

INSIDE

Vocation Circle, p. 3
Praying for Peace, p. 4
36 Men Admitted to
Candidacy, p. 6
Community Walk for
Hunger, p. 7

Bishop Blesses Women's
Center, p. 8
Youth 2000, p. 9
First Youth Team, p. 10
Financial Report of Diocese,
p. 11



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First Priest Of The San Angelo Diocese Elevated To Bishop

by Pete Micale, WTA

SAN ANGELO - Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, announced at a press conference at 9:30 a.m. on November 30th, the appointment of Fr. Joe Vasquez, presently the pastor of St. Joseph's church in San Angelo, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Galveston/Houston and Titular Bishop of Cova. Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, apostolic nuncio to the United States, also announced the appointment in Washington on Nov. 30.

At the press conference, Bishop Pfeifer said: "While we in the Dio-

cese of San Angelo take great pride in this Episcopal appointment by our Holy Father, and joyful that one of our priests will become a Bishop, we will feel the loss of Fr. Vasquez in our Diocese, especially at St. Joseph's church where he has served as pastor since 1997."

Bishop-elect Vasquez made the following statement: "I wish to express my gratitude to God and his Holiness John Paul II for selecting me to serve as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. I am truly overwhelmed and surprised by this appointment which I

received the day after Thanksgiving from the Pro-Nuncio his Excellency Gabriel Montalvo. I would like to thank Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, for his continued support and encouragement in my ministry as a priest. Also, to the priests, religious and deacons of the Diocese for their fine example and prayers, I wish to say, 'Thank you.' I must also add a word of thanks to the Parish of St. Joseph, which I am presently serving, 'You will always have my heart with you.' I ask all to remember me in your prayers."

Bishop-elect Joe S. Vasquez was



Father Joseph S. Vasquez of San Angelo, Texas, has been named by Pope John Paul II as an auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. Bishop-designate Vasquez, 44, is a native Texan. The appointment was announced Nov. 30 in Washington by the apostolic nuncio. (CNS photo from Texas Catholic Herald)

born in Stamford, Texas on July 9, 1957. He attended Stamford and later Abilene public schools, and graduated from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas with a bachelor's degree in Theology. He then attended the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, and earned a master's degree in Theology. He then attended the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, and earned a doctorate in Theology. He then returned to the United States and served as a priest in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston and Titular Bishop of Cova on November 30, 2001. (see "FIRST," page five)



Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington congratulates Bishop Wilton D. Gregory following his election as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington Nov. 13. Bishop Gregory, of Belleville, Ill., became the first African-American elected president of the conference. (CNS photo by Nancy Wiechec)

New Bishops' President Hopes His Impact Goes Beyond Racial Identity

by Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Bishop Wilton D. Gregory hopes the attention to his election as the first African-American president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is seen as a sign of the church's commitment to be inclusive and multicultural.

But he also hopes the attention he receives because of his race serves as a tool for evangelization and provides a reason for people to

listen to what the U.S. bishops have to say on a whole spectrum of issues, from their commitment to Africa to their positions on immigration, school choice and debt reduction.

"It raises the possibility that in the secular world the Catholic Church is perceived for that which we are - a leaven for truth and for justice," said Bishop Gregory, one of 11 active black U.S. Catholic bishops.

In the end, he hopes the picture

of himself that emerges is more textured than that of being the first bishops' conference president from a racial minority: He's an African-American convert to Catholicism who knows a lot about liturgy, articulates the church's teachings and positions well and is a fair and even-handed leader.

Bishop Gregory, of Belleville, Ill., who turns 54 on Dec. 7, was elected president of the USCCB

see "NEW," page ten



What Does Christmas Celebrate?

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

“And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

These words of the angel of God about an infant in a manger being a sign are proclaimed in the Gospel for Midnight Mass. And as we gather to celebrate the birthday of the God man, Jesus Christ, we ask what this sign means for us today. We ask the question, what does Christmas really celebrate?

Christmas celebrates a human event, an encounter with the humanity of Jesus Christ. Christmas recognizes how the God who created human beings to know, love and serve, realized that human beings could not know, love or serve anything that they could not wrap or put their arms around. Thus, God became a human being in Jesus.

As a human, Jesus was born, He grew, He worked, He sweated, He suffered, He laughed, He cried, and He died as all humans do except He died the worse possible death of His day, dying like a criminal on a cross. In His body, Jesus knew the smell of bread baking, and the warm breath of animals. He felt the heat of the sun and He also felt the touch of the hand of a friend. He heard the cry of a widow whose son had died. He tasted new wine, and also the dust of the road that He walked, and the fish that He shared with his apostles. He saw the world around Him, and He looked into the hearts of people.

At Christmas the church celebrates the experience of Jesus being a human being in a very unique, concrete manner. At its center, Christmas celebrates the meaning of the experiences of being human. Part of being human is pain and pleasure, suffering and joy, dying and rising to new life.

Christmas means that in Jesus, God accepts our humanness – our anguish and brokenness – and that through and because of Jesus we, too, can accept what it means to be human. We are called to live the human life in the fullest manner. Whenever we fully and truly accept ourselves as Jesus did, we are following in the footsteps of Jesus who fully accepted Himself.

In Jesus, the baby in the manger, we can recognize the face of God and we can learn how to love and discover how to serve. Jesus is not a divine replica, but the divine reality itself.

see “CHRISTMAS” page eight



¿Que Celebra la Navidad?

Por Obispo Miguel D. Pfeifer, OMI

«Esto les servirá de señal: encontraran al niño envuelto en pañales y recostado en un pesebre.»

Estas palabras del Ángel de Dios sobre un niño en un pesebre como señal, oímos proclamadas en el Evangelio. Mientras nos reunimos para celebrar el cumpleaños de Hombre Dios, Jesucristo, nos preguntamos, ¿que significa esta señal para nosotros ahora? Hacemos la pregunta, ¿que verdaderamente celebra la Navidad?

La Navidad celebra un evento humano, un encuentro con la humanidad de Jesucristo.

La Navidad reconoce como el Dios que creó a seres humanos para saber, amar y servir, realizó que los seres humanos no podían saber, amar o servir si no tuvieran a alguien a abrazarse con los brazos. Así Dios se hizo un ser humano en Jesús.

Como un humano, Jesús fue nacido, el creció, el trabajo, el sudo, el sufrió, el le dio risa, el lloro, y el se murió como todos humanos pero el se murió en la peor manera de su día, como un criminal en la cruz. En su cuerpo, Jesús sabía el olor de pan, y el caliente aliento de animales. El sentía el calor del sol y también sentía la mano de un amigo. El oyó el llanto de una viuda cuando su hijo murió. El gusto el sabor del vino verdadero, y también del polvo del camino que el camino, y el pescado que el compartió con sus Apóstoles. El miraba al mundo alrededor de El, y el miro en los corazones de la gente.

En la Navidad la Iglesia celebra la experiencia de Jesús siendo un ser humano en una manera única y concreta. En su centro, la Navidad celebra lo que significa las experiencias de ser un humano. Una parte de ser humano es el dolor y el gusto, sufrimiento y alegría, muriendo y resucitando a vida nueva.

La Navidad significa que en Jesús, Dios acepta nuestra naturaleza humana, nuestra angustia y dolor de corazón y por y con Jesús nosotros, también podemos aceptar lo que significa ser humano. Somos llamado a vivir la vida humana en la manera mas llena. Cuando verdaderamente aceptamos nosotros mismos, como Jesús, estamos siguiendo en los pasos de Jesús quien totalmente se aceptó si mismo.

see “NAVIDAD” page nine

The Bishop's Schedule



December 2001

December 1: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - 11:00 a.m. Mass for World AIDS Day

December 2: Carlsbad, St. Therese - 9:30 a.m. Mass and Prayer Service at state school at chapel at 11:00 a.m.

December 3: San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center - Mass for Staff at 8:30 a.m. Staff meeting at 11:15 a.m.

December 4: Dallas - Mass for

Holy Spirit Circle at 6:00 p.m.

December 6: Odessa, St. Mary - Advent Night of Prayer for all Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives of the Midland/Odessa Deanery at 7:00 p.m.

December 7-8: Indianapolis - National Youth Gathering

December 9: San Angelo, Fort Concho - Mass at 11:00 a.m. West Texas Boys Ranch - Christmas Prayer Service at 4:00 p.m.

December 10: San Angelo, Holy Angels - Advent Night of Prayer for all Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives of the San Angelo Deanery at 7:00 p.m.

December 11: Eden, Detention Center - Mass at 2:00 p.m.

December 12: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at 7:00 p.m.

December 13: San Angelo, Presbyteral Council Meeting 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.. Christmas Party for all Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives 5:30 p.m. at Christ the King Retreat Center

December 14: Rest and Prayer
December 16: Odessa, Holy Redeemer - 40th Anniversary Mass at 11:45 a.m.

December 17: San Angelo, Bishop's Residence - 6:00 p.m. Christmas Staff Party

December 18: San Angelo, San Angelo Community Hospital - Mass at 11:00 a.m. in Conference Room. Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart Penance Service at 7:00 p.m.
December 20: San Angelo, Baptist Memorial Hospital - Mass at 3:00 p.m.

December 21: San Angelo, Angelo Catholic School - Christmas Mass for students at 8:30 a.m.

December 23: Sanderson, St.

James - Mass at 3:00 p.m.

December 24: San Angelo, Tom Green County Jail - Mass at 9-00 a.m. Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Christmas Midnight Mass

December 25: San Angelo, Goodfellow Air Force Base - Mass at 9:00 a.m.

December 26-28: Rest and Prayer

December 29: San Angelo - Lunch with Seminarians for the Diocese of San Angelo at 11:30 a.m.

December 30: San Angelo, Rob Roy Juvenile Detention Center - Mass at 10:00 a.m.

January 2002

January 1: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Mass at 9:00 a.m.

January 3-4: Rest and Prayer
January 6: Bronte, Coke Co. Juvenile Detention Center - Prayer at 3:00 p.m. St. James Church - Mass at 5:00 p.m.

January 7-9: San Juan, Meeting of Texas Border Bishops with Bishops of Mexico

January 10: San Angelo, Mass for Staff of Diocesan Pastoral Center at 8:30 a.m. Staff meeting at 11:30 a.m.

January 11-13: San Angelo, Concho Pavilion at San Angelo Fairgrounds - Youth 2000

January 13: San Angelo, Fairgrounds - Mass for Youth 2000 at 10:45 a.m.

January 15: San Angelo, St. Joseph Church - Farewell Mass and Dinner for Bishop-Elect Joe Vasquez
January 16-18: Colorado Springs, Southwest Liturgical Conference

January 20: Coahoma, St. Joseph - Mass at 9:15 a.m.

January 21: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Prayer Service for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at 12:00 noon

January 22: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Pro Life Mass at 12:00 noon

January 23: Houston, Ordination of Bishop-Elect Joe Vasquez

January 26: Brownwood, Attend Knights of Columbus Bi-District Banquet. Mass at 4:00 p.m.

January 27: Coleman, Sacred Heart - Mass at 10:30 a.m.

January 28-31: Honduras, Diocese of San Pedro Sula

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Vocation Circle

by Ferney Medina

My name is Ferney Medina. I am 25 years old and currently studying in St. Mary's Seminary in Houston. God willing, I will be ordained as a priest for the Diocese of San Angelo in two years. I began studying to become a priest in Colombia, South America, almost 10 years ago. It certainly has been a long process, but one in which I have encountered so many satisfactions and beautiful lessons for life. I have learned that being a priest is not easy. It is a challenge and you need to be quite a brave person to accept any challenge in life, especially if it involves a long life decision like for being a priest. Likewise, it is not always an even and smooth path. This is certainly how I have experienced my vocation.

I was fourteen years old when I first felt the desire to become a priest. I kept living my life, doing well in school, going out with my friends, playing soccer, and just being a normal young guy. At the same time I tried to keep up with my spiri-

tual concerns and life of faith, because I knew of my increasing interest in being a priest. After I finished high school at the age of 16, I began my university education with the desire to go to the seminary as soon as I felt prepared for that step. After two years of college I entered the seminary and finished my philosophical studies. However, many doubts kept entering my mind. Then, for the sake of my vocation, I decided to get out of the seminary and do something different for a while. I returned to the University, where I began my theological studies and I took a part time job as a computer assistant in a shoe factory in my home city, Medellin, Colombia. It was a wonderful time, but God had another lesson for me.

After year and a half of university studies, I decided to leave my studies and my job and to go to a little town in the middle of the Andes Mountains. It was four hours from my city Medellin. It was the most beautiful place with plenty of clear rivers and green vegetation every-

where, it was magical. There in partnership with one of my uncles I built a little cafe. I entered into a new stage of my life. I tried to forget about God and everything related to him. I wanted to concentrate on my work and my new life of owning a nice place. Things went pretty well for a while. Everything was like a dream, business was good, I had many friends, I visited interesting places. Everyday was full of surprises. Yet, somehow there was something lacking in my life. It did not take me long to discover that that something was God. I decided to return to God. I began praying again, and again and again. It did not take me long to realize that I wanted to go back to the seminary. I left everything that I thought I had valued and enrolled at the University again. I supported myself by a part time job of being a taxi driver in Medellin. It was a risky job, but it was the way that God was using to teach me a lesson about people and my love for them. It was not easy, but I enjoyed every moment of it.

After a year of theological studies, I was invited by the Diocese of San Angelo to come to United States

and continue my studies towards the priesthood here. I came, I learned English and in the fall of 1999 I went to St. Mary's Seminary in Houston to continue my studies. I was accepted into the second year of theology. It was a great year. I made many friends and learned many new things. My spiritual life was enriched in an environment that treasures spirituality. Two summers ago I was in Clinical Pastoral Education in Hillcrest Baptist Hospital in Waco where I worked as a chaplain for the summer. I encountered many challenging and trying situations that had a transforming effect on me. I was led to grow spiritually and personally. At the same time, this experience equipped me with many ministerial tools for my pastoral year. Last year I experienced my pastoral year at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church in Ballinger. It was a wonderful year where I became part of their church family. I visited the sick, the elderly, prisoners; and serve them, risk their own lives in defense of the common good, which is a great service to our nation and an act of Christian virtue. We also pray for the Afghan people and for our adversaries. We call on Catholics to join in a National Day of Prayer for Peace on January 1, 2002.

• *A Time for Fasting.* As long as this struggle continues, we urge Catholics to fast one day a week.

• *A Time for Teaching.* Many Catholics know the Church's teaching on war and peace. Many do not. This is a time to share our principles and values, to invite discussion and dialogue.

• *A Time for Dialogue.* This is an urgent time to engage in dialogue with Muslims, Jews, fellow Christians and other faith communities. We need to know more about and understand better other faiths; especially Islam.

• *A Time for Witness.* In our work and communities, we should live our values of mutual respect, human dignity, and respect for life. We should seek security without embracing discrimination.

• *A Time for Service.* Catholic Charities throughout the United States is providing assistance to families, parishes, neighborhoods



Ferney Medina, a seminarian from Colombia.

many families from the parish. I helped to coach a soccer team and spent time with the youth of the parish. I helped Fr. Hugh Wade with baptisms, funerals, confirmations, and many other celebrations. I had the opportunity to give presentations and to share spirituality with others. In other words, I learned what the

see "VOCATION," page eight and communities directly affected by the attacks on September 11. This is a time for generous and sacrificial giving. (I point out here that our own Diocese has generously sent \$89,143.80 to the victims of the tragedy of September 11.)

• *A Time for Solidarity.* We are not the first to experience such horrors. We now understand better the daily lot of millions of people around the world who have long lived under the threat of violence and uncertainty and have refused to give in to fear or despair. We stand with all those whose lives are at risk and whose dignity is denied in this dangerous world.

• *A Time for Hope.* Above all, we need to turn to God and to one another in hope. Hope assure us that, with God's grace, we will see our way through what now seems such a daunting challenge. For believers, hope is not a matter of optimism but a source for strength and action in demanding times. For peacemakers, hope is the indispensable virtue.

We face these tasks with faith and hope, asking God to protect and guide us as we seek to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in these days of trial."

A Pastoral Message On The Aftermath Of September 11

by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

At the recent meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, the Bishops gave much time, consideration and discussion to the issue of terrorism and the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11. The Bishops issued a special message for the Catholic people of our country entitled, "*A Pastoral Message On The Aftermath Of September 11.*" As the Bishops prepared this message, they gathered for a special Mass at the National Shrine on Monday, November 12, offering a Mass for Peace under the Patronage of Mary Immaculate. I share with you in this article some of the highlights of this powerful statement.

"As Catholic bishops, we offer words of consolation, criteria for moral discernment, and a call to action and solidarity in these troubling and challenging times. After September 11, we serve a wounded people. We share their loss and pain, their anger and fear, their shock and

determination in the face of these attacks on our nation and on all humanity. We also honor the selflessness of fire fighters, police, chaplains, and others who lost their lives in the service of others. These women and men are our true heroes.

The dreadful deeds of September 11 cannot go unanswered. We continue to urge resolve, restraint, and greater attention to the roots of terrorism to protect against further attacks and to advance the global common good. Our nation must continue to pray and to respond in many ways, including through diplomacy, economic measures, effective intelligence, and ever more focus on security at home as we pursue the legitimate use of force.

No grievance, no matter what the claim, can legitimate what happened on September 11. Without in any way excusing indefensible terrorist acts, we still need to address those conditions of poverty and injustice which are exploited by terrorists. A successful campaign against terror-

ism will require a combination of resolve to do what is necessary to see it through, restraint to ensure that we act justly, and a long term focus on broader issues of justice and peace."

We reiterated that no cause, no grievance can justify flying civilian aircraft into office towers or poisoning postal workers and public figures. Rectifying this injustice will demand prudent action to build a safer, more just and more peaceful world.

"It has been said many times that September 11 changed the world. This is true in many ways, but the essential tasks of our community of faith continue with a new urgency and focus. The weeks and months and years ahead will be:

• *A Time for Prayer.* We pray for the victims and their families, for our President and national leaders, for police and fire fighters, postal, health care and relief workers, and for military men and women. American service personnel, and chaplains who



Twelve Questions on the Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani 2000 and the Pastoral Introduction to the Order of Mass

(Editor's note: Starting in the September edition and in the following three editions of the WT Angelus questions and answers have been printed which were prepared by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Secretariat (BCL) to help clarify the work in progress on the revision of the Roman Missal and its implementation in the dioceses of the United States. They are reprinted with permission from the September 2000 BCL Newsletter. With the recent news releases regarding the upcoming promulgation of the third edition of the Roman Missal, along with the publication of the English study translation of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, many pastors and liturgical leaders are asking how they might prepare their parishes for this next step in the ongoing renewal of the liturgy. The anticipation of a new Sacramentary in English provides an opportune moment for a renewed catechesis in general, and the Eucharist and Eucharistic celebrations in particular. This catechesis, well prepared at the diocesan and parish level will provide the firm foundation on which to understand the ongoing reform.)

10. What is the Pastoral Introduction to the Order of Mass?

The Pastoral Introduction is a resource to assist those involved in the planning, preparation, celebration and catechesis of the liturgy in the dioceses of the United States. The Pastoral Introduction clarifies and systematizes material scattered throughout the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, rubrics of the Missal and other sources, providing concrete and pastorally helpful liturgical guidance.

11. What is the difference between the Pastoral Introduction to the Order of Mass and the Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani (General Instruction of the Roman Missal)?

The Institutio Generalis (General Instruction) is the universal law of the Church. The Pastoral Introduction is not law, but a commentary on the law provided as a popular pastoral tool for understanding the proper celebration of the Eucharist. The Pastoral Introduction presumes the General Instruction and is in no way intended to replace it. The Pastoral Introduction cannot be read apart from the General Instruction.

12. Has the Pastoral Introduction been approved for publication by Rome?

Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, has called the Pastoral Introduction to the Order of Mass a "useful pastoral instrument for liturgical formation of the People of God" which addresses "appropriately and felicitously the specific ecclesial and pastoral context" of the United States of America. The Congregation has returned the Pastoral Introduction to the Order of Mass to the NCCB with minor revisions, most of which help to bring the text of the Pastoral Introduction into conformity with the recently published Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani.

Pray for Rain!

Praying For Peace: The More Things Change, The More They Remain Same

by John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When Pope John Paul II first convened an interfaith prayer gathering in 1986, the biggest danger on the world horizon was the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, with the specter of Europe as a potential nuclear battleground.

The pope again has invited religious leaders to the Italian hill town of Assisi to pray for peace, and this time the international community faces a new threat: terrorism capable of mass destruction.

How things have changed in just 15 years. The Cold War is over, the Soviet Union has disintegrated, and U.S. and Russian presidents seem the best of friends.

In 1986, the United States was arming and funding an Islamic jihad against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Today, its troops long withdrawn from Afghanistan, Russia has openly supported U.S. air strikes that toppled the Taliban fundamentalist regime.

Many of the wars that dotted the map in 1986 have disappeared — in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Lebanon, for example. New ones have come and gone: Iran-Iraq, the Gulf War, Croatia, Bosnia, Yu-



This is a 1986 file photo of the interfaith prayer gathering in the Italian town of Assisi, which brought world religious leaders together to pray for peace in the face of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Pope John Paul II has requested interfaith clerics to join him for a new peace gathering on Jan. 24, also to be held in Assisi. From left are Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch Methodios of Constantinople, Pope John Paul II and the Dalai Lama. (CNS file photo by KNA)

goslavia, Somalia, and various episodes of ethnic bloodletting in central Africa.

An agreement has finally come to Northern Ireland, and apartheid has ended in South Africa. Yet the world is not necessarily a more peaceful place today, with more than 35 wars simmering around the globe — a number that has sharply increased over the last four years. Chief among them is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which has wors-

ened dramatically over the past year.

The Sept. 11 attacks shocked the world because they were carried out in the United States, killed thousands of innocent civilians in one blow and revealed the capabilities and depth of anti-American resentment among some Islamic extremists.

They represent a new challenge to church leaders, too, as they try to

see "PEACE", page nine

San Pedro Sula Collection

by Msgr. Larry J. Droll

Thank you so much for your generosity in the special collection held the first weekend in November for the Diocese of San Pedro Sula in Honduras. San Pedro Sula is a sister diocese to the Dioceses of Tyler and San Angelo. It will take some weeks for all the collections to be sent in; early reports, however, have shown a very generous response. These funds will soon be sent to Honduras.

Some flooding was reported in the Diocese of San Pedro Sula, due to the rains from Hurricane Michelle. Sea coast towns like Tela and La Ceiba were affected, and low-lying areas like that around the San Pedro Sula airport. The Diocese

of San Pedro Sula is in the western part of the country; the eastern side seems to have suffered more from the hurricane.

The bishop of San Pedro Sula, Most Rev. Angel Garachana, has established a new parish in the area called Chamelecon. The new pastor of Most Holy Trinity Parish is Fr. Tom Goekler, MM, and the parochial vicar is Fr. David LaBuda, MM. They have been serving this area as part of a larger parish for some years. Fr. Goekler is known for his work with teenage gangs and building homes for the very poor. Last summer he hosted the mission trip participants from St. Ambrose Parish in Wall. Fr. LaBuda has established a project of removing tat-

toos, so that former gang members can get jobs. The Youth Group of St. Therese in Carlsbad recently donated equipment to this project.

The new parish has an estimated 80,000 inhabitants. There are fifteen churches and chapels to serve the people. At the inauguration ceremony for the parish, Fr. Goekler reported they prepared food for 1,500. "But it wasn't enough," he added.

People from the Diocese of San Angelo interested in learning more about the Diocese of San Pedro Sula or assisting with projects there are invited to contact me at Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902.



Advent – A Time To Open Doors

by Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer,
OMI

Advent comes from the Latin *Adventus* which means coming. The liturgical season of Advent prepares us for the great coming of Jesus Christ on the beautiful Feast of Christmas.

The Holy One of God, Jesus our Messiah, came in human form as a wondrous being, blessing our planet with his presence some 2,000 years ago. Jesus described Himself as a “door” to the sacred. (Jn 70: 7) Through His humanity, Jesus became a passage way for communion with God.

Advent is a season of opening doors. It is a time to deepen and strengthen our relationship with the Holy One so that more of the divine presence within us shines through and offers a welcome to others. It is a season to open the doors of our hearts so that we can both give and receive this love which comes from God. One of the ways we can do this is by seeing ourselves and others as doors through which the divine presence continually seeks an entrance.

Each of us, because of our baptism, has a sacred door. It is the place where we meet the Holy One, Emmanuel, in our midst. Advent

encourages us to be ready to hear the knock on the door and to welcome this loving presence ever more fully.

Advent reminds us that each coming and going of our daily routine is an opportunity to meet God - With - Us. It is up to us to welcome Emmanuel and then be a door so that he can come into the lives of others, especially our family members. The key is in the lock of our heart. The Divine Visitor is at the door knocking to come into our hearts. We need only to open wide the door with our welcome.

Students Invited To Enter Christopher Poster Contest

NEW YORK – The Christophers invite all high school students to share their unique ideas and creative talent by entering the Twelfth Annual Christopher Poster Contest for High School Students with prizes totaling \$2,000. To enter, each artist must illustrate his or her interpretation of the statement, “You Can Make a Difference.” This broad theme allows students the freedom to express themselves on any issue that interests them.

Last year’s contest drew over 2,100 entries from public, private and parochial schools around the United States and the world. Winning works included paintings, photographs, and linoleum block prints.

Msr. Jim Lisante, director of the

Christophers launched the competition saying, “in light of recent events, it’s more important than ever to empower young people with this positive message. Our future depends on their enthusiasm and outlook, so we have to let them know that their talents and abilities can be a force for positive change.”

Students in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to enter. Posters must include the words, “You Can Make a Difference.” They will be judged on overall impact, effectiveness in conveying the theme, originality and artistic merit. Entries must be received by January 25, 2002. All posters become the property of The Christophers and will not be returned.

Complete rules are available by writing to: High School Poster Contest, The Christophers, 12 East 48th Street, New York, NY 10017, or by calling 212-759-4050. They are also available at: www.christophers.org/contests.html on the Web.

The Christophers, a non-profit organization founded in 1945, uses print and broadcast media to highlight those individuals working to change the world for the better. These programs are designed to inspire others to also pursue positive and constructive action. The Christophers’ motto is: “It’s better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”

Call For Entries For KC Father Michael J. McGivney Award

CRITERIA – Stories of any length published between Jan. 1, 2001 and Dec. 31, 2001 are eligible. Stories SHOULD NOT be about the volunteer efforts of Knights of Columbus councils in your diocese or individual Knights specifically. We’re looking to honor the writers who have introduced your readers to outstanding volunteers who keep parishes, food banks, soup kitchens, etc., running and who witness to the

Gospel through their actions.

Up to three articles per publication may be submitted. Photocopies of the stories are sufficient. Photo essays or single photos ARE NOT eligible. All entries must be submitted to: Tim S. Hickey c/o Knights of Columbus Supreme Council, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510-3326

PRIZE – Total cash prize of \$500 for first-place (\$250 to writer + \$250

to charity of his/her choice). Certificates of recognition for top three finishers. Awards to be handed out at 2002 Catholic Press Association Awards Banquet.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES – Jan. 31, 2002

MORE INFORMATION – Contact Tim S. Hickey at tim.hickey@kofc-supreme.com or at 203-772-2130, x. 303, 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. (Eastern).

Religious Retirement Collection Set For December 8-9

by Sister Mary Ann Walsh, RSM

The 14th national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will be taken up in most Catholic parishes nationwide December 8-9. The theme of this year’s collection is “Share in the Care.”

The annual appeal helps retired members of religious orders-sisters, brothers and priests who spent their lives in church ministries such as education, health care, and social services.

There are an estimated 35,000 sisters and 5,000 brothers and priests religious over the age of 70 in the United States. The unfunded retirement liability of the nation’s religious orders is estimated at \$6.1 billion, down from the record high of \$7.9 billion. Last year the fund collected \$32.6 million and provided assistance to almost 500 religious orders.

Sister Andrée Fries, a Sister of the Most Precious Blood of O’Fallon, Missouri, and executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office, said the needs of religious are still pressing.

“Hundreds of religious institutes have depended on this collection over the past 13 years,” she said. “We also are finding other religious congregations who are just learning about assistance available to them for the health care and living costs of their members who are past retirement age.”

Recently, hit TV star Martin Sheen, who was taught by Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and Marianist Brothers in Dayton, Ohio, recorded TV and radio public service announcements to promote this year’s campaign.

“Mr. Sheen gave his time and talent in the midst of a tight taping schedule for the award-winning series *West Wing*,” Sister Andrée said. “He was incredibly busy but wanted to assist us because he remembered how much his early teachers had helped him.”

The National Religious Retirement Office notes that the increasing median age among religious makes this collection especially important now.

Of more than 70,000 women religious in the country, 53 percent are now past 70; of the more than 15,000 men, 35 percent are past 70. Total cost of care for them last year in independent, assisted living and nursing homes was \$716 million. The annual Social Security benefit received by an individual religious is less than \$4,000.

Since the appeal was established in 1988 by the US. bishops and leaders of national associations of religious orders, the religious retirement collection has collected more than \$351 million, making it the most successful regular collection in the history of the Church in the United States. Last year’s record collection of \$32.6 million included contributions exceeding \$1 million from Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Buffalo.

“Religious work in schools, houses of prayer, parishes, soup kitchens, AIDS hospices, and day care centers,” said Sister Andrée. “American Catholics have benefited beyond measure and they generously support the RFR campaign,” she said.

FIRST from page one

University in Rome, Italy for the period 1980–1985. Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza ordained him on June 29, 1984.

Bishop Pfeifer also announced

that Bishop-elect Vasquez’s Episcopal ordination would take place in Houston at 7 p.m. at the Charismatic Center on January 23, 2002. A farewell Mass and dinner for Bishop-elect Vasquez will be at St. Joseph’s church on Jan. 15, 2002 at 7 p.m. to which the public is invited.

Pray for Peace



Thirty Six Men Admitted to Candidacy for the Diaconate



Pictured with the candidates in the front row (l-r) are Fr. John Castro, O.M.I., who assists with the formation program; Mrs. Pam Graham, who assists the program with directed sessions for wives and liturgy preparations; Deacon Tim Graham, Associate Director; Bishop Michael F. Pfeifer; Fr. Tom Kelley, Director; Fr. Tom Barley, Spiritual Director; Oblate School of Theology professor, Scott Woodward, who oversees academic instruction. (Photo by Jim Bean.)

by Deacon Tim Graham

On Sunday, November 3, Bishop Pfeifer presided at a mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral where he accepted thirty-six men as candidates for ordination as deacons. After almost two years of discernment and study, the men and their wives made a commitment to the bishop to continue their preparation for the remaining three years of formation.

Candidacy is a major step in the preparation of future deacons and priests. Those in charge of their formation provide a formal declaration of the candidates' fitness to move forward in their course of study and formation. It is also a public statement by the candidates that they intend to receive holy orders, and the bishop's public statement that he accepts their intentions. During his homily, the bishop emphasized that they are moving toward ordination as deacons, not just for their own parish or even for the Diocese of San Angelo, but for the universal Church. Theirs will be a life of dedicated service as ministers just as Christ was a servant to all, he said.

Fr. Tom Kelley, Pastor of Our Lady of San Juan in Midland, and Deacon Tim Graham, Pastoral Associate at St. Theresa's in Junction, oversee the formation of the men and their wives. Fr. Kelley, the Director of Formation, told the group just after the mass that he felt "... a deep sense of pride that you have persevered thus far and are so committed to the Church."

Those accepted into candidacy and their wives are:

1. Aquirre, Jesse and Ilda, St. Mary's, San Angelo
2. Arguello, Johnny & Connie, Sacred Heart, Big Springs
3. Arispe, Ronnie & Juanita, St. Ann, Colorado City
4. Belman, Victor & Sylvia, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Eldorado
5. Brady, Bill & Gloria, St. Mary, Brownwood
6. Butler, Bill & Margaret, Holy Family, Sweetwater
7. Casarez, Arturo & Elena, Sacred Heart, Abilene
8. Dress, Jim & Marian, St. Margaret, San Angelo
9. Evans, Charlie & Carolyn, Holy Redeemer, Odessa
10. Fernandez, Able & Mary, St. Joseph, San Angelo
11. Franco, Flabio & Priscilla, St. Joseph, Odessa
12. Hinajos, Paul R. & Dorothy, St. Joseph, Odessa
13. Kalig, Michael & Patsy, St. Peter, Mertzon
14. Kenny, Michael & Allyson, Holy Family, Abilene
15. Knox, Beck & Mary, Sacred Heart, Coleman
16. Lambert, Chuck & Nancy, Holy Family, Abilene
17. LaMonica, Mike & Madolyn, Our Lady of San Juan, Midland
18. Leibrecht, Bob & Julie, St. Stephen, Midland
19. Lopez, Victor & Mary, Our

- Lady of Guadalupe, Midland
 20. Medina, Miguel & Lady Ann, Our Lady of San Juan, Midland
 21. Ortiz, Jesse & Celia, St. Mary, Odessa
 22. Pelto, Harry & Cathy, Holy Angels, San Angelo
 23. Pepper, Steve & Dorothy, St. Elizabeth, Odessa
 24. Perez, Alex & Jesus Maria, Our Lady of San Juan, Midland
 25. Perez, Carl, St. Joseph, San Angelo
 26. Primera, Salvador & Lupe, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Odessa
 27. Ramirez, Ray & Frances, St. Joseph, San Angelo
 28. Ramos, Juan & Norma, Our Lady of San Juan, Midland
 29. Reeh, Mark, St. Lawrence, Linda
 30. Reyes, Reuben, St. Agnes, Fr. Stockton Minnie
 31. Salvidar, Fidel & Alicia, St. Stephen, Midland
 32. Segura, Felix & Margie, Sacred Heart, McCamy
 33. Sosa, Alex, St. Joseph, Odessa
 34. Sotelo, Chano & Becky, Our Lady of San Juan, Midland
 35. Villa, Clemente & Abby, St. Joseph, Stanton
 36. Villa, Ignacio & Olga, Our Lady of San Juan, Midland
- Reflecting on their experience up to this time in their formation, Bob Leibrecht and his wife Julie had this to say.

"We are members of St. Stephen's in Midland. As laity, we have not always been active in our parish; however, there was a renewed awakening with the very tragic death of our 21 year old son on Valentine's Day in 1998. Through the loving support of our pastor, Father Bridges and our parish family, we developed a much greater appreciation for our church community. From that time, we began to realize our true Christian responsibility and wanted to give back by offering our time and talent to a variety of tasks within our parish and community at large. Applying for diaconal formation was a major calling we felt God had in mind for us. All the candidates are working to become Christ-like through more frequent reception of the sacraments, prayer forms such as the liturgy of the hours and spiritual direction as a means to challenge our growth. Christian formation is being stimulated through the thought provoking training sessions offered in areas of theology and spirituality. This broad training for the permanent diaconate provides a solid foundation for entering ordained ministry in the diocese. With love in our hearts and a desire to serve, the Holy Spirit will equip us so that we can have an impact in building community and spreading the love of Jesus to all."

Following the new Directory for the Life, Formation and Ministry of Permanent Deacons, being promulgated by the U.S. Catholic Bishops,

our formation process involves academic studies, theological reflection and pastoral ministry experience under supervision and evaluation for a period of almost five years. Along with spiritual direction and liturgical training and practice, the candidates are challenged to identify and address social justice issues in order to bring the Church and Christ into areas where there is a lack of spiritual awareness, be that in government endeavors or private business enterprise.

Therein lies one of the most important characteristics of the diaconate. They are Catholic clergy who are engaged in the marketplace. They are found in government offices, feed stores, corporate structures and small businesses as well as in the church office, leading congregations with preaching, sacraments and teaching. They are a new kind of clergy for the Catholic Church, and as we enter the 21st century, that kind of presence for the Church is critical.

The celebration of candidacy filled the Cathedral with family and friends praying together for these men and their wives, that their ministry will enrich not just those in the Catholic Church, but everyone who thirsts for the love of God. All of us are invited to keep these fine couples in our prayers for the next three years as they prepare for holy orders, and to thank God for the commitment they are preparing to make for us all.



Community Walk For Hunger

by Pat Lowery

The 4th annual Community Walk for Hunger was held on Saturday, October 31, 2001 to collect food for various charities in San Angelo. This was organized as in past years by the three San Angelo Knights of Columbus councils – San Angelo council 2136, Holy Angels council 12008, and St. Joseph council 12798. The walk started at the Shannon Clinic parking lot and after 3.7 miles ended at Colt Stadium. A total of 6 tons of food was collected, the largest part gathered the previous weekend at various food stores. The food and cash donations were given to the following agencies – Salvation Army, Family Shelter and Catholic Outreach. The financial sponsors for this year's walk were Town & Country Food Stores, Wells Fargo Bank, Concho Valley Concessions, and Coca-Cola.



(Photos by Joe Rodriguez.)



A Component Of Youth Ministry Comes Alive

by Sr. Hilda Marotta

The Ministry of Justice and Service came alive when high school youth at St. Ann's, Midland, TX. participated in a scavenger hunt during their normally scheduled religious education classes. With the help of about 20 junior high youth, they collected almost 1500 cans of food and \$10.00 cash donations. Over 50 students delivered the food collection to the Midland Soup Kitchen during their Thanksgiving break. Others served dinner to over 125 persons at the Kitchen. These young people are learning that justice and service are central to who we are as God's people and to how we live our faith at home, in our communities, and in the world. What a good experience for all who participated to give thanks and to prepare for Advent.

Photos by Office of Education and Evangelization





Bishop Blesses Permian Basin Women's Resource Center

by Mike LaMonica

Bishop Michael came to Midland on October 9th to bless the Permian Basin Women's Resource Center as well as deliver a donation from the diocese. According to the Director, Judy Rouse, the Bishop has consistently sent a donation from the Diocese every month for the past few years. Bishop Michael toured the facility and then blessed the Center and all the workers who were present.



Bishop Michael Pfeifer speaks to Crisis Pregnancy Center Staff. (Photo by Mike LaMonica.)

The Clinic began in 1979 primarily by parishoner's of St. Ann's Church in Midland as a crisis hotline for women considering the choice of abortion. Today, the Center has blossomed into a four-fold ministry outreach and has a 9 member board from various Christian denominations. In prevention education, TAsk, Teens Are Saying k NO w program, has been taught across West Texas to over 24 schools reaching over 9,000 students in Midland and the Permian Basin. The program is available to Church organizations as well as it was presented to over 100 youth from Our Lady of San Juan Church in Midland in October.

In crisis intervention, the Permian Basin Women's Resource Center sees an average of 1,700 women each year for pregnancy tests, counsel, and operates a small on-site clothing closet for maternity cloth-

ing, baby goods, infant car seats and basinets. The Permian Basin Women's Resource Clinic was opened in the fall of 2000 and has seen over 100 women for prenatal screening and sonogram verification of pregnancy. The Clinic will host on-site STD testing by the Midland Health Department in October 2001 for PBWRC clients and their partners. And finally, "Beyond Choice" joins the ministry as a support group for post-abortion healing. The purposes are profound and focused; to assist women and teens that face unplanned pregnancy at the point of their greatest need.

Additional information about the center:

The organization has been established as a non-profit, non-sectarian Christian organization, with the specific purpose of achieving the following goals:

1) To educate the public with respect to the preservation and enhancement of and appreciation for the dignity of human life at all stages of existence and development.

2) To provide women with free pregnancy tests, intelligent educational consultation about their alternatives, adoption information and referral with other assistance as needed.

3) To provide a dynamic fact and character-based, abstinence-only sex education program free-of-charge to Permian Basin area public and private schools.

4) To provide clinical evaluation of pregnancy through a PBWRC medical facility offering sonogram, Doppler, and early pregnancy consultation and STD testing and treatment through on-sight clinic visits with Midland Health Department.

would go to save humanity. But, the humble birthplace of Jesus also reveals something about us. It tells us that without Him, we are the poor ones, we are the abandoned and lost, we are vulnerable to the attacks of our enemy, the devil. But the baby in the manger is a sign that our God loves us, that our God is with us, and that our God wants to help us.

In the gospels there are many wonderful and seemingly impossible paradoxes of our faith. For example, we are told that it is in giving that we receive, that it is in emptying ourselves that we are filled. And that it is in pardoning that we are pardoned. And we are told that it is by forgetting ourselves that we truly find ourselves. But on Christmas day, when God Himself comes to us as a helpless infant in a

manger, we ponder the greatest paradox of all. This is the greatest paradox of God's immense love for all of us – God the all powerful, all knowing, all wise, becoming vulnerable, totally dependent on humans for His care and safety.

We are told in the Christmas Gospel, that when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem there was no place for them to stay - "there was no room for them in the inn." They had to hurriedly prepare for the birth of their first-born Son, and when He was born they laid Him in a manger. In a human way, the birth of the greatest person this world has ever known went unnoticed. But God the Father did send an announcement of the birth of the long-awaited Messiah and Savior to poor shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem.

Missioneros Oblatos De Maria Immaculada

by Fr. Daniel Crahen, OMI

After Sept. 11, 2001 everyone is reevaluating their lives. What I keep and what I shall throw away. Sometimes we throw away what can help others. I am speaking of your cancelled stamps especially foreign and commemoratives. These are garbage for most people, but we, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who work with the poorest of the poor, turn them into money to help our missions around the world. If you would please clip these stamps and send them to the Oblate Stamp Bureau, c/o Mr. Charles Malachosky, 1669 Merilin St., Cayahoga Falls, Ohio 44221. We can raise thousands of dollars to help bring the Good News to God's poor. Please save these stamps.

P. S. I am working in Mexico and we are so remote. We do not get postal service. So please send the stamps to Ohio.

Mary and Joseph did not have the opportunity nor the time or the money to send out a birth announcement about their baby. When a baby is born, the proud parents send out a notice to relatives and friends about the date of the birth, the name, the weight and the length of the new baby.

If God the Father had sent out a birth announcement about the vital statistics of the new born Son, Jesus, what would He have said? About the length of the child, He would have said that from eternity to eternity, His mercy will be endless. He would have said that His praise would go from pole to pole with one cry. As regards the weight of His Son, God the Father would have said that He is big and strong enough to hold the entire world in His hands. He would have said that He would have shoulders wide enough to bear a cross that was filled with the weight of the sins of the entire world, and upon His shoulders dominion rests. I believe He also would have said, that if you pick up this beautiful child who weighs practically nothing in a human way, and if you hold Him close to you, you will find that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

As regards the name of the child, God the Father would have reminded us of what the prophets down through the ages had prophesied about this unique child. He would be called Wonder – Counselor, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, a name which means God is with us, and Almighty God; God – hero. Later on this Son Himself would call Himself the Good Shepherd, and the light of the world, the bread of the world, the bread of life and the res-

urrection.

Today as we look for the sign and find that infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, we look at Him and can sum up all the names that have been given Him in one beautiful name, and that name is love, God's immense love for us. This child in the manger is God's love for us, and He was born to bring God's love into our world. He tells us that when we love, we are most like Him. This is Christmas, the true sign that God is with us.

May God fill your Christmas with love and peace.

VOCATION

from page three

life of a priest is about – service, faith, and love. The life of the priest is about being there for others, especially for those in need. After a year full of wonderful and at the same time challenging experiences these people became my new family. After leaving my country, my parents and my sister; after leaving friends and home, I encountered all of these again, in the middle of West Texas, in the heart of you, the wonderful people of San Angelo Diocese, to whom, I hope, God will give me the grace of someday being at your service.

This year I am in my third year of theological studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston. For my pastoral ministry I have chosen to work with AIDS patients. This is another challenge coming along, but you cannot imagine the happiness that it brings to my heart. Keep me in your prayers.

CHRISTMAS

from page two

Christmas reminds us how humble our God is. He came into the world that knew Him not in order to redeem a people who received Him not. He came not surrounded by fine gifts, or handled by the finest doctors and servants, or clothed in the best of linens. Instead Jesus was born in poverty, placed in an animal's manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes as we hear in the Gospel.

As we celebrate the beautiful feast of Christmas, the question that we ask is, why did the Father plan such a lowly appearance for the eternal Word of God, who had been with Him from all time? The poverty and humility that surround the birth of Jesus reveal the extent to which God



Youth 2000

In approximately one month YOUTH 2000 will once again be held in the Diocese of San Angelo! More than 1000 teenagers and adult sponsors from cities and towns throughout the state of Texas will be gathered at the Concho Pavilion in San Angelo from January 11-13 for a weekend of Adoration, presentations and discussion on Catholic teaching, prayer, meditation and music.

Pope John Paul II continually calls upon the youth of the Church to be instruments and leaders of a new effort to bring the Gospel of Christ to the world. A YOUTH 2000 Retreat helps the young people to grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith and to deepen their commitment to the service of the Church and others. In this way, YOUTH 2000 also responds to the U.S. Bishops' directives as stated in "Renewing the Vision" to draw young people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and to encourage young people to become active in their parishes and in the programs in their dioceses.

Informational packets and permission slips were mailed to every church in Texas in early October. If you did not receive one, or need further information, please call Lori at Holy Angels Parish (949-3308), Steve at Sacred heart Cathedral (658-6567) or Sylvia at St. Joseph's Parish (482-8886)

Si Dios el Padre hubiera mandado un anuncio del nacimiento con las estadísticas del nuevo nacido hijo, Jesús, ¿que hubiera dicho? De lo largo del niño, el hubiera dicho que de la eternidad hasta la eternidad, su misericordia sería interminable. El hubiera dicho que su alabanza se extendiera de un polo a otro polo con un llanto. En cuanto al peso de su hijo, Dios el Padre hubiera dicho que el es tan grande y fuerte para sostener todo el mundo en sus manos. El hubiera dicho que tuviera hombros tan grandes para aguantar una cruz que estaba llena de los pecados del mundo y lleva sobre sus hombros el signo del impero. Yo también creo que el hubiera dicho que si lo recogieras este niño maravilloso en tus brazos que pesa prácticamente nada en un sentido humano, y si lo abrazas junto de ti, encontraras que su yugo es fácil y su carga es ligera.

En cuanto al nombre del niño, Dios el Padre nos hubiera recordado lo que los profetas a través de los siglos profetizaron sobre este niño único. El sería llamado – consejero admirable – príncipe de la paz, Emmanuel, un nombre que quiere decir Dios – con nosotros y Dios poderoso. Mas tarde este hijo mismo se llamaría el Buen Pastor, y la luz del mundo, el pan de la vida, la resurrección.

Ahora que buscamos la señal y descubrimos ese niño envuelto en pañales, lo miramos a el y resumimos todos los nombres que le han dado a El en un nombre maravilloso, y ese nombre es amor. Este niño en el pesebre es el amor de Dios para nosotros, y el fue nacido para traer el amor de Dios a nuestro mundo. Nos dice que cuando amamos somos como El. Esto es la Navidad, la verdadera señal que Dios - esta con nosotros.

Les deseo a todos la paz y el amor de nuestro Dios.

PEACE

from page four

sort out the moral judgments on military retaliation against countries suspected of harboring terrorists.

The pope repeatedly expressed his deep regret for the loss of American lives in the suicide hijackings. But he has said little about the U.S. air strikes against Afghanistan — and some people wonder why.

Is it because his age and frailty has made him less inclined to fol-

*Jesus IS and Has
A WORD for you!*

In silence you will know it. . .

*Courage? Faithfulness? Forgiveness?
Love? Peace? Trust? Zeal?*

*May this Gift of Jesus be your password
into the New Year.*

*giving you a secret strength and focus
no one can take from you.*

*Blessed Christmas to each and every one in the
Diocese of San Angelo!*

With prayer and deepest gratitude.

Your Carmelite Sisters

Our Lady of Grace

Christoval

NAVIDAD

from page two

En Jesús, el niño en el pesebre, podemos reconocer la cara de Dios y podemos aprender como amar y descubrir como servir. Jesús no es una replica divina, pero la realidad divina en si misma.

La Navidad nos recuerda que tan humilde es nuestro Dios. El vino al mundo que no lo conoció a el para salvar a gente que no lo recibieron. El no vino rodeado de dones finos, o cuidado por los mas buenos doctores y sirvientes, o vestido con las mejores ropas. En cambia Jesús nació en pobreza, situado en un pesebre de animales y envuelto en pañales como oímos en nuestro Evangelio.

Como celebramos la preciosa fiesta de la Navidad, la pregunta para nosotros es, ¿por que el Padre Dios planeó una apariencia tan baja para la Palabra Eterna de Dios, quien estaba con el desde el principio? La pobreza y la humildad que están alrededor del nacimiento de Jesús revelan la extensión a que Dios iría para salvar a la humanidad. Pero, el humilde lugar del nacimiento de Jesús también revela algo de nosotros. Nos dice que sin el, nosotros somos pobres, somos los abandonados y perdidos, somos vulnerables a los ataques de nuestro enemigo, el diablo. Pero el niño en el pesebre es una señal que nuestro Dios nos ama, que nuestro Dios está con nosotros, y que nuestro Dios quiere ayudarnos.

En los Evangelios hay muchas

paradojas maravillosas e imposibles de nuestra fe. Por ejemplo, nos dicen que es en el dar que recibimos, que es en el rendimiento que somos llenos. Y que es en el perdón que somos perdonados. Y nos dicen que en el olvidarse es donde verdaderamente nos encontramos. Pero el día de la Navidad, cuando Dios mismo viene a nosotros como un niño vulnerable en un pesebre, consideramos la paradoja mas cede de todas. Esta es la mas, grande paradoja del amor inmenso de Dios para todos nosotros. Dios el todo poderoso, todo conocimiento, toda sabiduría, se hace vulnerable, totalmente dependiente de seres humanos para su cuidado y seguridad.

Nos dicen en el evangelio de la Navidad, que cuando José y María llegaron a Belén no hubo lugar para hospedarse - «no hubo lugar para ellos en la posada.» Ellos tenían que rápidamente prepararse para el nacimiento de su primer-nacido hijo, y cuando nació lo acostaron en un pesebre. En una manera humana, el nacimiento de la mas grande persona que este mundo ha conocido fue inadvertido. Pero, Dios Padre si anunció el nacimiento del esperado Mesías y Salvador a los pastores pobres que estaban en la área de Belén. María y José no tenían ni la oportunidad ni el tiempo o dinero para mandar un anuncio del nacimiento de su bebe. Cuando nace un bebe, los padres mandan un anuncio a los parientes y amigos con la fecha del nacimiento, el nombre, el peso y el largo del nuevo bebe.

low the complex developments in this case? Is it because — as some aides suggest — he is afraid that if he keeps voicing his hope for peaceful solutions, he'll be cast as a "peace-at-any-price" pacifist? Or could it be, as others believe, that he thinks the United States is justified but can't say so without jeopardizing the church's relations with Muslims?

Whatever the reasons, the pope has avoided making detailed statements about the current situation. In fact, although he has expressed concern about Afghan civilians and refugees, he hasn't directly mentioned the air strikes or the Taliban or Osama bin Laden in his public remarks.

Yet at a deeper level, the pope seems to share the commonly expressed feeling that "everything has changed" since Sept. 11. The language he used in condemning the terrorist acts was some of the most dramatic of his pontificate: He called it "a dark day in the history of humanity, a terrible affront to human dignity."

People noticed that he looked truly distraught in the days following the attacks, and his speeches to various groups were peppered with references to the "fear and anguish that seem to prevail" in the world. Two months after the attacks, he remarked that the "whole of humanity is still under shock," and he told a group of Asian bishops that "a deep and unexpected turmoil has gripped

the international community."

In response to all this, some people have proposed a "war on terrorism," new laws and security measures, or full-scale engagement in a supposed "clash of civilizations" between the West and Islam.

The pope has placed the emphasis elsewhere. He has spoken out strongly about the need to address the huge global imbalances — like hunger — that fuel hatred and bitterness, and has insisted that dialogue with Muslims continue despite the present crisis. This is not a "war of religions," he said.

But more than any new plan to meet the growing threat of terrorism, the pope has returned to an old practice: prayer. That's what he did as soon as he learned of the Sept. 11 attacks, spending long periods in his private chapel. The day after, he turned his general audience into a moving prayer service for the victims.

Now he has asked Catholics to fast and pray with him Dec. 14, and he invited Muslims, Christians, Jews and others to pray in Assisi in January. Several Muslim groups already have reacted enthusiastically.

Much has changed in the world since Sept. 11. That's true at the Vatican, too. But as in 1986, the pope wants to remind the world that ultimate answers go beyond military and political maneuvering and are sometimes best sought on one's knees.



First Youth Missionary Team Of The New Millennium

by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Four college-age young people spent seven weeks of their summer dedicated to the Lord in the work of evangelization of youth of middle school age, those who finished the 7, 8, and 9 grades. This event, called the Summer Catholic Missionary Experience for Youth, began with two weeks of training at St. Joseph Church in San Angelo. This team of Youth Missionaries, three women and one man, went to Abilene, Odessa, Big Lake, and Andrews. They stayed in parish halls or homes, visited homes, put on two youth rallies, and conducted a weekend retreat in each town. The participants Annamarie Giovannitti from Ft. Worth, Cecilia Mason from Abilene, Sara Primera from Odessa, and Hector Soto from Ft. Stockton came to a pre-training Discernment Weekend in which they first ascertained their readiness and willingness to serve in this manner this summer.

At the Discernment Weekend at Sacred Heart Church in Abilene,

prayer played an important part in being enlightened as to God's will—especially at the Adoration Chapel. The young team members felt reassured that their first desire to serve was really a call from God. They bonded together at that time and from then on looked forward to the summer as a way to go with God. The two week training offered much teaching from which this team drew for ministry. They experienced the power of the Lord in their lives, which helped them to be able to pass it on in ministry. They learned how to surrender their lives to the Providence of God and learn to be available for service to the Lord, using the gifts and talents the Lord always gives to those who serve him. Their weekly Holy Hours before the Blessed Sacrament allowed them to experience his love for them.

After the groundwork of training and prayer, the summer ministry would begin to bear fruit. The visitation of homes takes up much of the time spent in parishes. Fearful at

first, they became more enjoyable as time went on—new people to see and all situations different. Some people expressed amazement and delight that Catholics would actually visit homes of other Catholics in a visitation program. Each week the missionaries would meet with parents of youth to whom they would offer ministry later that week. Parents enjoyed seeing what the missionaries were to present to their youth and were in general eager for their youth to experience the Lord's working in their lives. At the youth rallies, youth who had never been to anything like that at first were a bit fearful, but afterward, became eager to invite other youth to the next one. During the weekend retreats, the grace of God powerfully worked to open the youth to hear the message that would change their hearts.

All in all, the summer taught this team much about evangelization, convincing them to want to continue a life of service for Christ and his people.

school, the main reason was academic.

"Like a lot of inner-city parents, they were very concerned about the quality of education available in the public schools – even in the '50s," Bishop Gregory said. "They put us in Catholic school primarily to provide a good education. Obviously the Catholic training and the Christian principles were good, but that wasn't the driving force. The driving force was to get a good education. Which, I'm sure, is one of the main reasons inner-city parents choose Catholic schools, even today."

Whatever differences it meant to the quality of his education, the "Catholic" influences at his school affected him dramatically. He decided a few weeks into the school year that he wanted to be a priest. By the end of that sixth-grade year, young Wilton had been baptized, received his first Communion and been confirmed.

Later his mother, Ethel, and two sisters also became Catholic, though his father, Wilton D. Gregory Sr., never has done so, he said. His parents, now in their 90s, still live in Chicago.

Two years after becoming a Catholic, Wilton entered Chicago's Quigley Preparatory, a high school seminary. By the time he was 25, he was ordained a priest. Just 10 years later, he became the youngest bishop in the country. He was installed as an auxiliary bishop for Chicago a few days after his 36th birthday in 1983. Among his duties in the archdiocese, he served as master of ceremonies for Cardinal John Cody and his successor, Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin.

Bishop Gregory holds a doctorate in liturgy from Rome's Pontifical Liturgical Institute and has written extensively on the subject, particularly on liturgy in the African-American community.

It was while serving as chairman of the bishops' Committee on Liturgy from 1990 to 1993 that Bishop Gregory began to develop a broader public profile than being one of a handful of African-American Catholic bishops. He adeptly led the bishops through a series of sometimes controversial endeavors, including changing holy days of obligation, adopting an English translation of the Sacramentary and approving a

lectionary for children's Masses.

Shortly after his term as chairman of the liturgy committee ended, he was named to head the Diocese of Belleville, which was just coming out of a series of scandals that resulted in the removal of eight priests from their parishes amid allegations that they sexually abused minors.

There he was credited with easing tensions and helping heal wounds. In a pastoral letter issued on the first anniversary of his installation in Belleville, he wrote that the church needs to speak honestly about the pain left by clergy sexual abuse of children.

People who work with Bishop Gregory in the Diocese of Belleville note that their boss seems to be happiest when he's around young people and that he makes a point of attending youth ministry events whenever possible. As a supervisor, they find him to be a good listener, who hears out all sides before making decisions.

Although he's been active on various committees throughout his 18 years as a bishop, Bishop Gregory said he was surprised and flattered the first time he was among 10 bishops nominated to head the conference in 1995.

"I can remember opening the letter, I was overwhelmed," he said. "It was a sign of great affirmation. And I was very grateful."

When he was nominated again three years later and was elected vice president, the experience was humbling, Bishop Gregory said. "I didn't know. Literally, I didn't have an inkling that that was in the works."

Until that election, he'd never envisioned himself being president of the conference, he said.

Now, as he begins his three-year term as head of the U.S. bishops, he hopes he's in this position for many reasons, from his work in the conference for 18 years to his fellow bishops' belief that he will be fair and even-handed.

"Hopefully, it's because they think that I will be able to articulate the positions of the Catholic conference," he said. "Hopefully it's because they believe I'm pretty much like most of the candidates who they've elected, someone who will bring some gifts and a particular vision."

NEW

from page one

Nov. 13 on the first ballot.

In an interview with Catholic News Service a few days before his election, Bishop Gregory was both amused and pragmatic about the flurry of press calls he's taken, all focused on his race.

"I'm sure that Bishop Fiorenza and Bishop Pilla before him did not get this kind of probing," he said of his immediate predecessors as president, Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, president from 1998-2001, and Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, president from 1995-98. "It's an indication that race is still a significant factor in our society.

"While we're choosing to make good on our commitment as bishops at least in this one area – and I hope it's seen as only one area – to elect a black president of the USCCB I hope is a wonderful and important sign of our commitment," he said. "But it can't be the only sign. We haven't achieved all that we need to achieve by having a black

president.

"The day-to-day struggle, the constant commitment to the social teaching and to the truth of the Gospel that stand in contradistinction to racism have to be the ongoing policy of the conference and of every local church and of every Catholic. We can rejoice at one event, but not presume that the battle is over. Because it isn't."

If the narrow focus of the interest in him gets to be a little annoying at times, Bishop Gregory is well aware that the novelty of his position opens new doors: to give non-Catholics a view into today's church; to help all Catholics understand the breadth of the church and that they have obligations of faith beyond their immediate community.

"The broad spectrum of issues that I will have to address goes well beyond the issues that are often identified as African-American concerns," he said. So, for instance, "when I speak out in support of justice for the immigrant community, be they Hispanic or Asian or South Pacific or European, I speak as a Catholic bishop, but I also speak as

an African-American and we have a stake in those concerns."

Bishop Gregory is also the first bishop to head the conference who wasn't born and raised a Catholic.

Born in Chicago on Dec. 7, 1947, Wilton Gregory was enrolled in St. Carthage School in Chicago as a sixth-grader.

His family wasn't Catholic and was basically unchurched, though there was a history of appreciation for the church. His maternal grandmother had become a Catholic when her parents enrolled her and her sister at St. Benedict the Moor boarding school in Milwaukee early in the century.

"It was one of the few boarding schools in the United States that would accept black kids at that time," he explained. His grandmother and great-aunt were baptized and made their first Communions, though they weren't active in the faith.

"But my grandmother always spoke – always spoke – very, very positively about her Catholic faith, even though she didn't go to Mass," he said. When he went to Catholic



Financial Report Of The Diocese Of San Angelo For The Year Ended June 30, 2001

December, 2001

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

I am happy to present to you in an abbreviated form the Diocese of San Angelo's Financial Report for the most recent year ending June 30, 2001 as prepared by our outside auditors, the national firm of K.P.M.G. This audit has been carefully studied by the Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Finance Council and the Diocesan Finance Officer and myself.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for your generous financial support upon which our church ministries depend. As you will readily note in this year's results, a spirit of hope is quite alive as we continue to reorder our financial affairs. I am pleased to report that we are ahead of the recovery schedule which the Diocesan Finance Council and Presbyteral Council recommended to me at the time of our loss four years ago. This is due to both your material generosity and your spiritual support.

I invite any of you who would like to receive the full audited financials to contact our Diocesan Finance Officer, Les Maiman, who will be happy to provide a copy to you.

Your servant in Christ and Mary,
Most Reverend Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo

The Administrative and Program Offices of the CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2001 and 2000

Assets	2001	2000
Current assets:		
Cash	\$7,842,657	\$5,857,348
Certificates of deposit	19,446	18,521
Accounts receivable, net of allowance of \$34,645 in 2001 and 2000 (note 4)	441,094	441,094
Grants receivable	150,000	125,000
Parish notes receivable (note 3)	253,646	101,573
Prepaid assets	9,099	59,839
Total current assets	\$8,715,942	\$6,601,233
Long term parish notes receivable (note 3)	632,009	872,754
Property and equipment, net (note 5)	2,609,091	2,413,336
Intangible asset (note 8)	527,358	494,721
Total assets	\$12,484,400	\$10,382,044
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable (notes 7, 8, 12)	\$606,501	\$578,897
Collections	12,357	100,721
Parish savings deposits (note 6)	7,399,318	5,856,403
Total liabilities	\$8,018,176	\$6,536,021
Net assets: (notes 2 and 9)		
Unrestricted	2,526,700	2,043,579
Temporarily restricted	837,156	788,589
Permanently restricted	1,102,368	1,013,855
Total net assets	4,466,224	3,846,023
Total liabilities and net assets	\$12,484,400	\$10,382,044

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

The Administrative and Program Offices of the CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO Statement of Activities For the Year Ended June 30, 2001

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenues, gains and other support:				
Contributions	\$25,424	\$197,861	\$ 88,513	\$ 311,798
Parish assessments	1,568,991	-	-	1,568,991
Interest and dividends	319,782	54,178	-	373,960
Grants	-	300,000	-	300,000
Other income and fees	493,583	-	-	493,583
Cemetery, net	-	30,950	-	30,950
Amounts released from restrictions	534,422	(534,422)	-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support before extraordinary item (note 13)	\$2,942,202	\$ 48,567	\$ 88,513	\$3,079,282
Expenditures:				
Inactive clergy assistance	\$ 74,939	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 74,939
Seminarians education	146,905	-	-	146,905
Vocations	59,918	-	-	59,918
Clergy medical and retirement	91,986	-	-	91,986
Continuing education of clergy	20,095	-	-	20,095
Permanent diaconate	74,436	-	-	74,436
Women religious	2,140	-	-	2,140
Christ the King Retreat Center	341,479	-	-	341,479
Religious Education and Formation	242,723	-	-	242,723
Communications and paper	105,883	-	-	105,883
Contributions and assessments	135,159	-	-	135,159
Tribunal	72,406	-	-	72,406
University Apostolate	72,055	-	-	72,055
Engaged Encounter	22,303	-	-	22,303
LIMEX	10,273	-	-	10,273
Liturgy office	6,923	-	-	6,923
Superintendent of schools	9,767	-	-	9,767
Pro-Life program	4,400	-	-	4,400
Natural Family Planning	239	-	-	239
Cursillo	725	-	-	725
Beginning experience	2,861	-	-	2,861
Hispanic ministries	853	-	-	853
Prison ministry	4,477	-	-	4,477
Administrative office	602,404	-	-	602,404
Bishop's residence	23,359	-	-	23,359
Capital renewal and replacement	7,989	-	-	7,989
Interest	337,123	-	-	337,123
Total expenditures before extraordinary item (note 13)	\$2,473,820	\$ -	\$ -	\$2,473,820
Change in net assets before extraordinary item	\$ 468,382	\$48,567	\$ 88,513	605,462
Extraordinary revenue	15,500	-	-	31,000
Extraordinary expenditures	(761)	-	-	(16,261)
Change in net assets	483,121	48,567	88,513	620,201
Net assets at beginning of year	2,043,579	788,589	1,013,855	3,846,023
Net assets at end of year	\$ 2,526,700	\$ 837,156	\$1,102,368	\$4,466,224

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

National Day Of Prayer For Peace

by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

At their November, 2001 meeting, the US Catholic Bishops designated January 1, 2002 as a National Day of Prayer for Peace. I ask all the people of our Diocese to join in prayer on that day, especially by

going to Mass, to ask our God for this special gift of peace that is so much needed in our world during this critical time.

Jesus calls us to be peace makers, and peace is a gift that we must pray for. On this special day, besides

assisting at Mass, I encourage our families in our homes to take some time to pray for peace, especially by praying the rosary. God's peace for all and thank you.



San Angelo Student Is Honored At Dallas Museum Of Art

by Jennifer Topiel

DALLAS - Valerie Michelle Ramirez, daughter of Ben and Elena Ramirez, parishioners of Holy Angels Church in San Angelo, a recent graduate of Central High School, is among 31 Advanced Placement Program® (AP) Studio Art students who was honored at an exhibition in the Fina Foundation Gallery of the Dallas Museum of Art from November 20 through December 9, 2001. Ramirez's artwork was selected from more than 140,000 works that were submitted by 29,000 students worldwide as part of the AP Studio Art portfolio evaluations in May 2000 and May 2001. Ramirez is currently a sophomore at the Angelo State University, where she is studying history and communications. She created the selected piece of artwork – an acrylic entitled "Carpenter" – under the guidance of AP Studio Art teacher Barbara Parker at Central High School.



Valerie Michelle Ramirez, Artist, member of Holy Angels Parish.



Three dynamics are working in the composition. First, the subject, a youth, is full of life and potential. He is cutting out his place in society (represented by images of the Aztec pyramids, modern skyscrapers, and the Parthenon). A family of chickens in the clouds ask, "Responsibility: Is it the parents' fault (the way the child was brought up), or can they dismiss and displace the blame for the child's actions?"

When she was asked why she picked this particular subject, she responded "The idea for *Carpenter* came from seeing a craftsman carving wooden sculpture. The mallet and chisel really caught my attention. The idea of impressing permanent, lasting effects presents a complex subject. The 'builder' or 'destroyer' can perfect the most intrinsic details if he is articulate, but if he is careless, or gets frustrated, he can ruin it all in one angry strike. The phenomenon of creating, of possessing such a far-reaching power that can shape countless futures will always be inspiring.

CKRC Women's Retreat

"Mary Speaks From Cana and Tepeyac with the Modern Catholic Woman"

Friday-Sunday, December 7-9 2001

Do you really know and love Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who in 1531 also graced our continent by visiting us as Our Lady of Guadalupe? You do not know Mary very well unless you have visited often with her, Jesus and the apostles at the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee. Father John Gonzales Castro, O. M. I., Christ the King Retreat Center director, will lead the women who attend this retreat to Jesus, the Eucharistic Christ, through Mary, His wonderful mother!

Friday registration will begin at 7:00 p.m.; the retreat begins at 7:30 p.m. and will end Sunday at 1:00 p.m. Donation for weekend \$85. Pre-registration deposit of \$ 20.00 required. Please send registration with \$20.00 deposit to: Christ the King Retreat Center, 802 Ford St., San Angelo, TX 76905, (915) 651-5352, e-mail: ckrc@wcc.net



On October 31, the Saints came marching in to St. Lawrence CCD. Back row L to R; Charlotte Kellermeier as St. Julie Billiart, Edgar Hernandez as St. Andrew, Juan Garcia as himself, Jake Schwartz as St. Anthony, Jacob Schmitz as St. Patrick, Aaron Michalewicz as St. Luke, Cindy Lopez as St. Tekakwitha, Vickie Garza as St. Lucy, Brooke Halfmann as St. Mary, Shelly Chudej as St. Thomas Becket. Front row L to R; Melissa Hirt as St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Levi Schaefer as St. Francis of Assisi, Sydney Halfmann as St. Gabriel, Macy Schwartz as St. Elizabeth, Edgar Najera as Juan Diego, Israel as St. Isidore, Tyler Childress as St. Joseph.



Fr. Arturo Pestin, OP, poses with Catholic Scouts from Troop 84, St. Ann's of Midland and Troop 77, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton of Odessa after celebrating Mass this past June at the Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch in the Davis Mountains of West Texas. Fr. Arturo is the Chaplain for the Catholic Committee on Scouting (Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) for the Diocese of San Angelo. The Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch is the summer camp for the Buffalo Trail Council BSA. This may have been the first Mass ever celebrated at the Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch. It was certainly the first in the past 20 years. (Photo by Bob Elliott.)