VIOLENCE IN INDIA

A Christian woman and her daughter take shelter in a church in the eastern city of Cuttack, India, Oct. 8. At least 52 people have been killed in anti-Christian violence in the state of Orissa. The violence has led to more than 20,000 mainly poor villagers taking refuge in camps and shelters.

By Fr. George Varakukala

The whole world watched in disbelief and horror the unspeakable orgy unleashed on innocent, peace-loving Christians in the State of Orissa, India, by the Bajrang Dal and the VHP (Vishva Hindu Parishad), from August of this year. There was no provocation whatever from the Christian Community. On August 23, Swami Varakukala writes this month about the anti-Christian violence and what it is doing to his homeland.

Killings devastate homeland of many San Angelo priests

Editor’s Note: Fr. George Varakukala and several other priests in the Diocese of San Angelo are from India. Fr. Varakukala writes this month about the anti-Christian violence and what it is doing to his homeland.

From the Bishop’s Desk

We have all heard the little saying—"Revenge is sweet"—and there is an innate desire in us to want to get even with those who have offended us. “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” a norm of the Old Testament in many ways is still the standard of ethics that is applied by most people today.

Catholics and their Bibles

Catholics have long been criticized for not following the Bible as much as other Christian-based religions. But why? And how do we overcome that stigma? As the Bishop's October Synod looks into the Bible, we talked to local church representatives.

Applying basic principles to the economy

Few people think of it this way, but we live in a faith-based economy. Not religious faith, to be sure, but faith nonetheless. Religious language without religious meaning has dominated the headlines in recent weeks. "Confidence in Financial Markets Plummet," we read. Notice that "con" is English for "cum," the Latin preposition meaning "with," and "fides" is Latin for "faith." So con-fidence means "with faith."

Freedom of Choice Act would cause abortion rate to rise dramatically

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer

Today we face the threat of a federal bill that, if enacted, would obliterate all the pro-life gains for the past 35 years and cause the abortion rate to skyrocket. This federal bill called, “Freedom of Choice Act” (FOCA) (S.1173,H.R.1964) already has many congressional sponsors, some of whom are pledging to act swiftly to help enact this proposed legislation. FOCA is a radical bill. It creates a “fundamental right” to abortion throughout the nine months of pregnancy. No governmental body at any level would be able to “deny or interfere with” this right. For the first time, abortion would become an entitlement the government must condone and promote.

Reminder: November 30 is the First Sunday of Advent

SanAngeloDiocese.org

This month at www.SanAngeloDiocese.org: Check throughout the months of November and December for reprints of Angelus articles and Advent- and Christmas-related information.

Language Preference

More bilingual Catholic Hispanics prefer to attend Mass celebrated in Spanish.

- Most times Spanish, 19%
- Most times English, 19%
- Every time Spanish, 46%
- Every time English, 16%

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Revenge is sweet, but mercy is twice blessed

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

We have all heard the little saying—“Revenge is sweet”—and there is an innate desire in us to want to get even with those who have offended us. “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” a norm of the Old Testament in many ways is still the standard of ethics that is applied by most people today.

However, instead of taking revenge on those who offend us, Jesus teaches us to use non-violent resistance which perhaps at first is interpreted by some as being passive or submissive to an injustice. But careful examination of the norm given us by Jesus as regards revenge and vengeance enables us to see that our faith and the gospel standard of Jesus calls us to create a way to deal with offenses and not to escalate evil. The norm of Jesus is to forgive and to even love our enemies. In other words, we have to show mercy to those who offend us, and in God’s design, mercy ultimately triumphs. Hence, while revenge is sweet, and gives some natural satisfaction or pleasure, showing mercy is twice blessed, as mercy blesses the one that gives it and blesses the one that takes mercy.

Our contemporary culture teaches us to settle the score, to get our just deserts. The problem is, we do not know where to stop. There is a certain tendency in all of us to want to take just a little extra “justice” against those who offend us. We want to hurt those who hurt us. The teaching of Jesus as regards love and mercy requires that we de-escalate the situation while reducing and diffusing revenge. When we do this, then we are not answering evil with evil but will be replacing evil with good.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Fall Festival in Rowena

November 9
ROWENA
St. Joseph
86th Annual Fall Festival-Sun., Nov. 9
Theme: “Count Your Blessings”
Flag Raising: 10:30 a.m. at Veteran’s Monument
Meal 11 a.m.-2 p.m.-Turkey, Dressing & Trimmings-
Rowena German Style Sausage
Drive Through plates to go available
Auction begins at 1:30 p.m.
Games for all ages 11:45 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
Country Store throughout the day
Sausage Sandwich Supper begins at 4:30 p.m.

Upcoming Cursillo Dates

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

Natural Family Planning

Helping couples to deepen conjugal love and achieve responsible parenthood is part of the Church’s total pastoral ministry to Catholic spouses. Fulfillment of this ministry includes both education and pastoral care. This means “insisting on conviction and offering practical help to those who wish to live out their parenthood in a truly responsible way.”

The closing options will be included in the new English-language translation of the main constant parts of the Mass, which was approved, or given “recognitio,” by the Vatican in July.

DISMISSAL: Options approved by the Vatican in July

(From 3)

missa est,” the Latin phrase now translated as “The Mass is ended, go in peace,” he said the new options are:

- "Ite ad Evangelium Domini annuntiandum" (Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord).
- "Ite in pace, glorificando vita vestra Dominum" (Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life).
- "Ite in pace" (Go in peace).
- "It's our understanding that the Holy Father had a desire to find ways to express more clearly the connection between what's celebrated in the liturgy and how the faithful live their lives beyond liturgy, that movement from the altar to the world," Father Hilgartner said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

The closing options will be included in the new English-language translation of the main constant parts of the Mass, which was approved, or given "recognitio," by the Vatican in July.

The new dismissals will be part of the revised Roman Missal, which will include modified interpretations of many of the common acclamations and prayers.

The U.S. bishops will take up the second of the 10 sections into which the Roman Missal has been divided at their fall general meeting Nov. 10-13 in Baltimore. The 700-page section failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority for approval after several long discussions during the bishops’ June meeting and a subsequent mail ballot.

OBITUARY

Deacon Simon C. Franco, Sr.

FORT STOCKTON -- Deacon Simon C. Franco, Sr., 85, of Fort Stockton, passed away on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 in Fort Stockton. The vigil service was October 10 at St. Agnes Catholic Church with Bishop Michael Pfeifer, O.M.I. presiding. The homilist at the vigil was Deacon Julio Carrasco, a classmate of Deacon Franco.

The Funeral Mass was celebrated on October 11 at St. Agnes Church. Rev. Thomas Manimala presided and Rev. Felix Okeke concelebrated at the Mass, and the homilist was Deacon Reuben Reyes. Burial was at the Fort Stockton Catholic Cemetery.

Deacon Franco was born January 5, 1923 in Terlingua. He moved from Terlingua to Fort Stockton in July 1944. He was a retired test driver for Firestone Test Truck Co. He was ordained a deacon in the San Angelo Diocese, and had served in the Fort Stockton area since 1979. As one of the first permanent deacons ordained in the diocese after the Vatican authorized the restoration of that branch of Catholic clergy, Dcn. Franco was a minister to many families and individuals for decades.

He married Maria L. Velasquez, September 22, 1946 in Fort Stockton. He was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Anna Marie Benavides on September 22, 1946 in Fort Stockton. He was a retired test driver for Firestone Test Truck Co. He was ordained a deacon in the San Angelo Diocese, and had served in the Fort Stockton area since 1979. As one of the first permanent deacons ordained in the diocese after the Vatican authorized the restoration of that branch of Catholic clergy, Dcn. Franco was a minister to many families and individuals for decades.

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He married Maria L. Velasquez, September 22, 1946 in Fort Stockton. He was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Anna Marie Benavides on December 21, 1991, a son-in-law, Tony Benavides on July 11, 2000. Survivors include his wife, Maria Franco of Fort Stockton; one son, Simon Franco, Jr. of Austin; four daughters, Linda Blanco, Gina Rodarte of Fort Stockton, Mandy Franco and Carol Garza of San Antonio; one brother, Tino Franco of Odessa; two sisters, Rita Sanchez of Fort Stockton; Canda Silva of Las Vegas, Nevada and eight grandchildren.
The Visiting Priest

Why don’t Catholics read the Bible?

By Father Bernard L Gully

Have friends, perhaps even relatives, who are faithful members of other denominations, asked you this question? My experience is that they are people who have found much meaning in their lives through the written word of God.

What is more puzzling to me is that Catholics also wonder why our brothers and sisters of some congregations seem to know more about the Bible than we do. At least they can quote Scripture verses quite freely. I say it is puzzling when we consider the central action of worship for Catholics is the Mass. We hold to the obligation to assist at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. We further have the opportunity of Mass every day of the year. Let’s consider how integral the Bible is in the Holy Eucharist.

The Mass has two principal parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We come to Mass to gather together as a community of faith to listen to God’s word proclaimed, to participate in the Lord’s Supper and to be sent forth to go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Let’s begin with the first part, the Liturgy of the Word. The essential elements of the Liturgy of the Word on Sundays consist of four Scripture readings. Generally the first reading is from the Old Testament—our ancestors in faith. We listen to the inspired words of wisdom that have been handed down for thousands of years. After a silent, reflective individual response, we sing (or recite) the “Responsorial Psalm”. This is our personal and community response to what we have just heard, and we use the inspired words of one of the 150 psalms of the Bible. We even repeat several times the refrain, for example, “The Lord is My Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want”, or “To You, O Lord, I lift my soul”. When this is sung, as it always should be, it becomes a memory.

New dismissal options to help faithful live the Gospel

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- The new options for dismissal at Mass are meant to help worshipers connect the liturgy with the missionary call of the rest of their lives, explained a liturgist with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington.

Chosen by Pope Benedict XVI himself, the closings were created to help the faithful see that the “transformation that takes place in the Eucharist...ultimately helps to transform us as those who receive the Eucharist,” said Father Richard B. Hilgartner, associate director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship.

However, U.S. Catholics are unlikely to hear the new forms of dismissal at Mass until 2012 or later, when the new English translation of the Roman Missal is introduced.

Father Hilgartner said the new options are meant to reflect “several transformations” that occur during the Mass.

"The bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus, and as the faithful share in the body and blood of Christ the prayer is that we become more the body of Christ, which has to do with how we live," he said.

The options were outlined by Cardinal Francis Arinze of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments at the Vatican, in an interview published in the Oct. 17 issue of L’Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper. Along with “Ite, (Please See GULLY/10)

Catching up: Effort to help villagers in Boquillas complete

By Jimmy Patterson

MARFA -- Two years ago this month, we shared with you the story of a remarkable woman from Terlingua, Cynta de Narvaez, who, despite a chronic illness, devoted much of her time to helping the women in the border village of Boquillas, just across the Rio Grande from Big Bend National Park. The woman’s efforts were made even more selfless when you factor in that even though it took her only 45 minutes to travel from her home in Terlingua to Boquillas, it took as many as 16 hours to return. The sealed border made re-entering the U.S. at the un-patrolled crossing a felony and anyone crossing over risked a $10,000 fine and being labeled a potential terrorist upon return.

So Cynta routinely shared a rickety old Mexican bus with goats, crossing treacherous, unpaved mountain roads before hours later she would arrive in Del Rio at the legal point of entry.

September brought Cynta’s final trip to Boquillas, ending a multi-year effort to teach the village women not only how to quilt, but to lift their self-esteem and make them self-sufficient. A series of quilt shows brought in thousands of dollars for the villagers. Future donations that come into Cynta’s non-profit organization, fronterasunlimited.org, will go toward paying for the education of some of the young people in the town.

And the women? They will soon busy themselves planning their own quilt show in larger towns in the interior of Mexico such as Muzquiz for they are now fully equipped to set out on their own and support themselves and the others in their village, thanks to the work of a group of selfless Americans on the border.

Cynta’s generosity and story of helping those not as fortunate as she remains one of the most selfless acts of kindness I have ever had the privilege to write and witness. That this story has the positive ending it does and that Cynta’s mission was a success makes it all the more remarkable and worth sharing with others.

Del Escriptorio del Obispo

Dulce es la venganza, pero la misericordia es doble bendecida

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

Todos hemos oído el dicho— “Dulce es la venganza”—y hay un deseo innato para desquitarnos con los quienes nos han ofendido. “Diente por diente y ojo por ojo” una norma del Antiguo Testamento que en muchas maneras sigue siendo la norma de ética que se aplica por la mayoría de la gente hoy día.

Sin embargo, en vez de tomar venganza a los que nos han ofendido, Jesús nos enseña que usemos resistencia sin violencia que quizás, a primera vista, se interprete por algunos como ser pasivos o sumisión a una injusticia. Pero una reexaminación cuidadosa de la norma que se nos ha dado por Jesús tocante a la revancha y la venganza nos hace ver que nuestra fe y la norma del evangelio de Jesús nos llama a crear una manera para tratar con las ofensas y no escalar la maldad.

La norma de Jesús es de perdonar, y hasta amar nuestros enemigos. En otras palabras, debemos demostrar misericordia a los que nos ofendan, y en el diseño de Dios, últimamente la misericordia triunfa. Entonces, mientras dulce es la venganza, y nos dan una satisfacción y placer natural, demostrar misericordia es doble bendecida, tal como la misericordia bendice al que la da y bendice al que la toma.

Nuestra cultura contemporánea nos enseña que debemos arreglar cuentas, para tomar nuestro meroce. El problema es, no sabemos donde parar. Hay cierta tendencia en todos nosotros de tomar un poco mas de “justicia” contra los que nos ofenden. Queremos lastimar al que nos ha lastimado.

Las enseñanzas de Jesús tocante al amor y la misericordia requieren que no escalamos la situación mientras reducimos y difundimos la venganza. Cuando hacemos esto, entonces no estamos respondiendo a la maldad con maldad pero más bien estamos reemplazando la maldad con lo bueno.

(Please See DISMISSAL/2)
Perpetual adoration fosters a personal, loving relationship with Jesus Christ

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

In today’s world, there are a great many demands placed on priests, deacons and religious who serve God’s people, and on all the faithful who deal with many pressing responsibilities. With a firm determination to face these many challenges without disregarding the difficulties and struggles, it is necessary that all – the ordained, the consecrated, and all the baptized – make special time to develop a deep, personal, intimate union with Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist. A special way of doing this is by taking part in perpetual Eucharistic adoration, which leads to the true sanctification of all those who share in this devotion. Perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which comes to us through the Mass, is the devotion of devotions, as it centers our lives on Jesus our risen Savior who is present in the host in a personal, loving manner for our adoration and worship. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament should deepen our appreciation for our Eucharistic celebrations.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament always involves acts of reparation for sin, thanksgiving for God’s countless favors, and focuses our attention on our main responsibility as followers of Christ, which is to give Him praise, worship, and adoration with our lives and all our works.

I thank God we have perpetual Eucharistic adoration in the four larger cities of our diocese—Odessa, Midland, San Angelo, and Abilene. I am deeply grateful to the priests and people of the communities who have made the commitment to host and participate in perpetual adoration. While I know that it is difficult for an individual parish to have perpetual Eucharistic adoration, I have encouraged several parishes of the larger cities to come together to support perpetual adoration in designated chapels of the four major cities. I encourage more people to participate in perpetual Eucharistic adoration, which brings countless personal and community blessings to all who share in this devotion. I strongly recommend that families—parents and children—take even a few moments to visit our Eucharistic Lord. We all deal with many complex situations in life today and seek many answers, and all the ultimate answers to our

November is National Donor Month

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

In November, faith communities throughout the country will observe a special time as they unite for one cause: to increase awareness of the critical need for organs and tissues and the miracle of transplantation. This annual interfaith celebration of life will stress the importance of donation. Religious leaders who participate in discussions of donation with their congregants can affirm that choosing to be an organ and tissue donor offers the opportunity to share the greatest blessing of all – the gift of life. All religions in the United States support organ and tissue donation as an honored and compassionate expression of generosity and love.

As of October 2008, more than 100,000 men, women and children were listed on the national transplant waiting list. Donation and transplantation can save lives, yet the need for organs far exceeds the supply. In 2007, more than 28,000 organs were transplanted but thousands more critically ill patients could have been helped if more organs were available. An average of 18 people die each day because an organ is not available for them. Prayerfully consider being an organ donor.” For more information contact Michelle Segovia at 512-459-4848.

10 from diocese installed in order of Holy Sepulchre

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

Ten persons from the Diocese of San Angelo were installed as Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in Little Rock on October 19. The organization promotes peace in the Holy Land and provides financial assistance to educational and humanitarian projects of the Catholic Church in Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Cyprus.

The new members are Norbert and Dedria Dickman (Midland), Richard and Lois Folger (Midland), Tom and Laverne Morgan (Midland), Dan and Joanne Vaughan (Abilene), Rev. Maurice Voity (San Angelo), and Rev. Mark Woodruff (Odessa). The impressive ceremonies and Mass were presided over by Archbishop Eusebius Beltran of Oklahoma City.

The previous day, several Knights and Ladies from the Diocese of San Angelo were promoted. These were Msgr. Larry Droll (Midland), Brian and Evelyn Martin (Midland), and Len Mertz (San Angelo).

There are sixty-one active members of the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in the Diocese of San Angelo.

Msgr. Robert Stern, president of the Pontifical Council of Palestine, who recently spoke in San Angelo, urged the Little Rock attendees to follow the guidance of Pope Paul VI “to engage in a courageous struggle for justice and peace” in their own sphere of influence, which will assist in bringing peace to the world.
ODESSA -- October 12 was a day filled with music, prayer, presentations on call and discipleship and tons of fun at the gym of the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. Young people from across the diocese came bustling through the doors looking to experience the “Great I Am”. Gabe Gutierrez, a youth minister from Keller, in the Fort Worth Diocese, was the keynote of the biennial Jr. High Youth Event sponsored by the Office of Education and Formation.

The youth choir and band from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Odessa kept the day moving with their wonderful music led by Claudia Richards. Young people sang and danced to the music. The youth from St. Stephen’s in Midland led a powerful prayer service on the call of Moses and reflected on how God continues to call us to mission in the world today. Christian Beltran and David Ramos, two young men from St. Mary Parish, Odessa were the emcees for the day. What a great witness to the Church to see these young people leading the day.

Gabe spoke about call in our lives and the openness and courage required to answer that call. He also talked about discipleship and the need to go out and serve in society. A gifted musician, he also shared some songs with the group to reinforce his point in his presentations.

A tasty supper was served by the Catholic Student Association from the university in the evening after the Sunday Eucharist. Rev. Bernardino Getigan from Holy Redeemer, Odessa, was the presider. A collection was taken during the offertory to help the victims of Hurricane Ike in the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese. The event concluded with a dance deejayed by Bob Mueller.

Hermits near Christoval visited by Carmelite prior

CHRISTOVAL -- In October, the Carmelite Hermits in Christoval celebrated the 800th anniversary of Carmelite Rule with two visiting hermits from the Monastery in Lake Elmo, Minn., and by a Carmelite from Washington, D.C. The rule, written by Saint Albert (1208), Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Father Elias O’Brien, O.Carm., came from Whitefriars Hall in Washington to speak about the Rule and to speak about Religious Life in the Holy Places. Though the Carmelites were driven from Mt. Carmel in the year 1298 because of the fall of the Crusader Kingdom of Acre, they still love to speak about what life was like in those early days, when the Rule was written.

Fr. Elias, a Carmelite since 1975, has preached retreats, and served as novice master in the Order. He has studied in Europe and done research into the lives of the early Carmelite hermits and the lives of hermits in the Holy Land.

“What I spoke on here was what life was like 800 years ago,” Fr. Elias said, “and what kind of conditions the hermit lived under and what was going on; there was a war going on, The Crusades. I also spoke on some of the traditions and stories the hermits would have heard and told 800 years ago.”

Fr. Elias said in the early days, Carmelite hermits would tell about the saints, the stories of the holy people, such as St. Anthony and how he would go into a hermit cave in silence and dedicate himself to God and stay there for years at a time sometimes and even though praying and struggling in the religious years he came out looking healthy and well, full of the grace God had given him.

“The message I hoped to convey is that the hermit way of life is how we live and serve God, and how we celebrate God’s love and serve the church through dedication and prayers,” Fr. Elias said.

The life of the Carmelite Hermits in Christoval, and those in Lake Elmo, continues a very venerable tradition in the Catholic Church. They spend their days in silence, prayer, and work, and their days follow the pattern set down by Saint Albert.

Fr. Elias wrote a dissertation for Oxford University in England, which examines the Carmelite Rule in its original context. He looked at the other religious rules that were written in the Holy Land, and other monasteries that were founded there, to see what they share in common. The oldest monasteries in the world, such as St. Sabas, near Jerusalem, have housed monks for more than 1,500 years without interruption and are still living the same pattern of life today.

“What we celebrate here at Christoval, is that we do not have to turn to history books to discover what the hermit life is like in our Church,” said Fr. Fabian Rosette, prior of the monastery near Christoval. “There are hermits now, and their lives are living examples of timeless wisdom. We are lucky that the tradition of the hermit life is not a treasure from the past, but a living reality right here in our own diocese.”
Making Sense of Bioethics

Religion and Science: Are they really enemies?

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

One subject I often end up discussing with friends and acquaintances is the apparent conflict between religion and science. A surprising number of people believe these two powerful forces in our society are incompatible with each other. Some even claim there is an "inherent conflict" between them.

When people learn that I am a scientist and a Catholic priest, a common response is, "Wow, how do you do it?" Although it may appear to a casual observer that science and religion need each other since they have distinct and important distinction, which was later incorporated into the writings of Galileo, reminds us that science and religion are not at odds. Indeed, the much-hyped conflict between religion and science turns out to be largely a conflict between men of science and men of religion, rather than between science itself and religion itself. Ultimately, some scientists may become uncomfortable when they perceive that science cannot adequately address value questions or provide answers to the ultimate questions that religion addresses. Some men of faith may similarly feel threatened when they finally have to acknowledge that the Bible is not, in fact, a scientific textbook.

A further explanation for the suspicion between scientists and men of faith can be the ill will generated by a vocal minority of scientists who suggest that religion has a "softening influence on the brain," or that men and women of faith are "spared the trouble of thinking" but, on the contrary, help us to think in a structured way, providing us with the very categories we need in order to be able to enter more deeply into this branch of mathematics. Similarly, religious dogma and sound ethical teaching afford us the essential categories we need to enter reasonably into a discussion of the ultimate questions that every person faces, questions of purpose, morality and human destiny. Religion, in the words of G. K. Chesterton, is never "an arrest of thought, but a fertile basis and constant provocation of thought."

Moving past the mutual suspicion that has arisen between scientists and men of faith is thus a critical first step in seeing how religion and science are not, in fact, enemies at all. The two are able not only to co-exist peacefully, but within the person of the scientist, religion and science can ultimately interconnect and strengthen one another. The pioneering astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler, who first calculated the elliptical orbits of the planets, perhaps put it best when he wrote: "The chief aim of all investigations of the external world should be to discover the rational order and harmony which has been imposed on it by God and which He revealed to us in the language of mathematics."

That source of rationality, which is God himself, should be a source of continual wonder for each of us, as it was for Einstein when he mused: "The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible."

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.ncbcenter.org.

Salas de Inyección Segura y Campañas contra las Drogas

Por Padre Tad Pacholczyk

Las llamadas “salas de inyección segura” son lugares especiales a donde los adictos a las drogas pueden acudir a inyectarse substancias ilegales, sin el temor de ser arrestados o investigados. Uno de estos sitios ha estado operando durante varios años en Canadá, en el lado Este de Vancouver. Los adictos de las áreas cercanas reciben ahí agujas higiénicas, ampollas con agua estéril, adhesivos con alcohol para higienizar las áreas de inyección, bandas adhesivas, ácido ascórbico en polvo (para diluir las drogas) y herramientas en forma de pequeñas cucharas metálicas. El gobierno canadiense ha estado aportando los fondos para esta sala y está en el proceso de renovarlas. Otras ciudades como San Francisco y Nueva York también están considerando el instituir sitios como éste. Muchos grupos se oponen a estas zonas de drogas pues las ven como colaboradoras, si no como promotoras directas, de una práctica claramente contraria a la ética y que daña seriamente a la sociedad. El argumento de estos grupos es que los contribuyentes de impuestos no deberían ser obligados a aportar dinero para sitios donde las personas pueden consumir substancias ilegales y destruir sus vidas.

La idea detrás de las salas de inyección segura es reducir los daños colaterales de la drogadicción. Quienes apoyan la iniciativa afirman que desde que los adictos hacen uso de estos sitios el índice de criminalidad en el lado Este de Vancouver ha descendido, y que los índices de SIDA y hepatitis han disminuido debido a la disponibilidad de agujas limpias. Así mismo, manifiestan que la observación por parte de las enfermeras hará que disminuyan las muertes por sobredosis pues desde dicho lugar se puede llamar a las ambulancias más fácilmente que si los adictos se inyectan estando...
The women and men who have courageously served their country. On this Veteran’s Day, November 11, we need to pause and remember and pay tribute to the millions of patriots whose bravery and sacrifice have secured our freedom since the beginning of our nation.

Veterans’ Day honors the hidden heroes of our country who put their lives on the line for the protection and freedom of our country and promote the ideals of democracy.

To pay tribute to those who have served in our armed forces, the U.S. Congress has provided that November 11 of each year should be set aside as a public holiday to honor American veterans. For their sacrifices and for the peace, prosperity and liberty their service has secured for us, our nation owes our veterans a profound debt of gratitude. Although our appreciation is expressed officially on Veterans’ Day, it should be expressed throughout the year.

As we celebrate Veterans’ Day, it is a time to pray for all those who have served our country in the cause of peace, to pray especially for peace in our world today and for all those actually serving in the military, many in conflict situations. Let all of us pause today to thank God for our veterans and to remember those who have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives for peace and freedom.
Applying a classic business principle to the economy

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

Few people think of it this way, but we live in a faith-based economy. Not religious faith, to be sure, but faith nonetheless. Religious language without religious meaning has dominated the headlines in recent weeks. "Confidence in Financial Markets Plummet," we read. Notice that "con" is English for "cum," the Latin preposition meaning "with," and "fides" is Latin for "faith." So confidence means "with faith." Whenever confidence in markets takes a hike, faith has slipped away before it. The credit markets are frozen, business analysts warn. Well "credit" derives from the Latin "credo," "I believe," and there again, when credit stops flowing, faith has preceded lending into the deep freeze.

Banks stop lending to other banks -- and to business or individual borrowers -- because confidence in their ability to repay has vanished. Interesting, isn't it, to recall that when a company was formed in Boston some years ago to manage other people's financial assets, the founders decided to call it "Fidelity." You'll find "trust," "providence" and other terms from the vocabulary of religious faith sprinkled throughout business directories listing banks, insurance and mortgage companies.

Religious faith would have you entrust yourself to God; secular faith involves mutual trust between buyer and seller, lender and borrower in the marketplace.

There are many markets in the world of finance. Best known, perhaps, is the stock market, but that's not where the problem lies today.

To the extent that speculation displaces investment, and greed drives decisions to buy or sell, there will be speculative bubbles in the stock market and cause for genuine concern. Indeed, stock market fluctuations signal stress in the nation's economic nervous system.

But our current problems relate chiefly to the credit markets and have their underlying causes in overpriced real estate and the subprime mortgage loans foisted upon willing but unqualified borrowers by greedy and profit-seeking lenders.

As the whole world knows, all this led to a legislative crisis and executive leadership challenge in our national government.

Neither Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson nor President George Bush is familiar, I suspect, with a classic principle of Catholic social teaching known as the "principle of subsidiarity."

This principle is designed to keep government in its place. In essence, it says that no decision should be taken to a higher level of organization that can be taken as efficiently and effectively at a lower level.

This principle was articulated by Pope Pius XI in his "Rerum Novarum" encyclical.

(Please See BYRON/19)

You're never alone in the voting booth

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

Earlier this year, my son Mike and I made the trek to the elections office so that he could register for the first time as a voter. It seemed like a big step, and we both took it very seriously.

But later, he asked me, "You know, really, what difference does it make if I vote?"

He wanted a practical answer, and it gave me pause to come up with one.

We live in Alaska, and we have some notoriously close races here, real cliffhangers. A couple of years ago a race out in a rural district for a state legislative seat was so close -- actually a tie -- that the winner was decided by a coin toss.

Now, there's where you'd kick yourself if you had stayed home.

And even in modern presidential politics, we've had some tight runs. Who can forget the Gore/Bush debacle in Florida and how breathtakingly tight that mess was?

Still, I've been voting for over 30 years, and even though I'm what they call a "super voter" (I never miss an election), I cannot point to one election in my whole life which would have turned out differently if I had stayed home and voted for an "American Idol" instead.

So, I pondered. What difference does it make if I vote?

The question itself raises interesting points about people's views of community and communal responsibility. Do the young see things more individually, more "what's in it for me"? Does this explain why older people statistically vote more than the less communally minded young?

If so, it doesn't bode well for democracy.

So, without lowering the boom on my own son too much, I'd say to him, no, Mike, on a practical level your one vote may not affect anything, any year, any election. But that's not the point.

When you go into a polling booth, you are acknowledging that you are a member of a community with precious rights and corresponding responsibilities.

You are remembering the women, many beaten and imprisoned, who fought for the right to vote in this country. You are remembering the civil rights workers, many of them murdered, who fought to overturn laws that barred blacks from the polling booth.

You are carrying with you the thousands of freedom fighters and journalists and religious activists all over the world who suffer in prison because they stood up for their rights and freedoms and do not have the protections we take for granted.

You carry with you the words of papal encyclicals that insist that we have inherent rights and human dignity, and that these rights carry obligations.

You walk into your precinct with the words of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights written between the lines on your voter registration card.

When you cast your ballot, you do so with your fellow citizens, thousands locally, millions nationally, who with one communal voice rise up and make their choice. You affirm your membership in that precious community by voting.

Maybe that's why I still sometimes get a tear in my eye when I go to my precinct voting place, watching my neighbors streaming in and out of the little fire station where we cast our ballot.

No, Mike, your one vote may not make the difference. But the votes of all of us can change the world, and don't ever miss out on your chance to say you were part of that.

You may pull back the curtain and enter the polling booth by yourself, but you are never in there alone.

Church guidelines for prayers of the faithful

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service

Q. Does the church have guidelines for the prayers of the faithful at Mass? It gets wearisome hearing the same ones week after week, and sometimes they are awfully long. Are there suggestions that would help us know what they are supposed to be? (Texas)

A. It appears that most Catholics, including many priests and parish liturgical ministers, would find some good catechesis about these intercessions extremely helpful.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (Nos. 55, 69) gives the bare rubrical bones. Of the general intercessions, or prayer of the faithful, it says, the people, "exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all."

It gives a general rule for the sequence of intentions:

a) For the needs of the church;

b) For public authorities and the salvation of the world;

c) For those oppressed by any need; and

d) For the local community. Intentions may also appropriately be related to special occasions such as weddings, funerals, baptism and confirmation.

These brief lines in the GIRM are based on a number of documents about the history and nature of these intercessions and the prominent place they have held in the liturgy nearly from the beginning.

We know that by the year 150 they already held an honored place in the Sunday Christian celebrations.
Panel deconstructs notion of a ‘Catholic vote’ and what defines it

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The first Catholic from a major political party to appear on a U.S. presidential ticket wasn’t nominated in 1928 because the Democrats were consciously trying to attract Catholic voters but because the party leaders figured they had nothing to lose.

John White, professor of politics at The Catholic University of America in Washington, told a colloquium on the Catholic vote Oct. 22 that the nomination of Al Smith as the Democratic nominee for president was less about appealing to Catholics in particular than it was about attracting votes of recent immigrants from Europe, many of whom were Catholic.

Smith, the governor of New York, had grandparents who were Irish, German, Italian and English and he was from a multi-ethnic section of New York.

As this year’s presidential election approached, the question of whether there is a cohesive Catholic vote and how to win it arose among those who have pointed out that a majority of Catholics have voted for the winner of the popular vote in nearly every election since 1972; 1988 was the exception.

At the colloquium, White described Smith’s nomination in 1928 as a political “what the heck, what have we got to lose” play. Going into the 1928 Democratic convention, Herbert Hoover, the Republican secretary of commerce, was popular and strongly favored to win the White House. That helped give Smith the nomination, White said.

“When the parties know they’re going to lose, they take bold gambits, as the Democrats did in 1928,” he said. The effort won Catholic voters to the Democrats, but failed to get Smith elected president.

He described the nomination of John F. Kennedy in 1960, the first Catholic to win the White House, as more about trying to pull Catholic voters back to the Democratic Party than about anyone in power in the party thinking it was high time a Catholic became president.

In the 1970s and ’80s, Catholic voters began to shift from being reliably

(Please See VOTE/17)
Bible always a ‘central part of the church’

“We must present the election of Alfred E. Smith to the presidency, if he is elected, will not be allowed to read or have a bible.” – Dayton Beach School Board

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

The Angelus

Anti-Catholic rhetoric aimed at Al Smith in the 1928 election was simply not true, he said. Clerics of the Catholic Church were accused of not reading the Bible, but the quote, which the Dayton Beach Sun Journal school board placed in the lunch pails of all its students, still packed a wallop.

In fact, the number of religious texts and materials among the masses that Catholics don’t read the Bible. It is a rumor still making the rounds in the Catholic community. A false idea, he added, is that Catholics do not read the Bible or know what it says. He denied that statement.

The idea that Catholics don’t read the Bible is a common among some of our Protestant brothers and sisters,” said Deacon Tim Graham, of Anast. “I don’t know how that falsehood started historically. The truth is there has never been a ban on reading scripture by the Catholic Church, as I have heard some say.

Graham said growing up in a pre-Vatican II Church, the Bible was honored and revered. “We read the Bible in my family. We had Bible stories, studies and readings all through the Catholic grade school I attended and when Vatican II happened, the emphasis was even stronger even more so.

Some fundamentalist ‘Bible’ churches seem to think that the Catholic Church proscribes little book of the Bible. Graham said. What they fail to realize is that the Roman Catholic Church is responsible for their having a Bible at all and that for 2,000 years scripture has been central to Catholic thought, teaching and the Church.

“The Bible is central to the Catholic Church because the Word of God is.” He said. “Catholics hold Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the actual practice of the faith all coming together in a harmonious approach to life and the marvelous ways God has revealed the reality of the Trinity as a means to call us into a deeper relationship, through our lives.”

Bishop Michael Pfeifer reiterated Graham’s words, saying the Bible is given great importance in the life of the church, especially since Vatican II, which pointed out its great importance. Pfeifer said “Vatican II pointed out the readings we would have in the Mass, the A, B, C, D years that would allow us to basically cover the entire Bible. In our readings, we can use the Bible, and not just read the Bible, but use the Bible in a way that would not make our preaching and our homilies sound like a Bible lesson. We can go through the Bible in a more meaningful way.

The prophets were chosen by God for His divine communication and to help them to the people.

Scripture Books

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Jonah
Amos
Joel
Obadiah
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Books of the New Testament

Bible Belt is a ‘frame of mind’

Bishops: Bible unites all Christians

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – The Bible unites all Christians, calls them to be the Church they have always known and invites them to reach out to the world’s poor and suffering, said ecclesiastical delegates to the world Synod of Bishops. Many Catholic members of the synod-speaking Oct. 7-8 praised Protestant groups for their work in distributing Bibles and expressed admiration for the way their churches grow to the world of God.

But at the same time, the first three ecclesiastical delegates to address the synod expressed hope that Catholics focus more on the Bible, the Christian churches would come together to the faith and in action.

U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said the synod Oct. 7 that a close

(See Please BIBLE1/3)

Cardinal DiNardo:
Bible Belt is a ‘frame of mind’

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – The Bible Belt refers geographically to parts of the southern United States, but it is also a “frame of mind,” it seems, in passages and images are alive and relevant to life, said Texas Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston.

The cardinal addressed the world Synod of Bishops on the Oct. 11, sharing stories of faith from his region and how he and his bishops have grown in understanding the church’s approach to the Scriptures, which is especially important for Catholics who “regularly with their Bibles

(See Please BIBLE1/2)

GULLY: Even homilies utilize Bible

(From 3)

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(See Please BIBLE1/3)
DiNARDO: Bible belt a ‘frame of mind’

(From 1)

Lakshananda Saraswathi, a VHP guru who violently opposed Christian Missionaries, was brutally murdered together with four of his disciples by Maoists, an extremely violent leftist Communist faction, who follow the “Cultural Revolution” policy of the late Chinese leader Mao – eliminate all those opposed to you. The Swamy and his followers opposed all conversions, especially to Christianity – not only of Hindus converting to Christianity, but also the tribals who are not Hindus, becoming Christians. Along the way, the Swamy also clashed with the Maoists, the radical Marxist faction who, true to their doctrine decided to do away with him. On August 23, a group of well-armed Maoists surprised the Swamy and his disciples in his ‘Ashram’, and cold-bloodedly shot them dead. Later, the Maoists claimed responsibility for the murder of the Swami, but the Maoists are an invisible group who mostly hide themselves in the vast forests and inaccessible areas of the country. But the Christians are very much visible and an easy target, even though they had nothing to do with the murder of the Swami. The radical Hindu factions -- the VHP and Bajrang Dal who hate the Christians anyway -- turned their fury on them. The murder of the Swami was not the reason but only an occasion for these radical Hindu groups supported by the BJP (Bharatiya Janatha Party), a Hindu Political party that is in power in the State of Orissa, to give vent to their anger and hatred towards Christians and Christianity, in a well planned, well-organized manner.

All hell broke loose as mobs of hundreds of these radicals, well armed with all types of weapons began a systematic, selective attack on Christians. Their houses were looted and burned, churches and prayer huts destroyed, sacred images and statues thrown down and desecrated. Schools, hospitals, orphanages, convents and homes for the disabled – everything that was Christian -- was razed to the ground or burned with inmates still in them. Priests, catechists and other ministers brutally assaulted, nuns and the inmates of asylums for the physically and mentally disabled were assaulted and raped in public. Scores of people were brutally murdered, some burned alive. The most despicable aspect of this orgy of violence was that while this religious “cleansing” was going on, police in Orissa turned a deaf ear to the cry for help from the victims -- some of them even joining in this diabolic horror.

By mid-September more than 300 villages were burnt, more than 4,000 houses destroyed, scores of people killed or burnt alive, many more missing, very likely killed, and some 50,000 poor Christians abandoned everything they had, had run away to the forests to save their lives.

Repeated appeals by the Church authorities and others to the Chief Minister of Orissa, Naveen Patnaik -- a BJP man, whose Party openly supported the radical Hindu factions -- fell on deaf ears. The Central Government in New Delhi ruled by the Congress-led coalition promised all help to protect the lives and property of the Christians, and sent paramilitary force to the State to establish law and order, and protect the lives and property of the Christians. But the BJP, the ruling party in Orissa did little to help the battered Christian Community.

Mr. Man Mohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India called the happenings in Orissa a “national shame。” I would say it is an “International Shame!” But the Prime Minister, while sympathetic toward the Christians, was more preoccupied with signing the nuclear deal with the US than with the events in Orissa, and was away from the country while Orissa was burning! And the Chief Minister of Orissa, was claiming all the while, that peace has been restored, and everything was normal -- while the orgy continued unabated! Hatred of Christianity is nothing new to Orissa. It was some ten years ago that the Australian Missionary Graham Stains, together with two of his little children were burnt alive in their jeep. The Stains family had lived and spent all their time among the lepers to give them hope and a better life. The reward they received in return? A brutal death by fire for him, and for his two little children.

Country-wide protests in India by Christians, closing down all their educational institutions and taking out peace-marches, concern expressed by the Vatican, the US, the European Union, the UN and others, made the rulers in New Delhi warn the BJP-led government of Orissa to reign in the terrorists and protect the Christians. The worst affected region was the District of Kandaham.

By mid-October the orgy somewhat subsided. But what of those thousands of who fled into the forests abandoning everything to save their lives? Now they are allowed to return to their villages only on one condition – convert to Hinduism! Sadly a number of Christians have been physically forced to ‘become’ Hindus and allowed to come back.

“We are migrants, not Muslims, but Hindus who have gone to the forest to escape from violence. We do not submit to conversion. We have been suffering since 1947 and now again since August 2008,” said a Swami of the Ashram, who returned to his forest home.

“Why?”, one may ask, “India, a democratic country- the land of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Non-Violence - of Mother Teresa, the Apostle of the slums who was honored with a state funeral – a rare honor given to no other non-political persons in the long history of the country – should be victimized by a small section of Hindu fanatics and thus tarnish the fair name of the land of Ahimsa? After all, Hindus are by and large the most tolerant and peace-loving people in the world.

Terrorists, whether Islamic Taliban or Hindu Bajran-Dal, are but the different faces of the same coin - evil. What made these radicals so brutal and evil in this 21st century? People have lived for thousands of years in perfect harmony and peace in India. Why then this narrow fundamentalism that we see in India now. A certain sense of insecurity felt by some, for their ancestral religion may be one reason. A peek into the recent history of India may give us a clue. Before the arrival of the Europeans in the Middle Ages, India was ruled by Mogul Emperors (Moslem) from Delhi, and many of the princely states had Moslem rulers too. Under centuries of Islamic rule, many Hindus embraced Islam and the Moslem population grew. At the time of Independence, the Moslems wanted a separate country based on religion carved out of India. Thus Pakistan, and later Bangladesh came into being for Moslems only. Many Hindus are worried that conversion to Christianity would create a similar situation in the future, when Christians may demand a State for them – a la Pakistan, Bangladesh! Hence they are allergic to Missionaries trying to convert people to Christianity.

We have also to admit that some fundamental Christian sects have hurt the feelings of Hindus by going to places where they gather in great numbers for their feasts and celebrations, and proclaim a narrow, perverted form of Christianity, declaring that, to be saved, all must become Christians, if not, it is hell for them! The average man in India does not make a distinction between the Catholic Church and the other Christian sects. For him all are Christians, just as for most average Americans, Moslems are all the same, whether Shia or Sunni, little realizing that Shiias and Sunni kill each other with religious fervor!

What is the remedy for this tragic situation? For one thing, many well informed Indians of all creeds and political leaders have demanded that the radical Hindu outfits like the Bajrang Dal and the VHP be banned, just as SIMI, the Taliban and other radical Islamic outfits have been banned in the country. Many in India, including political leaders and Hindu religious heads are embarrassed and ashamed of the brutal attack on helpless Christians, destruction of their Churches and places of worship, the cowardly and rape of helpless nuns. Many of these well-placed men in society had their education in Christian schools and colleges.

We hope and pray this cancer of intolerance that has appeared in Orissa, does not spread to other parts of India.
Satan The Adversary (Pt. 2)

Devil has been counter to all things good since dawn of time

(The following is Part 2 of a three part series. Kyle Clement is a parishioner at Sacred Heart Church in Abilene.)

By Kyle Clement

Building upon the last article, Satan the Adversary, we shall discuss the multi-generational aspect of the adversary’s predation upon mankind, and some cosmic laws which govern engaging him in battle.

Spiritual beings such as demons must have a physical presence in order to facilitate many of their activities here on earth. Their possession, oppression, and infestation (the varying levels of demonic influence in a human’s life) are the counterfeit of the action of God filling someone with the Holy Spirit. Humans must be willing to accept, encourage, and make themselves available to be filled with Holy Spirit; likewise, evil operates in those willing to facilitate evil.

Those who seek a life in Christ endeavor to make themselves a worthy receptacle of the Holy Spirit by pursuing devotions and various acts of piety with an eye toward the picture and seeking to confuse, contaminate, and obviate it. He tempted Eve with a lie (“surely you shall not die, but have knowledge”). The adversary still lies and man is beguiled. We must talk to God and listen to him, so that when he speaks we may recognize his voice. Eve knew very well the voice of God, yet chose to listen to the voice of the adversary. We see the veneful and hateful nature of the adversary in his choice of an animal form to tempt the woman. His disdain and hatred for his creator, who in our discussion of the Incarnation in the previous article, is willing to take a form less than himself, so enrages Lucifer that he rebels and says “I will not serve a God who will take a form less than me,” (the sin of Satan). In the most belligerent and hateful manner possible toward God Satan takes one of the lowest animal forms to cause the fall of God’s human creation. As a result of the fall, God addresses man, woman, and Satan (in the form of the serpent). In Genesis 3, God bans Satan from all animals and wild creatures, a clear cosmic law or edict from God, whereby demons are banned from entering animals or wild creatures. This cosmic law is affirmed in the turn to God, holy and completely, we come as close as possible to reentering the garden, that preternatural relationship, because everything else falls away. When Eve encounters the serpent, and he beguiles her, she totally focuses on him and not God. We must maintain our focus on God lest we be beguiled. We must talk to God and listen to him, so that when he speaks we may recognize his voice.

The Israelites were never closer to God than in the desert. When we suffer or undergo great trial and

BIBLE: Synod holds promise of renewal for entire Christian faith

(From 11)

relationship exists between the Scriptures and ecumenism.

“The Bible is truly a terrain for unity,” he said.

However, the cardinal said, “one cannot ignore the historical fact that is at the root of the division between Christians: the controversial interpretation of certain important fundamental biblical texts,” including those over the identity of Christ, the means of salvation and the role of the church in interpreting Scripture.

Cardinal Levada asked synod members to keep the ecumenical importance of the synod’s theme in mind as they discuss and deliberate because “the attention given to the written word of God is certainly a very strong bond that draws the Catholic Church closer to the other confessions.”

In an Oct. 7 message to the synod, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches and a Methodist minister from Kenya, said that Jesus’ prayer in the Gospel of St. John that his disciples would be one shows that “the search for the visible unity of the church is an indispensable dimension of the life and mission of the church.”

The message, read by Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste, the WCC representative at the synod, also said the synod’s focus held a promise for the renewal of the entire Christian church.

“How the word of God resonates in our lives, transforms us and motivates deeds of love among us is indeed central for the holistic mission of the church,” Rev. Kobia wrote.

He said the world, “torn apart by conflict and war, divided between rich and poor and haunted by communal hatred and violence,” desperately needs the united witness of Christians who love one another.

The Rev. Robert K. Welsh, the U.S.-based president of the Disciples of Christ’s council on Christian unity, told the synod Oct. 9 that “Christian unity stands at the heart of the Gospel’s message; division within the body of Christ is a scandal before God and before the world.”

He also said that focusing on the importance of Scripture is “a theme that is central to the life of the whole church, calling forth obedience in the church’s listening, obedience in our proclamation and obedience in our responding to the Word of God.”
Family

Is Thanksgiving losing its niche in today’s world?

By Dan Morris / Catholic News Service

I knew I should have been worried about Thanksgiving a couple of months ago when I saw Halloween stuff starting to sneak onto the chain store shelves shortly after Labor Day. Actually, it might have been a little before Labor Day.

I would have mentioned this sooner, but I have been busy reading the Christmas sale promotions that started a couple of weeks before Halloween.

It is my sincere hope that we will have a chance to celebrate Christmas before Valentine's Day advertising and heart-shaped candy boxes and disgusting heart-festooned underwear displays muscle their way onto the scene.

Candidly, I find this all a little confusing -- and not just the weird underwear. For one thing, this is the first year I can recall seeing so many Christmas lights set up before Halloween. People are calling them Halloween lights, even though they are about the same color as Christmas lights, lots of them twinkle and no one seems to be in a big hurry to take them down.

Actually, I support Halloween lights, that is, not starting to decorate the nation like it's Christmas before the nation's children have had a decent chance at making themselves sick on Halloween candy and their parents have enjoyed the annual tradition of shoveling stomped pumpkin moosh off the front porch.

Halloween lights are festive and provide little children a measure of additional safety so they can see where they are falling when their masks cover their faces and they can't see and they start screaming: "I'm scared. I want to go home. Mommy ate my best Snickers. I can't see. Help."

Worried about Thanksgiving, you ask? It is being squished between Halloween and Christmas until its eyes are bugging out. It is being reduced to a kind of national drum roll preceding the biggest shopping day of the year.

You get the impression that the traditional intake of a month’s worth of food on Thanksgiving Thursday itself is primarily so that you won’t have to eat on Friday as you tear through malls and shopping centers wondering why there are so many displays of heart-shaped candy boxes.

But at least they are on sale.

Yes, Thanksgiving needs to start standing up for itself again. It needs to find a stronger marketing theme. Halloween has candy, costumes, cards and weird boxer shorts. It has added lights. Christmas has everything else.

Thanksgiving has to start thinking outside the box. Contests to see who can make the most intriguing sculptures of turkey carcasses won't pack it anymore. (Although I admit a deep respect for the carcass artists who can turn a turkey skeleton into a pretty cool-looking pirate ship.)

Maybe Thanksgiving can steal a little thunder from Christmas and start billing itself more as a time to launch a renewed awareness that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. It can bill itself as a kind of advance warning system for Christmas. Advance? That's almost like "Advent."

I know what you are thinking: Advent lights. Maybe we could even go with Advent candles. Buy new ones on Thanksgiving!

This could be a good start.

By the way, Dec. 3 is the first Sunday of Advent. Suddenly, I am not so worried about Thanksgiving.

(Comments are welcome. E-mail Uncle Dan at cnsuncle01@yahoo.com.)

Bill & Monica Dodds

Fostering your ‘missionary spirit’

By Bill and Monica Dodds

Catholic News Service

We parents can’t be accused of not fostering a missionary spirit in our children.

("Missionary," coming from the Latin "mitto," "mittere," "misi," "missus," meaning "to send")

As our kids grow up, one of the most frequent commands they hear from us is "Go!"

"Go get ready for bed.

"Go help your sister.

"Go set the table.

"Go say you're sorry.

"Go do your homework.

"Go outside and play.

"Go to your room! Now! Go!"

"You want more money? Go get a job this summer."

Seeing the big picture, we moms and dads know that our little dears are "here," but now it's time for them to move "there." And while they're "there," they should brush their teeth and put on their pajamas. Or assist a sibling. Or get the dishes and silverware out. Or apologize (face-to-face) for misbehavior. Or finish that school assignment that's due tomorrow.

row. Or get some fresh air and exercise. Or just settle down and be in a "time out." Or come to appreciate the fact that money doesn't grow on trees.

(Yes, you promised yourself you'd never tell your kids that money doesn't grow on trees, but there you are telling them just that. And if you want to do something nice for your own parents, let your mom and dad know that you told your children about money and trees. That'll make their day.)

Why are parents so fond of "Go!"? It's part of our job. Our duty. Our responsibility. We know from experience that after our children have heard it for many years they're more likely to say it to themselves as they get older. Maturity lets a person spot "here" and "there" and recognize there are some things he or she should be doing "there."

In high school it might mean going over and talking to the new kid who seems to be floundering or the classmate who has a hard time making friends. In college it could be getting up and going to class even if that class begins at (yawn) 9 a.m.

On the job, in a marriage, as a parent, at the parish and, of course, at the end of Mass: "Go. Love. Serve."

As Catholics, each of us is a "multiple missionary." Called. Sent -- as a son or daughter, a brother or sister, a friend, a classmate, a neighbor, a workmate, an employer, a spouse or single person, a priest or religious, a parent, a grandparent, a retiree, a healthy person or one with health problems, and on and on and on.

And in every setting that we find ourselves or move ourselves into over the years, it's our heavenly Father who sees the infinite picture and tells us to go. To love. And to serve.

On the Web: A Mom and Dad on World Mission Sunday, Oct. 19

And speaking of parents and missionaries, the mother and father of St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897) are scheduled to be beatified on World Mission Sunday. Therese (along with St. Francis Xavier, 1506-1552) is the patron of foreign missions, even though she was a cloistered Carmelite nun. You can read more about Therese and Francis at www.xaviermissionaries.org, and about Therese's parents at www.sttherese.com.

Next: Why Halloween can be good for the soul

Bill and Monica Dodds are the founders of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver and editors of My Daily Visitor magazine. Their Web site is www.FSJC.org. They can be contacted at MonicaDodds@YourAgingParent.com.

ANSWERS

The Just 4 Kids page with puzzle will return in the November Angelus.
A question for teens to ask: What's the point?

By Erick Rommel
Catholic News Service

You don’t realize it at the time, but the most important thing you learn in school isn’t reading, writing or arithmetic; it’s learning how to take those skills and apply them to questions you’ve never been asked before.

This process begins at an early age.

When you learn to read and write, you don’t memorize every word in your spoken language; you learn how words are formed so you can identify new words as you see them. Even decades later, you use those skills to read and spell words you’ve never learned before.

The same is true for math. You learn multiplication tables not just to know that six times eight is always 48, but to know that six times 1,334 is always 8,004.

Variations of this lesson exist with all subjects. In history class, for example, you’re shown people attempting the same things centuries apart, and you learn that those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.

In art you are exposed to a variety of styles. It’s easy to see how predecessors and mentors influence each generation once you become familiar with an artist’s preferences.

Every school lesson has one goal: To teach you to think.

Jesus was teaching in the temple area when some of the chief priests and elders came up to him and asked him, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?"

Jesus knew they were trying to trick him, so he said in reply, "I shall ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I shall tell you by what authority I do these things. Where was John’s baptism from? Was it of heavenly or of human origin?"

The men whispered to each other. "If we say 'Of human origin,' he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of heavenly origin,' we fear the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet.' One of the men, speaking for the others, said, "We do not know."

So Jesus told them, "Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Jesus continued with his teaching by telling the people a story. "What is your opinion?" he asked them. "A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?"

Many of the people answered at the same time. "The first," they said.

"Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."

Jesus stood up and pointed out into the crowd. "When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him."

Jesus continued to teach using parables. He told the people about greedy tenants who beat a landowner’s servants and even killed the man’s own son. He reminded them of a passage from the Psalms that said, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

And he said to them, "Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

READ MORE ABOUT IT: Matthew 21

Q&A 1. Who asked Jesus about his authority? 2. What did Jesus say about the rejected stone?

Coming of Age

A question for teens to ask: What's the point?
A Mother’s Guilt: Handing life over to God

By Sylvia Moreno

I have a son and grandson who both have had a history of drug abuse. My son struggled with drugs since he was 16 and he is now 32, while my grandson has had an addiction since age 11, and he recently turned 21. It was not just narcotic drugs that lead to incarceration, but alcohol, as well. Both have spent time in juvenile detention and county jails prior to extended time in federal and state prisons. I knew very little about drugs and felt hopeless in not being able to help them. Their drug activities led to gangs, guns, fighting and to very serious drive by shootings at my home.

I was a single mother and worked long hours to provide for my children. During their times of incarceration, I would blame myself. I would ask, “Where did I go wrong, and what kind of a mother am I.” I would pray and ask God to give me the strength so I could ‘fix things’. With this situation seeming hopeless, I decided to turn to a support group for families with a loved one in prison. I was able to open up and share the struggles with my son and grandson, and the fear associated with both being released from prison very soon.

The support group was loving and helpful. They told me that I shouldn’t blame myself, as my son and grandson have a free will to make their own choices. I learned that addiction to drugs is very difficult to overcome. I began to realize that I needed to give my son and grandson’s problems to God, as I was not going to be able to fix things on my own. I now understand that God was by my side all along, and was just waiting for me to give things to Him. I have found great faith in being able to let God take charge. My son and grandson are now home and making good progress. They have both found jobs and are attending Church. I am now able to let God take control, while I pray for continued positive changes in their lives, and just take things one day at a time.

Criminal Justice Ministry

In February 2008, a New Life Ministry (NLM) support group was established in Midland. The group meets every Thursday at 7p.m. in Rooms 18 & 2 of the parish hall at St. Stephen’s, 4601 Neely Ave., in Midland. The NLM support group is for families with a loved one in prison or jail. Also, those who recently returned home from prison are encouraged to attend so they can be offered love and support which is so desperately needed during the difficult transition period following incarceration. In addition, children are welcome as a separate program is offered for them.

An 8-week program concluding with a healing Mass is the focus. A different reflection is presented each week. This is a community wide support group; open to all, Catholic and non-Catholic. There is time devoted to listen to others and share, if one desires. Everything shared is held in strict confidence. Prayer is an important part of our time together. As a church, we are to be Christ’s hands and feet, offering love and compassion to others, so that they might experience peace and a renewed sense of hope, a New Life in Christ.

The NLM support group in Midland is just the beginning. For more information on how you or your parish community can help in this important ministry, call Deacon Bob Leibrecht at 432-889-3858.

Criminal Justice Sunday scheduled for Nov. 15-16

Within the San Angelo diocese, there are 50 facilities of incarceration with a Catholic population of over 8,000 in federal, state, juvenile and county jails, about 10% of our diocesan congregation. To increase awareness and heighten concern for our incarcerated brothers and sisters, Bishop Michael Pfeifer is officially declaring Nov. 15-16 (33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time) as Criminal Justice Sunday. To bring the topic of injustices within the prison system to the forefront of our faithful, the celebration of Mass for this weekend will take on the theme of Criminal Justice in terms of the homily, music, prayers and petitions. The weekend will also provide an opportunity for a focused effort to recruit volunteers to join this ministry.

After the weekend Masses, there will be a table at the back of church at each parish where active ministry volunteers and/or helpers are available, to provide material to solicit interest. The volunteers in these parishes will be speaking about their jail and prison experiences, either from the pulpit and/or at the tables to encourage your involvement. Please stop by to learn about the various areas of Criminal Justice Ministry that you might want to join. Just fill out the application portion of the ministry form and leave at the table.

Besides ministry to the incarcerated, there is a great need to establish a New Life Ministry (NLM) support group in each parish or town. This NLM support group is for families dealing with a loved one incarcerated, as well as, those returning home from prison. Your involvement in this effort will help those struggling and in pain come to realize that “Church” is where they truly can receive love, acceptance and understanding. Won’t you respond to God’s call and put your faith and love into action? Please contact Deacon Bob Leibrecht at 432-889-3858 for further details.

Our Holy Father’s Monthly Intentions 2008

November

Love of God and Neighbor. That the testimony of love offered by the saints may fortify Christians in their devotion to God and neighbor, imitating Christ, who came to serve and not to be served.

The Church in Asia. That the Christian communities of Asia, contemplating the face of Christ, may find the most suitable ways to announce him, in full faithfulness to the Gospel.

December

Culture of Life. That, faced with the growing expansion of the culture of violence and death, the Church may courageously promote the culture of life through all her apostolic and missionary activities.

Fraternal Witness. That, especially in mission countries, Christians may show through gestures of kindness that the Child born in Bethlehem is the hope of the world.

Daily Offering Prayer

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin and the reunion of all Christians.

I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.

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Criminal Justice Ministry Diocesan Office
325-651-7500

www.san-angelo-diocese.org/cjm.html

Mystical Rose floral@hotmail.com
VOTE: Poll finds Catholic lawmakers largely pro life

(From 9)

Democratic votes to more closely mirroring the general public’s voting, White said.

For some voters that shift was about supporting the party that, beginning with Republican President Ronald Reagan, was more closely identified with anti-abortion policies. But White said it was more rooted in the upward mobility of Catholics whose parents had been blue-collar workers but who themselves had higher incomes and higher standards of living.

“Catholics became the ‘haves,’” he said.

Gregory Smith, a research fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, said Catholics this year were closely mirroring overall support being shown in polls. Barack Obama, an Illinois Democrat.

Pew polling through mid-October showed white Catholics supporting Obama by 8 points, a shift since September when white Catholics favored Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona by 13 points. Pew divides its religion subgroups into white Catholics and Hispanic Catholics, but Smith did not provide information on Hispanic Catholics or for all Catholics.

Zogby International’s daily tracking poll of Oct. 23 showed Obama favored by 56 to 37 points among Catholics and with a lead of 52 to 41 points among all voters surveyed.

This year, much has been made of the back and forth between those who argue that church teaching obligates Catholics to base their votes only on the issue of abortion and those who say church teaching calls Catholics to consider a broader range of issues.

But Smith said fewer than half of Catholics say they believe abortion should be illegal in most or all cases and he said even fewer base their votes primarily on the issue of abortion.

“While pro-life Catholics who say abortion is very important to them as an issue are much more likely to support McCain,” Smith said, “they constitute less than one-quarter of all Catholics. In that way, Catholics are very much like the population overall.”

Catholic University sociology professor William D’Antonio looked at data showing how Catholic members of Congress have voted on legislation that had a clear pro-life position. By that standard, D’Antonio said, the politicians’ votes “were much more defined by party line than they were by religious affiliation.”

Poignancy, surprises in new film about late pope

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Pope John Paul II was lightly wounded by a knife-wielding priest in Portugal in 1982, one year after a gunman tried to kill him in St. Peter’s Square, the late pope’s top aide discloses in the documentary.

In the film, Cardinal Dziwisz said the pope was in fact able to carry on with the prayer service and the rest of his schedule in Fatima.

“It was only when we returned to his room that I saw blood on his vestments,” the cardinal added. He did not elaborate, but other Vatican sources said the pope may have been superficially wounded in the attack.

The 90-minute film, narrated in English by the actor Michael York but dubbed in Italian for the Vatican screening, used actors to depict scenes from the pope’s life along with historical video footage and still photographs.

COMMENTARY: Catholic involvement doesn’t end after vote is cast

(From 9)

They will especially have to look at the ongoing scandal of health care access for millions of families and children who have none. In this new economic environment, we must ask if there is a greater role for government in providing this basic right and others. The poor and working poor on the economic margins need a “bailout,” too. Catholics who vote for McCain must also hold him accountable for the acts of war in our name to make sure they are justified and not actions of irresponsible violence.

If Obama wins, Catholics who voted for him will have a heavy responsibility. As his first act in office, he has pledged to support and sign into law the Freedom of Choice Act, or FOCA. This legislation is also supported by our own, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The Freedom of Choice Act establishes, by federal law, that abortion is a “fundamental right” throughout the full nine months of pregnancy. If passed, it will effectively wipe out 35 years of legislation seeking to modify some of the worst aspects of abortion. It would eliminate restrictions on the infanticide of partial-birth abortions. It would wipe from the books of more than 35 states laws which provide for informed consent in abortion clinics, parental consent or even notification of parents in the case of minors. It will obliterate laws that protect doctors, nurses and health workers from having to perform abortions or other procedures that they find morally objectionable. On the world scene, the Mexico City policy will be reversed by executive order, allowing U.S. taxpayer dollars to promote and perform abortions overseas.

It will be devastating for the cause of life and major victory for the culture of death. American Catholics who voted for Obama will have to work long and hard to stop this from happening. If they fail, this will be an immense burden on their consciences for there will be an immediate uptick in the numbers of the unborn killed through abortion.

The responsibilities of voting are heavy. Catholics voting for either Obama or McCain will have to realize that their vote has consequences that go far beyond Nov. 4. Their involvement can’t end on Election Day in pursuing a culture of life and justice and peace for all.
SATAN: Fortunately, we are given the option of turning back on devil

(From13)

Gospel of Mark (5:1-20) in the discussion of the Gadarene demoniac. Throughout the ministry of Christ, the demons recognized him as the Son of God. Ancient cultures had a more complete grasp of the spiritual realm than modern man due in large part to the absence of technology. Ancient man was in constant contact and immediately subject to the natural law in the world in which he lived. The demons would react immediately to the presence of Christ and still do. In the account of the demoniac in the fifth chapter of Mark, we see many insights into the demonic world. This possessed man lived among the tombs, outside the community, with no friends among the living. He was fully possessed. His behavior indicates the conflict raging within. He goes to Jesus, seeking to be delivered. The demons beg by the name of God not to be tormented. The demons, who are many (a common occurrence as demons find an acceptable host they run in gangs), petition Jesus to abrogate the cosmic law which God set forth in Genesis 3, specifically prohibiting them from entering animals. They enter the swine with the permission of the Son of God, and immediately run to the lake. Under the water is the same as under the ground, it gave them safe and unexposed passage from the man possessed back to the netherworld. The demons are vulnerable in the air; imagine the host of angels which accompanied Jesus throughout his earthly life, standing at the ready to bind and cast down the demons as did the archangel Raphael the healer in Tobit 8. Return to Mark the fifth chapter. In the aftermath of the event the formerly possessed but now healed man, in his right mind, begs Jesus to be allowed to accompany him. Jesus refuses and instead said to him, “Go home to your friends.” In this short sentence, home represents family, friends are community, those who care about him. The predator cannot overcome one in right relationship and under the protection of family and friends. The adversary seeks to isolate us from those who would strengthen, protect, nourish, and love us. We also learn that not even a legion of demons can keep one from crying out to, and being healed by, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Though Satan has demanded that we be “sifted like wheat” (Luke 22:31), we have recourse to God through Jesus, for in the very next verse Christ assures us that he prays that our own faith may not fail. As soldiers of Christ we can do great things; but the adversary conquers mere humans. We must engage the adversary in the name of Christ. Our salvation lies in the salvation of others, for no man may exist outside his place in creation.

Today people commonly make themselves vulnerable to the adversary through the occult in all its forms—including divination, tarot cards, horoscopes, the Ouija board, good luck charms, and psychics. When a person, a family member, parent, and/or ancestor does so, he gives the adversary a legal right to participate in, or interfere with, his life. This legal right becomes part of his “ray of creation,” turning him away from God—an affirmative act of defiance, just as Eve’s act in the garden. Adam, although he does not initiate the sin, participates in it and more importantly, does not admonish Eve. Similarly, the act of using a Ouija board or reading horoscopes in the home is “Eve’s sin;” allowing it to happen is “Adam’s sin.” Just as the sin of Adam and Eve affected the whole human race, so also our occult sins will affect our family and its descendents to the third and fourth generation—if not cancelled by repentance. If we know the circumstances which will confront us and choose not to follow, then we diminish our trust, reliance, and obedience to God. He knows it is harder for us to seek him in prosperity than adversity for we tend to see prosperity not as a blessing but as a right, and adversity not as an opportunity for returning to God but as a misfortune. God speaks to this turning away specifically in Exodus 34:7, “punishing children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for their father’s wickedness”—a reiteration of the first institution of the commandments. Many of us forget that this admonition follows God’s promise of blessing to the thousandth generation of those who turn toward Him and take up His commandments. It is that thousandth generation blessing that the adversary seeks to destroy. Though our line of creation may have had a parent or ancestor who lost a spiritual battle and subjected us to three or four generations of curse, we have the opportunity to regain the thousandth generation blessing by turning toward God and leading our family back. God provides a myriad of tools for us to accomplish this task. Church in all her three forms, Militant, Penitent, and Triumphant will assist us.

The final article in this series will deal with the specifics of how to rid our lives of the influence of the adversary so that we may be effective members of the Church Militant. The last article will deal with specific strategies for reclaiming the thousandth generation blessing in spite of the adversary’s attempts to rob mankind of his eternal birthright.

ADORATION: Mary always to be a guide for us when praying with Blessed Sacrament

(From 4)

problems are found in our Eucharistic Lord. When we spend time with our Eucharistic Lord, we are sure to receive all the grace and strength that we need to deal with all of life’s issues. Our Eucharistic Lord will never fail us.

In his great apostolic exhortation, “Sacramentum Caritatis,” our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI concretized the perennial teaching of the Church on the centrality of Eucharistic adoration in the life of the Church by a direct appeal addressed to all pastors, bishops, priests, as well as all the People of God for perpetual Eucharistic adoration. Our Holy Father said: “I heartily recommend to the church’s pastors and the People of God the practice of Eucharistic adoration, both individually and in community.” [194] “Great benefit would ensue from a suitable catechesis explaining the importance of this act of worship, which enables the faithful to experience the liturgical celebration more fully and more fruitfully. Whenever possible, it would be appropriate, especially in densely populated areas, to set aside specific churches or oratories for perpetual adoration. I also recommend that, in their catechetical training, and especially in preparation for First Holy Communion, children be taught the meaning and beauty of spending time with Jesus, and help to cultivate a sense of awe before His presence in the Eucharistic." [67]

The holiness of the Church, and of each individual, is found first in a mystical union with Christ, in forming a deeper, loving relationship with our Eucharistic Lord. After using the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit to achieve this union, the one who can help us most is Mary, the Mother of the Word Incarnate. Mary was the one whom Jesus desired to be intimately united with Himself for the salvation of our humanity. Mary is the one who can teach us the most about Christ, because she was His teacher and she had an intimate, personal, loving relationship with Him that has never been achieved by any other human being.

Hence, when we come to spend time with Jesus in perpetual Eucharistic adoration, the one we need to call upon to help us to know how to adore, praise and thank Jesus is His own mother, Mary. She will always guide us as regards what we need to say and pray for, and to help us obtain all the graces that we need to carry out our many responsibilities, and to find answers to the difficulties and struggles of life. I strongly encourage more and more people of our Diocese to take part in the perpetual Eucharistic adoration in the cities where we have established chapels for this devotion in our Diocese. I am deeply grateful to the priests of these parishes for promoting perpetual Eucharistic adoration, the devotion of devotions.
FOCA: Act’s passage may recede right to life into distant future

(From 1)

In his statement to mark Respect Life Sunday, October 5, Cardinal Justin Rigali who leads the pro-life office of the U.S. Catholic Bishops pointed out the sweeping and dire effects if this legislation were approved: “FOCA establishes abortion as a “fundamental right” throughout the nine months of pregnancy, and forbids any law or policy that could "interfere" with that right.

BYRON: Ideology gets in way

(From 8)

Pope Pius XI in 1931 in "Quadragesimo Anno," marking the 40th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum."

Although they may never have heard of it, both Secretary Paulson and President Bush did, however, use the language of subsidiarity when they argued in September that the federal government had to come to the rescue because the problem was "too big" to be handled efficiently and effectively at any other level in our economic system.

Only government, what some critics scornfully call "big government," was up to the job.

The president and treasury secretary

were right. The Senate immediately agreed and the House of Representatives eventually came around to seeing the light.

This is not socialism any more than the New Deal was socialism. Much repair work remains to be done. The tradition of Catholic social thought can help.

Those responsible for fixing our problems must have competence (knowledge of economics and finance) and conscience (ethical principles).

Faith in themselves will help. Faith in God is not to be overlooked.

Ideology at either extreme of the political spectrum will only get in the way.
BIBLE: Year of Paul may work to bring more Catholics to their Bible

(From 11)

Catholic Catechism of the Catholic Church (#133) in referring to the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation from Vatican II states that the Church “forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful…to learn ‘the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ’ by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures.” It further quotes St. Jerome, who translated the Bible into the common language of the people (Vulgate) in the fourth century, “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” In that same constitution, the Council further urged the church to make every means available to read, study and pray the Scriptures, “Access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful”. (#22)

In just the last few months Pope Benedict XVI has emphasized the importance of the Bible in two ways. First, he has proclaimed this the Pauline Year (June 29, 2008-2009) urging us to listen to Paul’s letters in the Bible. We should let him teach us as his disciples. We can do that by beginning with his letters to the Philippians and Thessalonians.

Second, in October he convoked a Synod of bishops with the Bible as the theme, to seek renewal “from the family, to schools, culture, work, free time and other sectors of society and our lives”.

If you and I respond to these various encouragements, the next time we get that question, “Why don’t Catholics read the Bible?” We can truthfully respond, “I don’t know about others, but my life is immersed in the Bible, and I am going deeper and deeper each day!”