed that our middle child is a good driver. But the interior decorating of my car simply has to stop, so I appeal to my daughter through this writing (which she will probably never see) to please leave my (our) car alone.

I realize, of course, that I am fighting a losing battle and that (my) (our) car will never be the same. And as soon as Daughter No. 2 graduates and goes to college, our youngest child, The Boy, will get his driver’s license.

Good gosh, I can only imagine those days, when I will be sharing my car with our son, and one day I will be driving down the street, a big, white square shoe-polished on my windshield and an arrow drawn toward it, in great big letters, the word “HOTTY!!” pointed at the driver. Which will be me. And I will be over 50 by then. And I will not be feelin’ hot.

Jimmy Patterson is Director of Communications for the Diocese of San Angelo.

Your Family

Are you happy with TV’s view of family life?

By Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

Parents are stupid. Especially Dad. Their children are smart. Especially a daughter. Any and all problems can be solved in 60 minutes for a drama and 30 for a comedy (including commercial breaks). And the ultimate -- or perhaps only -- sin is to be judgmental of another human being.

As the fall season begins, it’s good to remember that television is not reality. Although networks and advertisers aim at specific demographic targets, television is never a mirror that accurately reflects what it is like to be a member of that group. Shows aren’t written to offer a model of the ideal family or to present helpful suggestions on the best parenting practices.

You know it, we know it, everyone knows it. But -- like a gaggle of 9-year-old boys watching wrestling for a little while and then dissolving into a giant ball of holds and slams -- we may allow it to influence our opinions and our actions.

That’s so, even though television never has accurately depicted family life. Real families aren’t that dramatic or “funny.” Thank God! As you also well know, in its early days television featured families that always included a mother and father who, if they didn’t know best, knew more than their children. It presented children with minor troubles and major cuteness. It also gave the impression that all families are of one race (white) and one religion (generic Protestant). “I Love Lucy” was considered daring because Ricky was Cuban!

Fast forward half a century and dear old Dad has by and large become a major doofus. Often it’s Mom who knows better and, even more frequently, the children. Week after week, youngsters -- still cute -- now recognize, deal with and solve crises. These days more races are represented and so are a variety of living arrangements, from blended families to single parents to living-together couples. Added to the mix is sexual orientation.

Generally speaking, religion is out unless it has an Eastern or Native American flavor. Characters profess that they are “spiritual, not religious.” A person portrayed as a Christian is more likely to be a psycho or hypocrite than a well-balanced, caring individual.

A couple of points to consider:

> Television isn’t “bad” anymore than books or movies are “bad.” Just as you choose a book or a movie for yourself, just as you pay attention to what your children choose for themselves, watch with a critical eye and help your children learn to do the same. How? By watching their shows with them.
> Some people get paid to watch and critique television. Find a reviewer you trust.

A good place to start is the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Its Web site offers movie and TV reviews and recommendations: usccb.org/movies/index.htm. And listen to what your friends and extended family are recommending.

If you find a show you like, recommend it. The most trusted “advertising” remains word of mouth.

Puzzle Answers:

1. Judges
2. Psalms
3. sign
4. Heaven
5. Believe
6. life
7. sword.

Let’s skip Mr. Capole’s house.
He’s an exterminator.

YOUTH: Pray for those along Gulf Coast

(FROM 13)

me deeper than any other I’ve ever heard. Our Newman Center priest read the Gospel, stood up and said to a bunch of us college kids, “The worst mistake we humans can ever make is to believe we have done enough to change.” Trust me; I left there a bit scared.

The first move to changing for the better is to admit you are not perfect. I admit that I am far from it. My initial concern about the hurricane -- how "I" would be disappointed if "I" weren’t to go on "my" vacation -- slapped me right in the face with an example how far from perfect I am and that I needed to do more to focus beyond myself and my own needs.

Honestly, I know there are many others out there like me who did the same thing, looked first at how the tragedy affected them, but then came to realize the destitution it had created.

My first set of prayers is for all the survivors and family members of those less fortunate, and my second set of prayers (as I have learned a little bit about priorities from this) is for any who joined me by thinking momentarily of their own frivolous needs before turning to the more basic needs of those who truly needed and merited their attention.
Jesus preaches about forgiveness

Peter came to Jesus and asked: "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

Jesus shook his head and looked directly at Peter: "I say to you, not seven times, but 77 times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants."

Before Jesus continued his story, he turned to address the large crowd of people who also wanted to hear what he said:

"When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him sold ... in payment of the debt."

Jesus noticed that many of the people were leaning forward. They hoped they never would be sold off in order to pay one of their debts, and they wanted to know what was going to happen.

"At that, the servant fell down ... and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt."

Jesus paused and looked at the people in the crowd: "Now, when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they ... went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him: 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you? Then in his anger his master handed him over to the (jailers)."

Jesus again looked at the many faces that were watching him: "So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart."

Two sets of prayers for the people of the American Gulf Coast

By Kase Johnstun
Catholic News Service

I haven't lived long enough to witness a disaster like the one I watched unfold last month in New Orleans and the surrounding areas. There I saw the devastation of Mother Nature coupled with the despair of poverty as Katrina hit those hardest who had the least. My prayers are with all of them for their safety and future well-being.

Before the great wall of wind and rain struck the Gulf Coast, officials asked everyone to get out of the city. It seems to me that most of the people who could leave left and most of those who couldn't, didn't. It will take months to truly find out why some couldn't or didn't, but, as the world looked on, they faced the worst of life, struggling to make it through the next day.

Crazily enough, my friends and family had planned a trip to New Orleans the same week the hurricane hit, so we watched the pre-hurricane coverage, the actual hurricane coverage and the post-hurricane coverage. We, of course, hoped the storm would dissipate before it hit the Gulf Coast and wouldn't affect our trip.

Yep, I have to admit that selfishly before the hurricane hit I hoped it would move left or right of New Orleans so that it wouldn't change anything in my life. As the devastation grew, the realization that I had focused on the hurricane solely for its effect on my life grew. Along with that, a deeper look into who I am as a person grew also. Don't get me wrong. As soon as I knew that people had been killed, stranded, raped or starved, my prayers turned to their well-being and continued for them until this date and will for months to come or until their plight has calmed. It still bothers me that, before the hurricane hit, I thought solely about my happiness and that of my family and friends.

The best sermon I heard during college lasted about 20 seconds, but has affected
with the Divine. Again and again, men and women have rejected God's plan in favor of their own. Read the Old Testament. It won't be long before you start thinking, "Wow. These people really needed the Lord our God." And so do we. Yet many people embrace their own brand of freedom instead of accepting the freedom offered to them as children of God. All of us have known people who've freely indulged their appetites and desires. Frankly, eating disorders, addictions, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, financial ruin, and emotional isolation don't make a worldly view of freedom look too desirable.

For the Christian, freedom comes in accepting that we are spiritual as well as physical beings. Since we are created in the image of God, we are called to be holy. Since we are human and struggle with sin, that's not easy. We are a motley bunch, and we should thank God at least once a day for sending Jesus into the world to show us the Divine in human form. Christ, the Lamb of God, is the ultimate sacrifice, and it is through this sacrifice that we gain true freedom and are reconciled with God forever.

As Christians we are baptized and marked with the sign of the cross. We belong to the Lord. We are brothers and sisters of Christ, children of God, and members of the priesthood of believers. In the Eucharist we remain in communion with Jesus: he enters our earthly lives in a very real way and gives us the grace to grow in our faith. With Confirmation, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, which "marks our growth in our faith. With Confirmation, we are sealed with the sign of the cross. We belong to the Church in Odessa.

Since we are body and spirit, freedom affects both our earthly and eternal lives. As Christians we believe that nothing -- not even death -- will separate us from God, so we are freed from the finality of death. This freedom has special significance for people who suffer and have problems in their lives, which as near as I can figure is everyone. Promise of eternal life -- a better life -- brings joy to the sick, the impoverished, and the oppressed who hope in the Lord.

And when death loses its sting, a lot of earthly fears fall by the wayside. As Psalm 118 says, "The Lord is at my side; I do not fear. What can man do against me?"

What indeed?

As much as some of us may long to be with our Heavenly Father right now, He put us on Earth for a purpose: namely to love and serve Him. In our journey from birth to death, Jesus is the model for the proper and good way to fulfill our purpose in life.

And contrary to some people's perception of the Gospel, The Way has never been a goody-two-shoes, self-help program or a key to financial prosperity. It's a counter-cultural -- some might even say subversive -- call to build the Kingdom of God on Earth, and while nobody ever said it's safe or easy, it certainly can set you free.

Free from worry and anxiety. Free from financial insecurity and rampant materialism. Free to speak out against injustice and tyranny. As the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "No one can ride your back if it's not bent."

This brings us back full circle to our Founding Fathers and their notion of freedom. Their faith gave them the courage to pursue justice; their courage gives me the freedom to speak out against wrongdoing. Exercising this freedom may cost me a few friendships or even a job, but in another country, it could cost me my life.

But in my experience the waters of life are seldom calm anyway. Like Peter, we can choose to step out in faith even during a storm and walk toward Christ. The freedom Christ has given me allows me to head into the water -- even when I can clearly see that it is raging -- grit my teeth, and keep going forward, knowing that the One I belong to is with me in my struggles, even if I can't see Him.

James 2:12 tells me that I am "destined for judgment under the law of freedom," so the choices I make in this life will affect my eternal life. And God surely knows that we are a ragtag band of sinners, yet He loves us all -- the wretched and the righteous.

Writer Anne Lamott sums this up in her book "Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith" when she says that God has really low standards-a remark that initially appears ludicrous. But think about it. He really doesn't hate the people who drive us nuts. "This drives me crazy..." Lamott writes. "Yet on most days, this is what gives some of us hope."

The grace of God and the victory of the Cross can free us, transform our lives, and fill us with the most powerful force of all: love. But it's up to us to make the choice. Our bodies will die, and our "stuff" will stay behind. So ask yourself who is in charge of your life. When all is said and done, what are you worth?

If your answer is Almighty God, know that you are priceless. He has given you more real freedom than you ever imagined, and He wants you to enjoy it forever.

Sharon Denning is a member of St. Mary's Church in Odessa.
COSTELLA: Evacuee finds spirituality after storm rips apart life

(From 1)

after the storm hit, but finally got on a bus bound for Texas. He got off that bus in Big Spring, pulled himself off the ground, found a job and hardly missed a beat. When the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Parish in Big Spring heard about him, they mobilized. One parishioner donated a rent house, several others spruced it up, patched walls, donated furniture and bought flowers.

“It was the most gratifying group church effort I’ve ever been a part of,” said Deborah Rupard, secretary at Immaculate Heart of Mary. “Everyone came together and worked hard for Kim.”

The storm surged to the second floor of Costella’s house. His children, who joined him in September in Big Spring, escaped the city before Katrina blew ashore. They are displaced, a bit shaken, but lucky to be out harm’s way.

The experience of living through the middle of one of the deadliest storms ever to touch American soil is not one that Costella will soon forget. He is a tough man, a former Marine, a laborer, a self-described loner who won’t let himself get too close to anybody. He doesn’t drink or party and he says his life consists of his children, hunting and fishing. Unfortunately, at least right now, it holds one other thing.

“I still have dreams every night,” Costella said. “Night before last, it was three people trying to commandeer the boat I was in and they tried to kill me. They grabbed my arm, started to cut me, and I woke up.”

Costella said he will not return to New Orleans out of fear of future storms, and what he calls a corrupt government and police force. Quite obviously, he has never envisioned living even part of his life in the desert hot land of Big Spring, but now, he prefers the drylands of West Texas and doesn’t care if he ever sees rain again.

“When the effects of the storm reached West Texas it brought fresh clean air,” Rupard said. “The air of Big Spring was full of love and the feelings of community and brotherhood. This was a traumatic experience that our brothers and sisters from Louisiana had been thru and I can only hope that the air -- our Big Spring air -- began to comfort them and I thank God that in his infinite wisdom, he brought them to our community. A gift we received! He brought us together thru their tragedy!”

Costella was watching Katrina’s evil sister Rita roll through the Gulf Coast on CNN recently as it barreled toward the Texas Coast.

“No fear at all,” he said when asked if the thought of another one bothered him.

Costella was raised a Catholic, but when his mother died of brain cancer when he was a teenager he drifted away and “wasn’t real hot for God.” Despite the bad dreams, his tough veneer figures to win the day.

Hymel said ultimately our goodness is a reflection of God’s goodness, something that he has been placed within each one of us.

“We want to respond in love to God’s people who are hurting because at some deep human level, we are hurting too,” Hymel said.

“Only the people that have seen the light can see the darkness,” Hymel said. “They have gotten out of New Orleans early doesn’t have a clue about what those who stayed went through.

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GOODNESS: We, God’s creations, come with basic inherent kindness

(From 1)

thousands of miles to help their fellow man.

What is it about us? Why would a species deemed violent by sociologists and historians turn so good in times of need when we may or may not be that way in our day-to-day world?

Dr. Francis Hymel, a Doctor of Ministry, licensed professional counselor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Midland, sees it as being a characteristic inherent in the way God made us.

“In our times of greatest suffering, we have a unity with the rest of humankind,” Hymel said. “Our empathy for others is at its highest and we realize that the pictures on TV could be me or my family that has lost everything. We feel their pain and anguish. Our hearts are filled with compassion and we want to do something to help.”

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and work to build relationships. Spiritually, we can be transformed into the image and likeness of God.

“Doing good can deepen our prayer life,” he said. “It connects us with the whole Body of Christ and we grow in God’s goodness and love.

“It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. Let’s hope and pray that those who respond with loving hearts and acts of kindness will light the way for all of us and the light will truly overcome the darkness: “Thus says the Lord of hosts: Lo, I will rescue my people from the land of the rising sun, and from the land of the setting sun...They shall be my people, and I will be their God, with faithfulness and justice.” -- Zech. 8:7-8”

For more information on New Hope Counseling Center, visit www.newhopecounseling.net

OCTOBER: A month to express our faith in action

(From 7)

Respect Life program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops for all the Catholics parishes of the USA, including our own diocese. During this year, you will receive many announcements and information with regard to how you can work to promote a new respect for human life, which is threatened in so many ways today.

October 7: Our Lady of the Rosary – This special day of Mary is a time to deepen our devotion to the Mother of Jesus and our own mother. A special way of building up devotion to Mary is by praying the rosary every day during the month of October, which is dedicated to Mary as the month of Our Lady.

October 16: Criminal Justice Ministry Sunday – On this Sunday, we, the Body of Christ of the Diocese of San Angelo, reflect on how we all must be involved in the Criminal Justice Ministry. Our prayers and efforts should focus first on reaching out to our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated, seeing in each one the face of Christ, and locally in each parish designating individuals and groups to receive these sisters and brothers when they return home.

This is also a time to examine how we can all work to improve the criminal justice system in the state of Texas and the USA, making them true centers of rehabilitation.

October 23: World Mission Sunday – On this Sunday, we focus on mission, especially on how we can support the mission Church outside of our own country.

We have many needs at home, but the needs in mission lands is much greater. On this Sunday, we review the call that is made to all of us to be missionaries according to our vocation—reflecting on how we can bring Christ to others at home and abroad. A special collection is taken up on this Sunday for the support of missionaries, dedicated and generous women and men who give their lives to bringing Christ to others and proclaiming His Gospel message to so many people. Be generous in this collection and constantly offer prayers for missionaries.

October 30: Priesthood Sunday – This is a special Sunday to thank God for the gift of priesthood, and to show our support and affirmation for our priests by our prayers, by the spirit of cooperation we offer them, and by programs we initiate to honor them. This is the occasion to also stress more effective work and prayers for vocations.

The one who is at the center of this month, and of every month of the year, is Jesus our Good Shepherd. This month provides us many opportunities and occasions to show that we, who truly make up the flock of Christ, are truly His followers by expressing our faith in action. Our model is His first, greatest and most perfect disciple — His own dear mother and ours — Mary.
NEW YORK — Once upon a time, as we learn in distinguished filmmaker David Grubin’s compelling four-part series on immigration, there was no such thing as an illegal immigrant. Basically, if you could get here, you could stay.

But today, that phenomenon is a fact of life, and the first hour of the series called “Destination America” contrasts the historical situation with the experience of a Mexican man who for the 15th time must leave his family and make his way across the heavily guarded Arizona border to earn money for his family. The program airs on successive Wednesdays, Oct. 19 and Oct. 26, 8-10 p.m., CT each night on PBS stations (check local listings).

Manuel’s story — it takes him five days to get from the border to Chicago, where he finds work in construction — is weighed against the historical migrations of the Irish and the Norwegians. Economic opportunity, political freedom and artistic expression were and continue to be the driving forces behind the influx.

The Irish story is well known, though the potato famine is so vividly outlined it sounds fresh. The population thrived on potatoes, so the rotting crop with its powerful stench meant that there was no food for half the population.

Less familiar is the Norwegian story. Despite the great beauty of their country, only 3 percent of the land was able to be cultivated. America remained an utterly unknown commodity to most people there, until Ole Rynning, the so-called father of Norwegian immigration, wrote a handbook explaining all a prospective immigrant would need to know, and “America fever” swept the land as they left Norway for the Midwest.

This is no dry history lesson. On the basis of the first installment, the pace and the then-and-now format create variety, the personal stories and historical backdrop are interesting, and the historians and other experts offer perceptive commentary.

If you take a hard-line stance on illegal immigration in theory, your views may change when you see a sympathetic character like Manuel leaving his supportive and loving family for no other reason than sheer economic necessity. So, too, the series frequently reminds us that this country was, after all, built by immigrants. It is, nonetheless, a rather stunning fact that as many as 4,000 cross the border illegally every day.

By Harry Forbes
Catholic News Service

Film a hole-in-one for adults, kids alike

By Harry Forbes
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Here’s that rarity: an intelligent adult film that youngsters should like as well.

At least those kids not put off by a leisurely pace, muted color palette, and classy but reserved performances. Everyone else should find “The Greatest Game Ever Played” (Disney) a moving and elevating experience.

This is the true story of a young working-class golfer, Francis Ouimet (Shia LeBeouf), who played against British champion Harry Vardon (Stephen Dillane) in the 1913 U.S. Open in Brookline, Mass.

Both men shared similar backgrounds, to an extent that they may have been unaware of.

Vardon was haunted by childhood memories of stern men in stovetop hats building golf links near his Isle of Jersey home, and being sternly told that the game was not for the likes of him. So, too, young Ouimet was the son of an immigrant father (Elias Koteas) who only barely tolerated his son’s interest in the game, and believed failure was assured because the game was out of their class. His Irish mother Mary (Marnie McPhail) was quietly supportive.

Ouimet is shown to be smitten with the sport at a very young age. Against the father’s wishes, Mary secretly takes him to see Vardon give a golf demonstration at a local theater, and Ouimet volunteers to join his idol on stage.

The years go by and Ouimet, working as a caddie, has a chance to participate in the National Amateurs Championship. His father reluctantly agrees on the condition that if he loses he’ll give up golf and go into a trade. Despite a good showing, Ouimet loses the match.

But when he is later offered an opportunity to compete in the U.S. Open, his resolve to obey his father wavers, and he decides he must follow his heart. Upper-crust Smith College girl Sara Wallis (Peyton List), whom he met at a party, cheers him on from the sidelines.

When his usual caddie bails, 10-year-old pint-sized Eddie (Josh Flitter) gets the job and, surprisingly, becomes a great asset.

Robert Redford’s underrated golf movie, “The Legend of Bagger Vance,” did unaccountably poorly at the box office. Something tells me this will do better.

The film contains minimal, mild language. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-I — general patronage.

Book addresses challenges of life, faith in rural areas


Reviewed by Judith Bandy
Catholic News Service

“Sustaining Heart in the Heartland: Exploring Rural Spirituality,” edited by Dominican Sister Miriam Brown, explores the social, ministerial and pastoral challenges facing those who live in rural, sparsely populated areas of the United States. Sister Brown is the former executive director of the Churches’ Center for Land and People in Sinsinawa, Wis.

Writing with authentic grass-roots knowledge and experience, the authors demonstrate that the notion of rural spirituality takes on many different forms. The book describes how faith is lived out in our smaller communities across the country. It also looks at what it is to be people of faith and commitment in the face of the daunting challenges to the rural way of life today.

The book is a collection of essays in three parts. The publisher writes that the book’s first section treats the characteristics and themes of rural spirituality, as well as its hopes and struggles. The second describes the roles, dynamics, spirit and challenges of 10 groups working in the context of rural life. The third part looks at the expanding identities of local congregations and includes a pastoral suggestions review.

“Sustaining Heart in the Heartland” is written with a passion for rural life and a deep appreciation for rural spirituality. It invites residents of the heartland, as well as those in ministry, the clergy and lay leaders, to work together to nurture the spiritual vigor of the rural community.