From the Bishop’s Desk

No room in the inn: Savior of the world born in manger

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The Gospel for the Midnight Christmas Mass as told to us by St. Luke tells us that when it came time for Mary to give birth to the greatest person who ever lived, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that there was no room for them in the inn of Bethlehem. And we are told that his dear mother, Mary, and foster father, Joseph, accommodated to the situation, by laying the newborn Jesus in a manger – the place where the animals would feed.

In that same Gospel, we are told that the angel of the Lord announced to the shepherds — and to all of us today — the long-awaited and hoped for message that the whole world had longed for centuries, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David, a Savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

In the few words of that beautiful Gospel, we are told about the birth of Jesus Christ, who is the very Son of the eternal Father, and who became one of us by taking flesh from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was born like we are, He lived our life, and as we know, He gave His life for all of us, dying on the cross like a criminal. From the crib to the cross Jesus was saving all people of all time. When it came time for the birth of Christ as we hear in the gospel, there was no room in the inn of Bethlehem.

(See Please BISHOP/19)
Ordination for permanent deacons Dec. 13 in San Angelo

By Deacon Tim Graham

Thirty men admitted to the formal ministries of Lector and Acolyte on December 13, are all in preparation for ordination as permanent deacons. This major step toward ordination was marked by a mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral on December 13, with Bishop Pfeifer presiding. At the Mass the bishop installed the men into the ministries for the Diocese of San Angelo.

To better understand this installation, it is good to note that many men and women serve as readers at Mass and as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Many young people serve at the altar as servers, or acolytes. So, what is different about this formal installation?

To begin with, the ministries into which these men were installed were formerly considered a part of minor orders. The Sacrament of Holy Orders used to begin at the level of the major orders. The Sacrament of Holy Orders formerly considered a part of minor orders. The Order of Subdeacon and all the minor orders be filled by those aspiring to the roles of lector, acolyte, porter and exorcist used to begin at the level of the major orders. The Sacrament of Holy Orders used to begin at the level of the major orders. The Order of Subdeacon and all the minor orders were abolished by Pope Paul VI right after Vatican II. That was also the point at which the permanent diaconate was revived. With all these changes (and more) there was also the recognition that men preparing for Holy Orders should serve in formal ministries prior to ordination as a deacon. The expectation that the functions of Acolyte and Lector would be exercised by such men for a suitable length of time prior to ordination is now observed and the celebration for the installation into the ministries is what the bishop presided over on December 13.

The most significant difference with an instituted lector and acolyte and other lay people serving in some of those roles is that the institution is performed by the bishop, for the good of the diocese and the duties and responsibilities, though not carried out under the promise of obedience, represent a permanent assignment, taking precedence over those temporarily installed at the parish level. For those instituted into the ministry of Lector, their duty, on a permanent basis, is to proclaim the Word of God in liturgical assemblies, teach children and adults in the faith, prepare the faithful to receive the sacraments and to be evangelists, spreading the Word to those who have (Please See DEACONS/9)

Deacon Candidates

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Steve Zimmerman</td>
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No hubo lugar en la posada

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer

Del Escritorio del Obispo

Gaining 33 brothers in one weekend impossible? Not at all

By Jimmy Patterson

I f I were to tell you that during a recent weekend I gained 33 new brothers, anyone educated in the biological or reproductive sciences would figure that I was plain nuts. However anyone with a spiritual streak worth anything would most definitely know my meaning.

I recently returned from an ACTS retreat, the second such retreat I have been blessed to attend. It was quite likely the most spiritually meaningful event of my life, even more so than the first of my ACTS experiences a year ago.

ACTS -- which stands for Adoration, Community, Theology and Service -- is a powerful and growing movement within the Catholic Church. Introduced in a parish in the Hill Country, it has now grown and is experienced by men and women in parishes not only across Texas but in other states and even in other countries. Some say it might provide a significant boon to Church growth in the coming years.

Yes, it is that powerful in its message and scope.

ACTS is a three-day getaway where men or women grow in their faith and common, shared experiences. Intense, long-lasting bonds are often formed through what the retreatants share, and men and women often go back to their parishes eager to build on those friendships forged. What is perhaps even more valuable is that the men and women who complete ACTS often return to their parish excited about serving their church in a number of new capacities -- through mission work, eucharistic ministers, lectors, catechists and any number of opportunities they maybe have been hesitant to step forward in before.

The effects of ACTS can be and often are long-lasting and the sharing that goes on during the three-day retreat is real and often life-changing. Two concerns that may exist in some ACTS parishes: a feeling of being left out by those who haven’t experienced the retreat, and the ‘over-selling’ of the ACTS experience. Often those two experiences can go hand in hand.

ACTS retreatants and team members return with such zeal and vigor that it’s easy for those who have not yet experienced the retreat to feel a disconnect. The homecoming Mass held when retreatants and team members return is designed to celebrate the experience, yet those who haven’t had that experience may not feel that same zeal. When those who have gone through the retreat put a sell job on those who haven’t experienced the retreat, they can easily over do it.

To those who feel pressured or out of the loop, don’t. No harm is intended by ACTS members who talk up the weekend. It is only the fervent hope of the retreatant that you will one day experience the same feeling of the Holy Spirit at work. I have known several men who swore they would never benefit from such a weekend, and they are now some of the best walking commercials for ACTS that the community has. If you haven’t been on an ACTS retreat, consider giving it a shot. Your world may likely never be the same.

(Mira OBISPO/18)
**Planned Parenthood: the single largest abortion provider in the United States**

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

Planned Parenthood is a business, and a major part of this business is the killing of unborn children. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) is the single largest abortion provider in the United States. In 2005 its affiliates performed 264,943 surgical and "medical" (i.e., RU-486) abortions—a new record, and about 10,000 more abortions than in 2004, at a time when abortions are declining overall. In 2007, Planned Parenthood’s record of 290,000 abortions amounts to almost 1 out of every 4 abortions committed in the U.S.

While PPFA claims to serve women’s “choices,” it reports providing prenatal care to just 12,548 women in 2005, and infertility services to only 248. Together these are one-twentieth the number of abortions it performs. For 2005 it reported no adoption referrals (compared to 1,414 the previous year). To carry out its mission, Planned Parenthood receives $336 million in taxpayer funding.

**Planned Parenthood Centers in West Texas**

In the counties that make up the Diocese of San Angelo, there are four known Planned Parenthood facilities. Planned Parenthood in Midland does surgical abortion every Friday. I am deeply grateful for all those who gather in prayer in front of this death center each Friday morning when surgical abortions are performed, pleading to Christ through Mary for the precious unborn that are destroyed there. Recently I offered a Pro-Life Mass on the side of this death clinic, asking Jesus our Good Shepherd to bring an end to the killing of the unborn at this center an end to abortion throughout our country.

Of the other Planned Parenthood facilities in our diocesan territory, I have acquired the following information:

- **Odessa**: From the information I received, the center is not directly involved in abortion services. An unanswered question is whether this center counsels where abortions might be acquired?
- **Abilene**: Like for Odessa, from the information I received, the center is not directly involved in abortion services. An unanswered question is whether this center counsels where abortions might be acquired?
- **San Angelo**: Information acquired from Planned Parenthood indicates that "medication abortions" are performed in Midland and San Angelo. Planned Parenthood’s information says the following: “Medication Abortion (Midland and San Angelo). Medical abortion is a way to end pregnancy without surgery. It’s done with medicine up to 9 weeks gestation. —Your clinician will give you medication in tablet form to be taken orally. —you are required to return to the clinic for a follow up visit. If the medication abortion does not work, a surgical abortion must be done.”

The public needs to know that the Planned Parenthood facility in San Angelo promotes in its material “medical abortion” and other information obtained indicates this is caused by the controversial RU-486 drug. I have learned of this information only recently, and by way of this article and other information, I want our people to know about the deadly process that happens at this facility. I ask the priests and people of the parishes of the city of San Angelo, especially our local Knights of Columbus, to inform our people about the “medical abortions” taking place at this center and expressing our disgust for this deadly procedure.

**Planned Parenthood uses the dangerous abortion drug RU-486**

PPFA strongly supports the dangerous abortion drug RU-486. (Please See PLANNED/17)

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**The earthly liturgy of the church and its relationship to the heavenly liturgy**

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

During his recent Apostolic Journey to France, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the connection between the earthly Liturgy of the Church and its relationship to the heavenly liturgy. The Liturgy, as Vatican II has pointed out, is the source and summit of our spiritual life, and the primary work of the Church is to celebrate the Liturgy together with all the members of the Body of Christ.

To better understand the connection between the earthly Liturgy of the Church and its relation to heavenly liturgy, I present here the words of Pope Benedict XVI:

“The Son of God took flesh in the womb of a woman, a virgin. Your cathedral is a living hymn of stone and light in praise of that act, unique in the annals of human history: the eternal Word of God entering our history in the fullness of time to redeem us by his self-offering in the sacrifice of the Cross. Our earthly liturgies, entirely ordered to the celebration of this unique act within history, will never fully express its infinite meaning. Certainly, the beauty of our celebrations can never be sufficiently cultivated, fostered and refined, for nothing can be too beautiful for God, who is himself infinite Beauty. Yet our earthly liturgies will never be more than a pale reflection of the liturgy celebrated in the Jerusalem on high, the goal of our pilgrimage on earth. May our own celebrations nonetheless resemble that liturgy as closely as possible and grant us a foretaste of it!”
Conception Seminary: Forming young men into vibrant servants of the Church

By Jarod Thorne
Conception Seminary

Even though they’re different concepts, the economy and the economy of salvation do share some common characteristics.

Over the years, for example, we see and feel the effects of business cycles and the peaks and troughs of expansion and recession—“good times” and “hard times”. With the collapse of the housing market, many people have had to face foreclosure on their homes. Now the economy as a whole is feeling the spillover effects of crumbling financial institutions that had invested heavily in securities backed by these sub-prime mortgages. Similarly, even the economy of salvation—as perceived by those of us constrained by space and time—has its ups and downs. To see this, we need only pick up the Bible or a Church history book and start reading cover to cover. In doing so, one can read about creation, the fall from grace, the patriarchs, the Israelites’ journey in the desert, the prophets, the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and on and on up to today where a decline in vocations in recent decades has unfortunately resulted in the closures or consolidation of parishes and some religious orders. There are spillover effects in this too. In this case, the luxury of daily Mass or Catholic schools might not be as available in as many areas as they once were. But just as no recession in the economy lasts forever, there is hope on the horizon for the Church. That hope is evident at Conception.

I feel it’s necessary to clarify here that the economy of salvation operates in time, but it is not constrained by it—it’s a divine plan that we participate in. In this way it’s different from the economy, even if we feel at times as if the economy is a mysterious force controlled by a not-so-benevolent “higher power”! At any rate, in an effort to mitigate the negative effects of a low spot in the economy, our country has recourse to the tools of fiscal and monetary policy.

What, though, do we faithful have as tools to combat the “hard times” along the road to heaven? For one, we have the power of prayer and the assurance that the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit. Add to that the words of Christ himself, “I am with you always, to the close of the age!” and what else do we need?

This is something Conception Seminary College has done time and time again over the course of its history, as evidenced through initiatives such as the Deacon Formation Program; the Pre-Theology Program; the Language, Culture, and Church Program; and recently, the summer Language, Culture, and Church for International Priests Program.

Here is a brief overview of some of the things Conception Seminary College has done in recent years to better serve its seminarians and the wider Church.

A Diverse Campus

The Church in the United States has always been a Church “on the move.” With more and more vocations coming from minority populations, today is no exception. Conception has taken several steps in response to this trend. Attending to a growing Hispanic population, the seminary has started utilizing bilingual priests to serve as spiritual directors and is now actively seeking a bilingual Hispanic priest to serve as a chaplain—not necessarily to serve Hispanic seminarians exclusively, but so that the chaplains’ group can better appreciate cultural variations amongst the students. Additionally, the services of a Spanish speaking counselor are available when needed.

Responding to the formation needs of seminarians from various cultural backgrounds is nothing new however. In 1998, Conception Seminary College inaugurated the Language, Culture, and Church (LCC) Program for this very reason. The program focuses on the intensive study of English as a second language and the adaptation to American culture and the Church of the United States. From the 1998-99 academic year to the 2007-08 academic year, there have been 68 LCC students. In this amount of time, 10 LCC students have been ordained to the priesthood and one was ordained a deacon last May. Since LCC formation is usually a prerequisite to any further priestly formation (normally lasting 8 years) the fruits of this program will become even more evident in the coming years.

The Program Grows

The LCC Program has been a great success in preparing seminarians from other countries to minister in the United States. To further this success, Conception Seminary College has developed an extension of the program. This summer marked the first session of the Language, Culture, and Church Program for International Priests (LCCIP). The main goal of the LCCIP program is ideologically congruent with that of the regular LCC Program—the major difference being that the participants of the LCCIP Program are already ordained. We are seeing today an influx of missionary priests to the U.S. from other countries; the LCCIP Program offers them a stepping stone in bridging the cultural gap that arises as they take up their new roles of ministry.

Buildings and Grounds

As previously mentioned, the renovation of the main seminary classroom and administration building was completed in 2005. Not only did this make more efficient use of classroom space, but it also updated the facilities with newer technology and science labs, bringing the classrooms up to modern educational standards.

Other recent building improvements include new and more efficient heating systems for the residence halls, new seminary dining room furniture, and increased accessibility measures including automated doors, a handicapped accessible student room, and a new chair lift.

To read the continuation of this article, log on to www.sanangelodiocese.org.
Making Sense of Bioethics

Making Truthful Choices of Conscience

By Rev. Tad Pacholczyk

One recurrent theme in bioethical discussions is the idea that each of us possesses a basic awareness of the moral law. This distinctly human faculty, which Western culture has referred to as “conscience,” helps us to choose correctly when confronted with basic moral decisions. Even children, when taught about right and wrong, instinctively seem to recognize a law higher than themselves. Deep within their conscience man discovers that law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Conscience has been aptly described as man’s most secret core and his sanctuary.

As creatures of conscience, then, we are moved to pursue good and to avoid evil. Yet, in our fallen nature, we are also drawn, mysteriously, towards wrong and harmful choices. The dictates of conscience may become muted or drowned out by other voices around us. As we grow older we may even acquire a certain finesse in justifying personal choices that are not good, choices strongly contrary to the law of our own being. The inner sanctuary of conscience may become muted or lost.

The young man was shaken by this answer, but when he reflected on it later, he understood that the priest was right. Certain kinds of personal choices touch us at the very core of our being. Accepting or rejecting a temptation to serious wrongdoing like abortion involves our hearts in a far deeper way than many of the lesser decisions we have to make each day, so that in the end, it is our moral choices that define who we are and what we become. By acting against an upright conscience, we violate and disfigure who we are, and become less human. That’s why the priest told the young man that he would not know who he was anymore.

I recall another true story about the gentle proddings of conscience that involved a mom with three children. When she found out she was pregnant yet again, she became fearful and began telling herself she couldn’t support the burden of another child. She finally decided it would be necessary to have an abortion. She arrived at her decision just before going in for her next checkup. The doctor, unaware of her plans, began a routine ultrasound to find out how the pregnancy was progressing. She had brought along her three children, and they were busy playing together on the floor of the examination room. As the doctor ran the scanner over her belly, her little son glanced up from his toy airplanes, pointed to the screen and said, “Look, Mommy — a baby!” She left the doctor’s office that afternoon with a new awareness that she couldn’t end the growing life within her.

Through the eyes and heart of a child we are often reminded of what a pure and upright conscience ought to look like. To form our conscience as adults means to learn virtue, by repetitively and determinately choosing what is good, true and moral. Doing so brings order to our lives and engenders peace in our hearts. Ultimately, we discover how to be fully human only to the extent that we faithfully follow that delicate voice of a properly-formed conscience.

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

Making Sense out of Bioethics (De la serie “Making Sense out of Bioethics”)
Angelo Catholic School celebrates 120 years

Capacity crowds at a Mass and dinner helped the faithful celebrate the 120th anniversary of Angelo Catholic School, Nov. 8 at the school’s gymnasium. “It’s a privilege to be able to praise and adore our God in our Catholic schools,” Bishop Michael Pfeifer told the crowd. “Catholic Schools teach the truth, and the truth is getting battered around quite a bit today.”

The amalgamation of Sacred Heart and Holy Angels schools took place in 1976, to form Angelo Catholic. Predecessors also included Immaculate Conception School (1888-1953), St. Peter’s (1922-1938), St. Mary’s Parochial School (1938-1960), Sacred Heart School (1953-1976), New St. Mary’s School (1960-1970) and Holy Angels (1962-1976).

Ten sisters from Sisters of Charity of Incarnate Word who staffed the schools in the 1960–1980’s attended the special anniversary celebration.

The Sisters of Incarnate Word arrived in San Angelo in 1887 and in 1888 the first Catholic school, Immaculate Conception Academy, opened its doors, becoming the first Catholic school in San Angelo. “I am even more challenged in my faith, in the sports I play and in how to be a leader because of Angelo Catholic School. Angelo Catholic taught me how to be a leader and everyone who attended ACS is a leader in what they do today because of having attended Angelo Catholic School,” said Barry Norriega, a presenter at the celebration and a 2002 graduate of ACS. “My parents placed me in a great, loving environment where I experienced spiritual growth, good morals, and was challenged intellectually not to mention a place to pray and celebrate Mass. Now it is up to us to continue promoting Catholic education not only to our children but to all children who believe in Jesus and want to expand their growth spiritually.”

Emcee Ray Zapata pointed out that ACS graduates have continued their educations from Harvard to Pepperdine and their post-high school educational travels from Alaska to South America to Europe.

Catholics and their Bibles: You have one, you might as well read it

Part 2 of a two-part series

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

Now that we have established that Catholics, contrary to some people’s popular perceptions, often do have and even read their Bibles, what’s the best way to partake in Holy Scripture in a holy way? Deacon Tim Graham, of Junction, has a few suggestions.

“After finding a quiet place and time (turn off the cell phone), I always begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to be with me as I read and reflect, and reminding myself that when the scriptures are opened, it is an opening of myself as well,” Graham said.

One of the best approaches to daily scripture readings, Graham said, is to employ a technique known as Lectio Divina, which entails finding a quiet time and place, asking the Lord to make one aware of the presence of God in His Word, then reading the selection.

“After reading, take time to allow what is offered to ‘sink in,’ chewing it over a bit, perhaps focusing on one point or idea that strikes one. Then, slowly, re-read the same passage. Again, taking some time to reflect and pray with what comes from that second reading, a third or even fourth reading using that same format can prove to be very fruitful. Those who are in the habit of journaling can use the scriptures in conjunction with this method to unearth a treasure of insight. At the conclusion, an act of thanksgiving is appropriate.”

Graham says serious students of the scriptures will need to employ other approaches that emphasize the particular purposes of the study -- a historical overview, or thematic examination of the readings. There are many reading guides available from Catholic publishers.

“For Catholics, the use of scripture is always, however, from the perspective of one who believes … the perspective of viewing the Bible with the eyes of faith,” Graham said.
Catholic Voices

Giving: It’s the Christmas gift of example

By Dan Morris

A Christmas season does not pass that does not stir memories of the late Bishop Bernard J. Topel, former bishop of Spokane, Wash. He gave me and a whole slew of others -- Catholics and non-Catholics alike -- one of the best Christmas presents we could ever want: his example.

You might recall Bishop Topel. He drew the attention of Time magazine and other national media in the 1970s when he sold his episcopal mansion (as mansions go, it was modest, but it was still quite an elegant place), as well as his jewel-encrusted crozier, and gave the money as seed projects for the poor.

There were critics who claimed he was grandstanding, playing to the media. There were critics who felt he snubbed wealthy patrons of the diocese when he declined sumptuous galas or high-end events. There were critics who said he was inappropriately rolling the dice with his health because he ate what he grew in his own weedy garden or what people might give him.

There were even critics who felt his driving an aged Chevy Nova bruised the dignity of his office and risked potential road incidents. There were critics who leveled similar charges about his $4,000 house in a low-income neighborhood.

He clearly made his critics uncomfortable. And criticize as they might, they still nearly universally respected the man.

Bishop Topel preached Gospel poverty and put flesh and blood on it -- his own. His poverty was not defined by economic paucity, although his example and his writings called the rich to evaluate their lifestyles; the middle class to question a focus on fashion, multiple televisions and keeping up with the Joneses; and the working class and the poor to offer up their prayers and time generously.

I suspect he also made his fellow bishops a bit self-conscious. Yet he in no way tried to embarrass them or call them to task for their incredibly comfortable ways of life. I even asked him once when I worked at this diocesan newspaper why he did not say anything about Gospel poverty at the national bishops' meetings. He smiled and said it was not his role to do that.

More than a few of his episcopal friends, however, were quite aware that Bishop Topel did not stay at the Hyatt Regency or the Waterfront Marriott or the other not-inexpensive sites for national bishops’ gatherings. He would call a local parish in a poor area and ask if he might use a guest room.

Bishop Topel would have been proud of the world's bishops -- or at least the 250 or so of them who gathered for a world synod on the role of bishop in 2001. They clearly and prophetically called on bishops of the world to "be poor in the face of our brothers and sisters, marked by a style of life which draws people to Jesus the Lord. The bishop is the father and the brother of the poor."

Actually, we are all called to kinship with the poor very clearly by the one whose birthday we will soon celebrate. We owe our thanks to witnesses like Bishop Bernard Topel, who preach that message by example. That is a royal gift.

(Comments are welcome. E-mail Uncle Dan at cnsulture01@yahoo.com.)

An issue that lives on long after the elections

By Effie Caldarola

The election is over and most of us, except those political junkies weeping on their blogs, are relieved.

Admit it, weren't there certain political ads that tempted you to throw your shoe at the TV? The booby prize here in Anchorage goes to a local race whose ads used the phrase "Seamus the Truth Leprechaun." With an irritatingly fake Irish accent, Seamus threatened to return to Dublin if his candidate’s opponent wouldn't tell the truth.

"Please, Seamus, please go back to Dublin," I begged one day as I raced to turn off the radio.

But just because the ads are over doesn't mean the issues are gone. Here's an issue that lives on -- our national commitment to justice for the poor.

Almost as annoying to me as Seamus was the propaganda railing against "income redistribution" and "socialism." Essentially, income redistribution is just a fancy way of describing taxes.

Every time we tax we take somebody's income and distribute it for the common good. That good might be a highway or fire trucks or higher pay for the military or an increase in funding for food stamps or low-income housing.

Being Catholics, of course, we should commit to distributing some to helping the poorest among us.

There was endless discussion in the presidential campaign about taxes. Everyone agrees we should tax, and McCain's and Obama's proposals weren't that far apart when the experts sat down and figured it out, although Obama's proposals were admittedly a little tougher on the rich than the rich and corporations.

Certain right-wing pundits went apoplectic, describing this as socialist despite the fact that Obama's proposals would take us back to pre-2001 tax rates, hardly a period of socialist revolution.

Meanwhile, McClatchy Newspapers reports "the gap between the rich and poor in America has grown bigger in recent years than any time since the 1920s."

The nation's top 1 percent of earners, said the paper, had a 22.9 percent share of all pretax income in 2006. Compare that to the 1950s through the 1970s, when the top 1 percent had about 9-10 percent of this income.

"Wow. When you belong to a faith that is committed to the common good, to "a preferential option for the poor," alluded to by the Second Vatican Council and reinforced by Pope John Paul II, how can you not look at those statistics and think, "Hmmm, something doesn't look right here."

Yet some fretted that someone might take a little of my income -- horrors! -- and use it to bolster the safety net or increase medical insurance for the poorest.

Could I, as a Catholic, argue with that? We just want to make sure it's done efficiently, honestly, effectively -- and that's a whole other challenge. We want to do it in such a way that people still can "make it" in America, can work hard and create wealth that creates jobs.

But come on, we know that greed is a sin; yet there are those among us who think it's a virtue. We can have a healthy capitalism and still regulate and tax in such a way that we don't forget our duty to the common good.

Capitalism needs oversight, which is obvious after this year's economic catastrophe.

You know the saying, "In America, we have capitalism for the poor and socialism for the rich." McClatchy reported that the bailout, poorly constructed and poorly administered, may be broadened to help more failing businesses and enabled one bank to buy out a rival. Meanwhile, corporate execons escape crumbling corporations, using golden parachutes paid for by the taxpayer.

Now that's income redistribution we should complain about!

(Please See MAGLIANO/20)

Supporting and challenging the president-elect

By Tony Magliano

Catholic News Service

With the U.S. and the world in so much trouble, a lot is riding on President-elect Barack Obama.

And with inauguration day less than two months away, Obama's agenda is quickly solidifying. Before it is set in stone, however, the president-elect needs to develop a similar moral vision.

Obama's commitment to diplomacy in the Middle East, and to ending America's combat role in Iraq, is a major step in the direction of the Gospel's teaching on reconciliation and peace. However, the president-elect needs to develop a similar diplomatic and exit strategy for Afghanistan. Sending additional troops there is a mistaken continuation of the "Bush Doctrine." Instead, creative, peaceful ideas are needed.

Obama's goal to have Russian and American nuclear missiles removed from "hair trigger" alert, and to eventually elim-
Bishop responds to priest advising confession for Obama voters

Catholic News Service

STOCKTON, Calif. -- A Modesto pastor urged his parishioners to receive the sacrament of penance if they voted for President-elect Barack Obama, who supports legalized abortion, but Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton said the sacrament was not obligatory for Catholics who supported Obama.

"Requiring all Catholics who voted for a candidate with a pro-abortion record to go to confession is not in accord with the moral guidelines set out in 'Faithful Citizenship,'" said the bishop, referring to the U.S. bishops' 2007 document on political responsibility.

Bishop Blaire, in a statement released Dec. 1, said that "determining the moral culpability of an individual Catholic who votes for a candidate with a pro-abortion record is a very complicated matter."

He said that if a Catholic voted for a candidate "with a pro-abortion record with the motivation of supporting that abortion stance, then that is a grave moral matter."

The bishop's statement came in response to a Nov. 21 letter sent to parishioners by Father Joseph Illo, pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Modesto, that urged parishioners to "go to confession before receiving Communion" if they were among "the 54 percent of Catholics who voted for a pro-abortion candidate" and had a clear understanding of the candidate's abortion stance.

According to exit polls, 54 percent of Catholics across the country voted for Obama.

The priest said he could not say if parishioners should refrain from receiving Communion, because he didn't know what they were thinking when they voted, but he stressed that "voting for a candidate who promises 'abortion rights' ... is voting for abortion. It is a grave mistake and probably a grave sin."

The priest's letter, available on the parish Web site -- www.stjmod.com -- gained attention beyond the parish after it was reported in The Modesto Bee daily newspaper Nov. 29 and picked up by other media outlets.

Since then the parish has added a special link to its Web site to enable people to e-mail their comments on the letter.

The priest also clarified the meaning of the letter in a Dec. 1 homily, stating that he never meant that simply voting for Obama made it necessary to go to confession. Instead, he stressed that parishioners risked a "state of grace" if they voted for Obama while fully aware of his position on abortion.

Father Illo said the president-elect has publicly supported the Freedom of Choice Act. The latest version of the legislation, introduced in 2007, would establish federal protection of abortion as a "fundamental right" throughout the nine months of pregnancy, regardless of existing state laws to restrict it. However, it is not clear it will even be reintroduced into the new Congress.

The California newspaper reported that Father Illo had a long line of parishioners greeting him after Mass Dec. 1 offering their support. The priest told the paper that he never "condemned Barack Obama." Instead, he said, "we must condemn a policy that eliminates the rights of a whole class of people."

In his letter, the priest said he knew that many people were "confused about the issues. It is a difficult time for us all, and we are facing new social and cultural issues." But despite such confusion, he said, "one thing is clear and certain: We can never vote for a candidate who promises to promote abortion."

DEACONS: Candidates intend to ‘change lives forever’ for Christ

DEACONS: Candidates intend to ‘change lives forever’ for Christ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Benedict XVI condemned the wave of terrorist attacks in India as acts of "cruel and senseless violence," and led prayers for the more than 170 people who died and the hundreds injured in the bloodshed.

A Vatican spokesman, meanwhile, warned that if extremists continue to exploit the ethnic and religious tensions of southern Asia the results could be even more tragic.

Speaking at his noon blessing Nov. 30, the pope asked for prayers for the victims of the attacks in Mumbai, the Indian financial capital, where suspected Islamic militants assaulted at least 10 targets in a three-day siege that began Nov. 26.

The pope also expressed concern for the clashes between rival ethnic and religious groups in Jos, Nigeria, where at least 200 people were killed Nov. 28-29. Churches and mosques were burned in the rioting.

"The causes and circumstances of these tragic events are different, but there should be a common sense of horror and condemnation for the explosion of such cruel and senseless violence," the pope told pilgrims from his apartment window overlooking St. Peter's Square.

"Let us ask the Lord to touch the hearts of those who delude themselves by thinking that this is the way to resolve local or international problems," he said.

The morning after gunmen attacked the targets in Mumbai, including the luxury Taj Mahal hotel, the pope deplored the brutality of the violence in a telegram sent to Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Mumbai.

An Israeli mourner attends the funeral for Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife, Rivka Holtzberg in Kfar Chabad near Tel Aviv, Israel, Dec. 2. Rabbi Holtzberg and his wife were among six hostages killed at the Jewish center in Mumbai, India, during coordinated attacks by Islamic militants on luxury hotels and other sites. At least 172 people were killed in the attacks. (CNS photo/Yannis Behrakis, Reuters)

Pope condemns terrorist attacks in India

\[\text{The Angelus DECEMBER 2008 Page 9}\]

\section*{Nation}

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Advent: Our joyful, hopeful journey to celebrate Christmas

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

The church gives us four weeks of Advent to prepare to celebrate the wonderful mystery of the incarnation—God became human to bring us out of darkness and to bring us into God’s eternal light. First and foremost, we need to thank our generous God for giving us Jesus who was born of Mary, to teach us about God’s great love for us and to show us how to live our life on planet Earth as we travel with him to God’s eternal kingdom.

We can say that Advent is the dawn, and Christmas is the sunrise. The important thing in the Advent season is to remember the one who is indeed the reason for the season—Jesus Christ. We need to prepare to celebrate the wonderful mystery of the incarnation—God became human to bring us out of darkness and to bring us into God’s eternal light. First and foremost, we need to thank our generous God for giving us Jesus who was born of Mary, to teach us about God’s great love for us and to show us how to live our life on planet Earth as we travel with him to God’s eternal kingdom.

As we prepare for the birthday of Christ, we need to remember to focus our attention primarily on Jesus who is our light and our strength. In Him we place all our hope and trust, as he guides our way even in the darkest times. Jesus asked us to have faith and to be more trusting because you are always safe in His arms. Our prayer during Advent should be—“Dear Lord, Help me not to be afraid; Teach me to be faithful. Advent is a time to be faithful.”

As we walk through the Advent season, we need to capture the spirit of hope and joy that Jesus wants us to have as we anticipate his birthday. Jesus especially invites us to not be overcome by fear, but to trust him and to be faithful to his teaching. Our hope in Jesus helps us to face the many fears that surround us in life, but we consistently need to listen to the biblical words—“Be not afraid” which are repeated 365 times in the Bible. Our prayer during Advent should be—“Dear Lord, Help me not to be afraid. Teach me to be more trusting because you are always with me.”

Advent/Christmas

Upcoming Dates in the 2009 Church Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 12</td>
<td>Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 14</td>
<td>Third Sunday of Advent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 21</td>
<td>Fourth Sunday of Advent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 25</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1, 2010</td>
<td>Mary Mother of God, Octave Day of Christmas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>Epiphany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>First Sunday of Lent</td>
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<td>March 25</td>
<td>The Annunciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Palm Sunday</td>
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<td>April 9</td>
<td>Holy Thursday</td>
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<td>April 10</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td>Holy Saturday</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Easter Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Ascension of the Lord</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Pentecost Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 15</td>
<td>Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary</td>
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From Joseph and Mary of Nazareth

With great joy and affection we cordially invite you to the Birthday of our Son

EMMANUEL

At your nearest Parish Church, On 25 December, and the reception thereafter in your

HEARTS

You are requested, as you come together with your family, to invite the poor, the oppressed, the needy, and especially children, and to celebrate this day in a spirit of peace and joy.

In your own House At your own expense And at your convenience We wish you a very happy and meaningful

CHRISTMAS

Heaven Garden, Date: 25 Dec.2008

With best compliments from: All Saints, Heavenly Ministers, Earthly Friends.

[My sisters and brothers—Joseph and Mary asked me to please share their invitation with all of you. RSVP to Heaven Garden as soon as possible. They take calls day and night.—Bishop Mike]
My Name is Not Fetus

My Name is Amy

(Dedicated to the 46 million babies aborted each year)

(Pro-life Notes: This poem, by Waller Mueller of Abilene’s
Holy Family Parish, was published incorrectly in the
November Angelus. It is republished here in its entirety
and correct sequence. The Angelus regrets the error.)

My mother and I visited Planned Parenthood today,
and I was anxious and my apprehension was very real.
I am not yet born, I am not human, so some say,
can you please tell me if I have the right of appeal?

Mother, I don’t understand. Why are we here?
Why do they call me Fetus and not by my name?
Why do you not want me, mother? Are you ashamed?
What is evacuation and aspiration? Are they the same?

Mother, can we go home now, I am becoming afraid.
You said you came here to talk about another option.

I don’t like what I’m hearing; it’s all terrible for me.
Why didn’t you tell me about adoption?

I have no rights they say. What about my right to life?
Mother, don’t do this. I have done nothing wrong.
The doctor said you have nothing to worry about.

I’m not viable, so it’s not murder. Roe supporters say.

You say tomorrow will be my last day on earth,
do I have a grandmother? Wouldn’t she want me?

I don’t know why we have to get up so early.
Is there really any rush? Do we really have to go?
The doctor said you will be sedated and feel no pain.

Mother, don’t do this. I have done nothing wrong.

Everybody else has civil rights, why not tiny me?
Roe v. Wade said it was all right to take my life away.

Didn’t they know it’s a sin according to God’s law?
I’m not viable, so it’s not murder. Roe supporters say.

Mary, Mother of God, pressed me close to her breast,
and I wished you would write, “Amy, my beloved little girl,”
or am I just another throw away child the world forgot?

Feeling the greatful love of all God’s Children

Submitted by S. Malachy Griffin

The San Angelo and Tyler diocesan partnership teams visited our sisters and brothers in San Pedro Sula, Honduras in late October. Evaluating our efforts and planning for the future occupied part of each day but there was also time to travel to parishes, missions and to the minor seminary. We delivered non-perishable food and other supplies to refugees forced from their homes by steady, daily, and unusually heavy rains which caused rivers to overflow their banks. We also spent time at a Catholic grade school and a home for abandoned children.

For me, a former elementary teacher and principal, who has always had a special love for children, spending time at La Escuela de San Diego Alcalá was delightful. This three year old school is a little gem with red-tile-roof classrooms surrounding an open-air yard. The school has an enrollment of 240 students. Classes at San Diego are mornings only. When the students are dismissed at 12:30, the teachers rush to the public school where they teach afternoons. Children go to school in either the afternoon or the morning.

When we arrived, the students were seated around the yard’s perimeter. The guests were welcomed by the school’s director, Juana Lícida Chinchilla and by the pastor, Father Richard Frank, M.M., a Maryknoll missionary. Costumed first and second graders entertained us with a traditional Honduran dance. They were followed by fifth and sixth graders whose dances were more intricate and a bit more polished. Between acts, we were served a homemade treat by third and fourth graders. Lastly, four kindergarten girls danced a bit more traditional Honduran dance. They were ambulatory, some were not. The children were loving and cared for but there were no dancing brown eyes or magnificent smiles. The visitors were deeply moved by all they saw.

Partnership at Seven Years

Despite rains and flooding, the Diocesan Partnership Teams of the Dioceses of San Pedro Sula, Tyler and San Angelo met in Honduras in late October to discuss the future of the Hermanamiento that began in 2001. Sister Malachy Griffin, OP, Sister Hilda Marotta, OSF, and Msgr. Larry Droll represented the Diocese of San Angelo. The event was held at Monte Horeb Retreat Center in La Lima.

The Partnership attempts to create relationships between dioceses, parishes, schools and university students in the three dioceses. St. Joseph and St. Anthony Parishes in Odessa have a very active partnership with Holy Cross Parish in Baracoa. The Diocesan Teams toured the flooded areas of this parish.

St. Ann’s Parish in Midland is beginning a new partnership with Holy Trinity Parish in Chamelecón. Members of St. Ann’s are already familiar with the neighborhood from previous mission trips. Msgr. Droll met with Father Carlos Felipe Rodriguez, the pastor of Holy Trinity, and discussed possibilities for the relationship, including mutual prayer, learning from one another, and working in solidarity with one another.

The Diocesan Teams also enjoyed visits to the diocesan minor seminary and an elementary school, San Diego de Alcalá. The San Angelo Team is planning to share more information with the parishioners of the Diocese of San Angelo about the Hermanamiento, to develop new energy for the partnership. The teams of Diocesan Teams will meet in San Angelo in late August, 2009.
Enticement that can lead to Satanic possession

By Kyle Clement

In our final installment of the 3 part series, Satan the Adversary, we will discuss various methods and strategies and time-tested remedies which may be utilized to great effect in our battle with the adversary. The military analogy enlightens the discussion of our conflict as children of God against Satan. To be successful in their campaign against evil, both in their life and in their world we must dwell on, perfect, practice and adapt the fundamentals of Christianity. Effective and victorious military leaders, coaches or any successful person know that they must have a firm and instinctual grasp of the fundamentals of their discipline to be successful; likewise in spiritual warfare.

We must go beyond avoiding sin to pursue holiness in Christ to avoid being hamstrung in our conflict as children of God against Satan. Our busyness and our activities result in a “house being swept clean.” St. Luke documents Jesus’ teaching on this principle in the 11th chapter, verse 24-26. A house swept clean, “freed of evil spirits,” produces a period of vulnerability as the house stands unoccupied. The house in this instance is our life, our soul, perhaps our families or marriage.

When we rid a portion of our life of evil, ridding it of evil creates a vacancy, a vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum or vacancy, which will be filled. We have developed the filling of our lives to an art-form in this society: our busyness and our activities. These occupy in an unfulfilling way the place Christ desires in our hearts. The second part of our baptismal vows address this.

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Family

Don't touch anything. Don't sit anywhere. And Happy Holidays

By Jimmy Patterson

I had to laugh earlier in the week when Karen showed me her to-do list, or as she calls it, her "Accomplish List." I prefer to call mine a "to-do" list. It doesn't take as long to write, it's not as hard to spell and I don't seem like such a failure when I don't 'do' something rather than when I fail to accomplish something.

"What is this?" I asked Karen when she gave me her list.

"It's my list of things I am going to accomplish. See ... paint, buy new furniture, hang curtains."

"Yeah, yeah, I know THAT. Why is that there?" I pointed to the word at the top of her list. "Accomplish." "It's my accomplish list." "Yeah, I know, but do you really have to write the word 'accomplish' at the top of your accomplish list? I mean, would you not know that you need to paint, to buy new furniture and to hang new curtains if you didn't have the word 'accomplish' at the top of the page? For that matter, that's just three items. You should really be able to remember those three things." "You?" she said. "YOU are telling ME how to write a to-do list?"

"It's not a to-do list, it's your accomplish list. There's a difference."

"I'll say," she said. "Who but you would ever write "nap" on his to-do list? It's not like you're gonna forget to do that, I guarantee it."

She continued, pointed out my list-making foibles, including how if I forget to include something on my to-do list, but then do it, I write it on my list anyway, after the fact, and then immediately scratch it off. It's always made me feel even better if I can work on extra projects while having the more formal to-do list.

"You do it your way, I'll do it mine," I said. "Just leave me alone on the nap thing. A man has to have his rest. Especially a man who lives in this house. Especially a man who lives in this house this WEEK. This place is kind of a mess, y'know. Do you realize we might not be able to find the turkey Thursday? We might have actually thrown it out when we rolled up the old carpeting and tossed it in the dumpster Monday night. And how do we know if we'll be eating turkey gravy Thursday? We could pour our used carmel brown semi-gloss over our stuffing. This IS the best week to re-do the house, my dear." "Well, it's been a pretty good week for me what with you having to work and all. Why don't you just go take a nap ... scratch something off of your to-do list."

Tips for a festive but frugal Christmas celebration

By Bill and Monica Dodds

Catholic News Service

Don't touch anything. Don't sit anywhere. And Happy Holidays.

We're not going to say the recent economic turmoil has a silver lining for families. (If it did have one, many families would have grabbed it and sold it by now.) But it does offer some opportunities to help you do what you've wanted to do -- or at least have talked about doing -- for several Christmases past.

And that is: spend less.

So here's the good news. This year, you probably will spend less. The not-so-good news? You'll do that because you have less to spend or you have a well-founded concern (or fear) that all too soon that will be the case.

Here are some tips and reminders for those who in the not-so-distant past may have been "frugally challenged."

1. Decide on a realistic budget and stick to it.
2. Tell the kids that this year, when it comes to gifts, simple (read "not expensive") is "in." (Or, to paraphrase a popular expression, "Twenty dollars is the new 50 dollars.")
3. Stick to your guns! There's no better way to help your sons and daughters learn that:
   a. You stick to your guns! and
   b. It's possible to have a wonderful Christmas without spending a wad of money and ringing up more credit card debt.

   This January can be the first year in a long time that begins without a visit from the terrifying Ghost of Christmas Just Passed (i.e., a big, fat credit card bill in the mail).

   And speaking of things to watch out for ...
4. Avoid choosing to give a homemade gift that ends up costing more than something store-bought. As every craftsperson and hobbyist knows, that can easily happen.

5. Don't re-gift an item to someone unless you're sure he or she didn't first give it to you. (And neither did anyone else in the circle of family or friends at that particular gathering where this latest gift exchange is taking place.)

6. Never give an item to senior family members without seriously considering:
   a. Will she just see this as one more object that has to be dusted once a week?
   b. Is he just going to toss this into the sock drawer with so many other gifts from so many other years?

   If either seems likely, give the gift of yourself: A pledge that you'll call or visit on a regular basis. (Keep that promise!)

And speaking of gifts and visits ...

7. Remember that at that first Christmas the initial celebration was low-budget. No, we aren't referring to the stable. We mean the angels sang and the shepherds came by to say hello. It was only later that the wise men showed up with packages.

   And, while the Gospels don't tell us, it seems possible that Mary and Joseph later returned those presents to raise some money for what the Holy Family really needed: a way to cover expenses for the flight into Egypt.

   On the Web: Free Computer Video Games Game Giveaway of the Day offers free games every Saturday and Sunday. The catch? A particular game is available only that day and will work only on the computer onto which it is downloaded. (But you can download the same game on more than one computer on that day.) The choices are hit and miss, but the hits are fun. And the price can't be beat.

   Go to: game.giveawayoftheday.com.

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.FSJ.org. They can be contacted at MonicaDodds@YourAgingParent.com.

ANSWERS

A teen's prayer during the family's holiday meal

By Erick Rommel / Catholic News Service

In some families, teens are encouraged to give a blessing before the Thanksgiving meal. For those who would rather do more than mumble a few words about how great the turkey looks, I recommend these special words:

"As we prepare for our feast, I'd like to honor this holiday and those who celebrate it by giving thanks in the truest sense of those words."

"We give thanks for the family that surrounds us and comes together in celebration on this and other holidays."

"Many call Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter special occasions, but we know in our hearts that the truly special occasion occurs whenever we come together. We're also thankful that while we don't always like each other, we do always love each other; and that's far more important.

"Those who can't be with us today due to distance or health, high gas prices or low cash reserves are in our prayers and our hearts; we are thankful for all they bring to our family."

"If there are any not with us today because our imperfect lives have led to what appears to be an insurmountable rift, I express hope that we can overcome our obstacles and learn the ties that bind us are far stronger than those that tear us apart.

"For those new to our family -- whether it's by birth or marriage, or simply an opening of hearts, we embrace you with love and joy and look forward to our celebrations for many years to come.

"I pray that good health continues for each of us. We thank God for our aches and pains too, because if we didn't notice them it would be because pains far worse would be taking our attention.

"For those whose health isn't what it once was, we pray for your speedy recovery. If that is not to be possible, we pray that you find the strength to endure -- and that we find the compassion to embrace you in your time of need.

"We also remember those no longer with us and the joyous times when they were at this table.

"Regardless of our finances, we give thanks for all we do have."

Coming of Age

While we talk about economic hardships while eating a bounty greater than many will see this entire week, we remember that we still receive blessings great and small, from roofs over our heads to plasma TVs on our walls.

"We thank God that we live in a society where we can thank God. Just as important, we are thankful that we have faith, for without that our lives would be much less.

"To those who lead us, we are thankful that you make decisions with our best interests at heart rather than your own. We respectfully acknowledge differences of opinion as long as they never degenerate into differences of respect.

"We offer a special thanks to the Detroit Lions. We may or may not be fans of their team, but they along with their gridiron compatriots give us something to do after we finish this food. Today may be for family, but sometimes family needs time where giving thanks doesn't include conversation.

"In the spirit of the holiday season, we're thankful we don't have to judge our gifts by the price on the tag or the size of the box, but rather on the size of the heart that gives it, which is priceless. Amen!"
The right place at the right time

By Anonymous

I came to the support group by way of my boss who saw the notice in his church bulletin and thought of me. I have attended a support group in the past for another issue and knew that it could be beneficial. When I arrived at the group, I was the only person there that was not Catholic. This has not been a problem. I have been included, supported, encouraged and prayed for, as much as I have supported, encouraged and prayed for others.

The group has provided a safe environment in which I could process my feelings and emotions regarding the incarceration of my son. I am single so I don't have a partner to share these burdens or the feelings with. Although, as I have learned, even if I had a husband sometimes there is so much pain we don't want to burden our partner with any more so we don't share.

When I arrived, I did not realize that God was placing me here so that I could receive support while my son was facing surgery and possible cancer. As it turns out, after surgery his results from the pathology report were benign. Praise God, what a blessing.

New Life Ministry Support Group

Many families with a loved one in jail or prison feel great shame and don't want to tell others about their personal struggles, but only through sharing their burdens can healing begin. New Life Ministry (NLM) is a community support group that offers love, understanding and acceptance. Everything shared is held in strict confidence and no one is there to judge your actions, only to support you in these difficult times. It is very important to remember that if a spouse or child commits a crime, they had a free will to make these poor choices. You shouldn't carry that guilt, but you do need to find it in your heart to forgive. In Matthew 18:20-22, "Peter said, "Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me, up to seven times?" Jesus said in reply, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." Unforgiveness can lead one to cut off communications with the person incarcerated, and this is the worst thing that could happen. It is essential to maintain communication during the incarceration period of a loved one through letters, phone calls and most importantly personal visits. If this communication is not there, a loved one may feel abandoned and this could lead to depression, and even thoughts of suicide. As such, continual contact is a key contributor to increase the chances of a loved one not returning to prison.

At present, there are 2.5 million children, in the US, under the age of 18 years old that have at least one parent in prison. Many of these children and families live in poverty conditions, and this environment leads to more than 50% becoming future prisoners themselves. The NLM support group not only has a program for the adults, but can help children deal with the difficulties in their lives.

Each parish in our diocese has families and children that come to Mass and sit in the pews as a “hidden population” suffering in silence. They are afraid to share their struggles so they carry their burdens alone. The main goal of NLM support group is found in Matthew 11:28, where Jesus says, “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. God hears the cries of those suffering, and He a calls us to be His hands and feet reaching out to them. Through our efforts, we listen to their struggles, comfort them and plant seeds that can lead to reconciliation. In this way, we assist in opening the door for them to experience a New Life in Christ where we have found peace and joy in our relationship with Him. If we truly love our neighbor as ourselves, we will respond to this great need.

New Life Ministry (NLM) support groups are underway in Midland, and recently in San Angelo. Which city in the diocese will be next? Please contact Deacon Bob Leibrrecht at 432-889-3858 for more details.

However, watching your offspring deal with such life issues when they and you are totally not in control of any decision making, scheduling, or selecting of the doctor is, at best, gut wrenching. Receiving support from the group helped me give support to him each of the 10 weeks I traveled to see him, as he waited first for his test, then a doctor’s appointment, then surgery, and last but not least his results. It was a blessing to now look back, and see that God was with me all along. He has a plan to carry us through those difficult times if we are willing to listen and follow His direction.
PLANNED PARENTHOOD: Foundation comes from anti-Christian founder

(From 4)

486 for medical abortions, and promoted its approval by the FDA, and volunteered to conduct early U.S. drug trials. In one trial the patient nearly bled to death, but the PPFA affiliate did not report this as an "adverse event." Young Californians Holly Patterson and Vivian Tran died from toxic poisoning after Planned Parenthood's RU-486 abortions. PPFA's promotion of RU-486 continues, despite a medical finding that the risk of death after such abortions, from infection alone, is ten times the risk of death from all causes in surgical abortions at the same state of pregnancy.

It is very sad and troubling to know that the Federal Drug Administration(FDA) in approving RU-486 has, for the first time in its history, approved a drug that is designed to kill. The FDA is charged with approving only those drugs which would improve health or assist in overcoming some pathology and which carry minimal or no risk to those who would use them. The FDA's approval of RU-486 does none of the above, and this "abortion pill" does not improve the health of the woman taking the pill, since pregnancy is not a disease. Plaintiff-patients have said that they have been misled about the severity of the side affects of RU-486 which include excessive bleeding, severed headaches, nausea, dizziness, mood swings, and depression. One study showed twenty percent of women who underwent RU-486 misoprostol abortion suffered prolonged bleeding for 35 to 42 days.

Many have misleadingly promoted RU-486 as a panacea. In reality, chemical or medical abortion is an intense, three to fifteen day regimen involving multiple office visits and a combination of drugs with the possibility of life-threatening complications. Over 660 "adverse events" reports were recorded by the FDA describing problems which arose in the course of RU-486 abortions over four years ending October 2004.

Supporters of RU-486 also claim it is "effective." The truth is, this depends on what you mean by "effective." What a terrible distortion of medicine's highest goal—to provide health and well-being—to say a drug is "effective" in destroying human life. What failure rate is acceptable in a completely voluntary drug like RU-486 that has no health benefit and substantial risk to the user? One might tolerate fairly high risk of failure and harm in a drug that might cure cancer, because the alternative is probable death. RU-486 is blatantly immoral as its sole purpose is to kill the unborn.

Planned Parenthood Political Efforts

Planned Parenthood (PPFA) has been making news lately on several fronts. In fiscal year 2007, the nation's premier abortion provider topped $1 Billion in revenues (with the help of over $336 million in taxpayer funding). "Flush with cash"—as the Wall Street Journal describes it—Planned Parenthood has embarked on two spending sprees. Its Action Fund offered to pump $10 million into this year's political campaigns to elect pro-abortion candidates. The election funding should go a long way to ensuring that PPFA continues to get hundreds of millions annually in government handouts.

Planned Parenthood and Teens

Parents need to be aware of Planned Parenthood's degrading position on pornography featured on "Teenwire: There is no indication that using pornography causes problems as long as it does not interfere with other aspects of a person's life." How different is this from the position of our Catholic Church, and most Christians, that pornography degrades and dehumanizes both female and male participants and present youth with a false and distorted image of human sexuality, devoid of love, commitment, and responsibility. Planned Parenthood also entices hundreds of thousands of teenagers to believe that condoms and pills guarantee consequences. Planned Parenthood propagates myths among youth that condoms and birth control pills are "effective" in preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Planned Parenthood continues to mislead teens that there is no substantial risk of becoming pregnant or acquiring an STD while using condoms or the Pill. However, last March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that one in four teens had at least one sexually transmitted disease.

It has been pointed out by the Weekly Standard, 10/22/07, that about 60% of the government funding PPFA received in the fiscal ending June 30, 2005, came from state and local governments. Planned Parenthood has consistently fought recent pro-abortion limits—

- Right to know laws ensuring women know about abortion's physical, psychological, risks, fetal development, and alternatives to abortion.
- Waiting periods that give women opportunity to reflect on their abortion decision.
- Parental involvement laws allowing parents to be informed if their minor daughter is undergoing an abortion. While Planned Parenthood encourages more abortions, a recent poll conducted by Marist College Institute of public opinion between September 24 and October 3rd shows that almost all Americans think abortion should be restricted. The poll indicated that even among those who describe themselves as pro-choice, 71% favored restricting abortion.

Planned Parenthood bases its anti-Christian philosophy on its Founder

Americans need to know that Planned Parenthood still bases its philosophy and principles on its founder, Margaret Sanger, who called Christianity "parasitic," and looked forward to the day when humanity would be freed from its tyranny. She labeled the holy Sacrament of Marriage a decadent institution, and the masthead of her magazine proudly declared her motto—"No Gods, no Masters." Planned Parenthood bases its direction on Margaret Sanger, its founder, who championed limiting the births of groups she deemed undesirable. Her aim was one of "refining the population along preferred ethnic lines.” All Americans need to know that Margaret Sanger founded the "Negro project" to reduce black reproduction in the United States. Margaret Sanger was an eugenicist and racist, and her agenda is being carried out today in Planned Parenthood clinics in minority neighborhoods, which are abortuaries that destroy the unborn. A major question needs to be answered by Planned Parenthood. All need to know that at least until 1963, Planned Parenthood recognized that the unborn was a baby when it stated: “An abortion kills the life of a baby after it has begun. It is dangerous to your life and health.” When and why did Planned Parenthood stop considering the unborn to be a baby?

Support Prolife Legislation

There is an important legislation that is before Congress [S.351], that would amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to “any entity that performs abortions,” which would immediately cut off Planned Parenthood’s $336 million taxpayer funding. Now is the time to act to support this legislation, and to take a stance for the precious unborn who are being destroyed at many Planned Parenthood clinics. Please write your local officials and media about your displeasure with the programs of Planned Parenthood, and write our Congress people to support Bill S.351. I have pleaded with the Knights of Columbus of our Diocese to support this bill. Brother Knights, you have to be more pro-active—the unborn depend on you. Most of all, let us pray for the guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit. I close by asking that we pray the short, powerful prayer of Pope John Paul II: “Give us the grace—when the sacredness of life before birth is attacked, to stand up and proclaim that no one ever has the authority to destroy unborn life.”

BIOETHICS

(Para 13)

Dejar atrás la desconfianza mutua que se ha generado entre científicos y hombres de fe es, por lo tanto, el primer paso para comprender que la ciencia y la religión no son enemigos en lo absoluto. Ambas son capaces no sólo de coexistir en paz sino que, al interior del científico mismo, la religión y la ciencia pueden interconectarse y fortalecerse mutuamente. Quizá quien mejor lo ha expresado fue Johannes Kepler, pionero en astronomía, matemático y primero en calcular las órbitas elípticas de los planetas: “El objetivo principal de todas las investigaciones sobre el mundo exterior debe ser descubrir el orden racional y la armonía que Dios le impuso, y que Él nos reveló en el lenguaje de las matemáticas”.

Esa fuente de racionalidad, que es Dios mismo, debe ser en cada uno de nosotros la fuente que nos llene de asombro continuamente, así como lo fue para Einstein al darse cuenta de que “Lo más incomprensible del universo es que es comprensible”.

El Padre Tadeusz Pacholczyk hizo su doctorado en neurociencias en la Universidad de Yale y su trabajo post-doctoral en la Universidad de Harvard. Es Sacerdote para la Diócesis de Fall River, Massachusetts, y se desempeña como Director de Educación en el Centro Nacional Católico de Bioética en Philadelphia. The National Catholic Bioethics Center; www.ncbcenter.org

Traducción: María Elena Rodríguez
**ADVENT: Preparing for God’s great gift**

(From 10)

selves: What is my level of faith and trust, and how am I expressing my faith in action? How am I being faithful to Christ’s teachings given to me in the church he established?

Christmas is about God’s great gift to us, and about giving. Hence, to really prepare well for the great gift of Christmas, we need to live the days of Advent with generous hearts and hands that especially reach out to family members who are in need, and to look at ways of how we can help the poor and needy who surround us.

To help us capture the Advent’s spirit, I recommend that each home have an Advent wreath, and also acquire or design as a family an Advent calendar. The Advent calendar can serve like a window to open each day leading us to the great celebration of Christmas. The Advent calendar especially should focus on special scriptural readings that the family can share together, each day, or at least once or twice a week. Prepare for Christ’s birthday especially by praying and sharing with family members. Let us open our hearts to God’s mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and receive Him often in Holy Communion.

May your Advent journey be filled with new hope, peace and joy. To help us truly live this season, let us turn to the mother of Jesus, and our mother, and try to capture in our hearts her spirit of preparation for that first Christmas when Jesus took flesh from her body and became one of us. Like Mary, we are called to accept God’s will by surrendering our lives to God’s will. And, like Mary, we can bring Jesus into the world by sharing Him and His message of love, justice, peace and truth with others.

**SATAN: Spiritual survival dependent on knowledge**

(From 13)

themselves to the infilling of the Holy Spirit into the place made vacant by the renunciation in the first three vows. Daily recitation of our baptismal vows affirms this infilling of the Holy Spirit. We cannot pursue holiness or be an instrument of God without the animating force of the Holy Spirit. By this principle, we make ourselves available to the action of the Holy Spirit in our life.

The fourth fundamental, being readied for battle, involves our spiritual health. No soldier goes to war without basic training, which centers on physical fitness. Constant pursuit of spiritual fitness maintains readiness. The adversary will come in times of weakness, stress. As an opportunistic predator with no concept of honor or fairness, he will strike at the most vulnerable.

**OBISPO**

(Para 3)

cuando renace de una manera nueva en nuestro mundo, hay posada de nuestros corazones? ¿Hay algo que impida el renacimiento de nuestro Cristo en cada uno de nosotros, en nuestra sociedad y nuestro mundo? Sabemos que el Niño Cristo de la Navidad es el mismo niño de quien se hablaba por el gran profeta Isaías en la primera lectura para la Misa de Gallo donde leemos: “Un niño nos ha nacido, un hijo se nos ha dado; lleva sobre sus hombros el signo del imperio.” A ese niño, entonces, se le ha dado títulos increíbles y maravillosos que aplican al Niño Cristo que descansa en el pesebre en Belén. El cien
tamente es—“Consejero-Admisible, Dios Todopoderoso, Padre Semipaterno, Príncipe de la Paz.”

El niño de Navidad recostado en el pesebre es nuestro Príncipe de Paz. ¿Has escuchado y vivido verdaderamente nuestro mundo el mensaje del Príncipe de Paz de cómo la paz verdadera se logrará en nuestro mundo? ¿Hemos realmente tomado a pecho ese mensaje? Si así fuera, entonces no habría el conflicto, la violencia y la guerra que existe hoy día en nuestro mundo. El niño recostado en el pesebre en el establo de Belén nos dirá después, en su misión de adulto, una de las ocho maneras como seremos bendecidos en las Bienaventuranzas. Él nos dice, “Dichosos los que trabajan por la paz, porque Dios los llamará hijos suyos.” Interesantemente, Jesús no dijo benditos son ellos que piensan o sueñan, o hasta rezan por la paz—aunque, por cierto, necesitamos orar por la paz. Pero dijo esos que hacen la paz, que ellos mismos que se han cometido a laborar por la paz, son los que serán llamados Hijos de Dios. Al celebrar el cumpleaños del Príncipe de Paz, debemos preguntarnos: ¿Hay algo que impide recibir, en la posada de nuestros corazones, el mensaje verdadero de paz?

Últimamente, la Navidad es una celebración de un cumpleaños—el cumpleaños de la persona más grande que ha vivido. Tristemente, para muchos, la temporada de la Navidad es más acerca de cosas, en vez de la persona quien es la razón de la temporada. Esa persona es Jesucristo, el Salvador anhelado. En la Navidad, celebramos un nacimiento que cambió la historia y reclamó nuestro destino como gente de Dios. Eso, por cierto, es algo que debemos celebrar—en oración, en leer las Escrituras, en nuestras celebraciones familiares y por medio de vivir nuestras vidas en amor y servicio en estos días. Si excluimos a Jesús y su mensaje, entonces todos los villanicos, los adormes, las luces, y las compras de regalos buenos de Navidad, pierden su significado. Sin Jesús, este festivo siempre será hueco y vacío.

Al celebrar la Navidad, se pregunta: ¿Cómo llegamos del nacimiento de Cristo a la celebración de la Navidad el 25 de diciembre? La palabra, Navidad, (Christmas en el idioma inglés) entró al lenguaje inglés alrededor de 1050 como una frase del inglés pasado—Christes maesse—que significa “Christ’s Mass (Misa de Cristo)”. Aunque el día exacto del nacimiento de Jesús no se sabe, la Navidad misma, históricamente, comenzó alrededor del cuarto siglo como una manera de dar un espíritu cristiano a la celebración del solsticio invernal.

Antes de ese tiempo, cada año, comenzando el 17 de diciembre, los romanos honraban a Saturno, su dios de agricultura, en una celebración que duraba siete días e incluía el solsticio invernal, generalmente tomando lugar alrededor del 25 de diciembre en el calendario Juliano antiguo. Durante ese tiempo de festividad, los romanos festejaban, posponían negocios y guerras, compartían regalos, y temporalmente libraban a sus esclavos.

Al pasar los siguientes 1,000 años, la observancia de la Navidad el 25 de diciembre siguió la expansión de la Cristiandad por todo el mundo. Recordamos que fue San Francisco quien nos dio la crèche, la cuna. Creencias Cristianas combinaron con fiestas y ritos existentes para crear tradiciones, como el intercambio de regalos y tarjetas, y adornos especiales, incluso el árbol siempre verde, el árbol navideño. Cualquier cosa que los Cristianos hagan para marcar este día santo, debe ser consagrado en Jesús—in nuestros corazones, hogares y vecindades.

Al celebrar el día de nacimiento de Cristo, individualmente y como familias necesitamos pasar un tiempo en frente de la cuna y reflexionar en el misterio del niño recostado en el pesebre. Ese niño es el verdadero Hijo de Dios. El es el cual Pablo nos dice, “En Él Dios creó todo lo que hay en el cielo y la tierra. Todo fue creado por medio de Él y para Él, y por Él todo se mantiene en orden.” (Col. 1:16-17) Durante esta temporada de la Navidad, especialmente antes del año nuevo, al reunirnos como familias, necesitamos, de nuevo, leer la historia Navideña. Leer acerca del nacimiento de Cristo en el

(Mira NAVIDAD/19)
BISHOP: Little child in a manger becomes our Prince of Peace

(From 2)

As we reflect on this beautiful Gospel for Christmas, the question for us today is:
When we celebrate His birthday on December 25, when He is reborn in a new way in our world, is there room for Him in the inn of our hearts today? Is there something perhaps that is blocking the rebirth of our Christ in each of us, in our society and in our world?

We know that the Christ Child of Christmas is that same little child spoken of by the great Prophet Isaiah in the First Reading for the Midnight Mass for Christmas where we read: “A child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.” That little child is then given by the great Prophet Isaiah wonderful and unbelievable titles that apply to the Christ Child lying in a manger in Bethlehem. He is indeed—“wonder-counselor, God-hero, Father-forever, Prince of Peace.”

The little child of Christmas lying in a manger is our Prince of Peace. Has our world truly heard and lived the message of the Prince of Peace of how true peace will be achieved in our world? Have we truly taken that message to heart? If so, then there would not be the conflict, the violence and the war that we find in our world today.

The child lying in the manger in the stable in Bethlehem will later on tell us in His adult mission about one of the eight ways that we will be blessed in the Beatitudes.

He says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” As we celebrate the birthday of Christ, individually and as families we need to spend some time in front of the crib and ponder the mystery of the little child lying in the manger.

That child is the very Son of God. He is the One as Paul tells us “For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth—all things were created through him and for him...and in him all things hold together” (Col.1:16-17) During this season of Christmas, especially before the new year, as we come together as families, we need to read over the Christmas story.

Read about the birth of Christ in St. Luke’s Gospel, Ch. 2, in Matthew’s Gospel, Ch. 1 and 2. When we sit down to a meal, invite family members to discuss the meaning of Christmas and how each one has lived like Jesus during this Christmas season.

The angel told us that the sign of Christmas is the infant, “lying in a manger.” That little infant in the manger who is the God-man has come to bring salvation and God’s love for all people of all times. In taking on our humanity, Jesus Christ began His life as a baby among us and identified Himself with every man and woman who will ever live, especially with each baby in the womb waiting to be born, and every little child in the arms of mothers and fathers.

Where do we find Jesus today? In a particular way, Jesus our Savior who was born in poverty, is found in the least of our brothers and sisters. He is found in the forgotten ones, the ones who suffer, the ones who are alone, the ones who are poor or whose lives are cut short even before they leave the womb. Jesus was born poor and in poverty to make all of us rich, and He also willed to be born poor to be especially close to little ones, the forgotten, the abandoned ones of this earth. This fact challenges us to remember that we cannot be indifferent or oblivious to the situation and plight of each human being with whom we come in contact.

The infant in the manger would one day remind us as an adult in one of His most powerful and challenging stories that we must make every effort to recognize Him in the hungry, in the thirsty, in the imprisoned, in the sick, in the needy, in the abandoned. And He constantly tells us that each time that we do something to help one of these least, we are helping Him.

To truly celebrate Christmas then, we must look for the sign of Christmas mentioned by the angel—“the infant lying in the manger.” We are invited to go with Mary and Joseph before that infant and to adore our God as the Christ Child. We are invited to embrace with tender love, heartfelt gratitude, and prepare our hearts to receive Him in a new way each day, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Just think of this: Each time when we go to Mass and receive the Eucharist, the infant Jesus, our Risen Savior, is reborn in our world and in each one of us, and so we can say that Christmas is truly happening not only on December 25, but on January 25 and February 25, and on every day of the year.

NAVIDAD

(Para 3)

Evangelio de San Lucas, Capítulo 2, en el Evangelio de Mateo, Capítulo 1 y 2. Al sentarnos a una comida, invitamos a miembros de la familia a discutir el significado de la Navidad y cómo cada uno ha vivido como el Niño Cristo.

¿Dónde encontramos a Jesús hoy? En una manera particular, Jesús nuestro Salvador quien nació en pobreza, se encuentra en nuestros hogares y personas más insignificantes. Él se encuentra en los olvidados, los que sufren, los que están solos, los que son pobres o en los noatos quienes se destruyen en las entrañas maternales antes de nacer. Jesús nació pobre y en su pobreza nos hace ricos. Él también tomó a libre albedrío de nacer pobre para poder estar especialmente cerca de los pequeños, los olvidados, los abandonados de este mundo.

Este hecho nos reta a recordar en el tiempo navideño que no podemos ser indiferentes o inconscientes de la situación o condición difícil de cada ser humano con quien nos ponemos en contacto. El niño en el pesebre, algún día nos recordaría, como adulto, en una de sus más poderosas y desafiantes historias, que siempre debemos hacer todo esfuerzo para reconocerlo en el hambre, en el sediento, en el encarcelado, en el enfermo, en el necesitado, en el abandonado. Y Él constantemente nos recuerda que cada vez que hacemos algo para ayudar a uno de estos insignificantes, le estamos ayudando a Él.

Entonces, para realmente celebrar la Navidad, debemos buscar la señal de la Navidad mencionada por el ángel—“el niño recostado en el pesebre.” Estamos invitados a ir con María y José ante ese niño y adorar nuestro Dios como el Niño Cristo. Estamos invitados abrazar amor tierno, gratitud sincera, y preparar nuestros corazones para recibir a Él de una manera nueva cada día, especialmente en la celebración de la Eucaristía y el Sacramento de Reconciliación. Piensen seriamente en esto: Cada vez que vamos a Misa y recibimos la Eucaristía, el niño Jesús, nuestro Salvador Resucitado, es renacido en nuestro mundo y en cada uno de nosotros, y podemos decir que realmente la Navidad está sucediendo no solamente el 25 de diciembre, sino también el 25 de enero y el 25 de febrero y en cada día del año.
MAGLIANO: Doubling foreign assistance a start, columnist says

(From 8)

Doubles foreign weapons, powerful-ly reflects Catholic teaching. But his determination to rely on nuclear deterrence in the interim does not.

The president-elect's proposal of doubling foreign assistance to the world's poor is an improvement, but not as generous as it may sound.

According to the Christian anti-poverty organization Bread for the World, the United States in 2007 gave a total of $14 billion for poverty-focused development assistance -- which is only 0.5 percent of our federal budget.

Pope John Paul II warned America not to be content to give just the crumbs from our feast to the poor.

According to the World Bank, 1.4 billion human beings live in extreme poverty -- struggling to survive on less than $1.25 a day. Even during these difficult economic times, we can allocate much more than a 0.5 percent budgetary increase to help our suffering brothers and sister.

Christ expects better from us!

We need to challenge ourselves and President-elect Obama to share far more of our wealth with the world's poor.

Very troubling is Obama's strong pro-abortion stance.

He hopes to sign into law the Freedom of Choice Act. If passed by Congress, this legislation would cancel even modest abortion restraints like parental notification laws. It would forbid banning par-tial-birth abortions and would even deny legal protection for an infant born alive after a failed abortion!

During their recent meeting in Baltimore, the U.S. Catholic bishops unanimously agreed to mobilize the resources of the Catholic community to prevent the passage of the Freedom of Choice Act.

One easy step we can take imme-diately is to call President-elect Obama (202-540-3000 and press 2) or, preferably, contact him at www.change.gov and go to "American Moment" at the top of the page. Click "Share Your Vision."

In the comment section please explain why you object to Obama's support of abortion and the Freedom of Choice Act. Urge him to agree to dialogue with the pro-life community.

Also request that he pursue diplo-macy in Afghanistan and abandon his intentions to deepen our military involvement there. And ask him to triple poverty-focused assistance to the world's poor in 2009.

Now is the best time to help President-elect Obama understand the moral concerns of America's Catholic community!