Advent-Christmas 2013
FROM THE BISHOP’S DESK

How we can make Christmas happen every day

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In the Gospel for the midnight Christmas Mass, we hear God’s angel announce the wonderful news of that long-awaited first Christmas: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim for 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.” The birth of that baby, the Incarnation of Christ, is the greatest event in all of human history—the very Son of God, becoming man, like us.

My first wish for all of you, your families and friends, is for a blessed and joyful Christmas as we remember that unique moment in human history of the birth of the greatest person who ever lived, Jesus Christ, true God and true man. I pray in a special way in my Christmas Masses that the peace of the child Jesus, the one who is still the Prince and way of true peace, will fill all of your hearts and that we will all come to understand the true meaning of Christmas. As we mark the birthday of the Prince of Peace, we pray for peace in our world, for the millions of poor and homeless, for an end to war and violence, for God’s protection of our military personnel and for peace in each of our hearts and families.

To understand, to comprehend, at least in some way, in as much as our tiny, human minds can, I invite you to come and meditate on the divine mystery of that wonderful child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Take time on Christmas, and throughout the Christmas season, to come especially as a family and spend time in prayer and meditation before this infant in the crib, and to give him praise and glory as we kneel before our little king, begging him to show us the way to peace, reconciliation and how to discover God’s mercy and forgiveness, and how to be agents of God’s mercy for others. The infant, the God-man, in the crib is a sign and source of the reconciliation and healing that we need in our individual lives, in our families, in our communities, and throughout the world.

Historically, we assign a day to say when Christ was born. However, because of the wonderful mystery of the sacred liturgy, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, Christ is born in a new way each day in each and every Mass.

(Please See BISHOP/22)
## Love of family, self: Learning from others

AMMAN, Jordan — Tears are prevalent here. They come from the eyes of Syrian refugees driven from their homes by the violence of the Assad regime and the forces that oppose his rule in their homeland. In two years of fighting, the bloodshed quickly escalated and grew into the deadly conflict it is today. The latest numbers are startling: Over 2 million have fled the country. Of the ones who stayed, more than 115,000 are now dead. Those who escaped are left to face a future of uncertainty. No one knows when or if they will ever be able to return home. Or if they will ever see their family members who stayed behind to fight for Syria.

In America, our greatest uncertainties can amount to what time a soccer game begins or when a spouse will get off work so that dinner can be on the table and warm for the family. So many of us have such minor problems in comparison.

The killing in Syria is not unlike the stories of war and brutality we’ve heard for as long as any of us care to remember. War has been with all of us for most of our lives, it doesn’t matter our age. We have not learned.

Certainly next to those who give their lives or suffer injury, and their families, the people who lose so much in war are the peaceful among us; citizens, such as the Syrians in this case, lose so much; they are forced to give up their homes, husbands and sons. Forced to trade lives of security for the unknown. Peace-seeking people are left out of the political equation of war. People like us and Syrian refugees — who are like us — are all one, perhaps especially so when part of the body is hurting.

I learned a lot in the Middle East. Most lessons came from people who say they are hopeless, but who still hope anyway. When I left America on October 4, we were embroiled in much bitterness. Disgust flowed from our lips and anger through our Facebook status — our modern day stage and soapbox. We were faced with the bleak reality of having a government in tatters, unable to pay its bills and its people but continuing to spend. When I returned home, we had traded a government shutdown for a healthcare lockdown. The rage remained, only the object of the rancor had changed.

I learned a lot from the people I was fortunate to meet from Syria and Jordan. Like many people in America, nothing is more important than love of family and country. Many Syrians step out in courage instead of understandably suffering through pain and depression. Just that one attitude can teach us a valuable lesson.

But there’s also this:

> **Love your family.** Anyone who has survived a fire or a natural disaster knows what it feels like to lose everything. When family emerges from the rubble, they know what it feels like to have everything. People driven from their homeland know both those

(please see Patterson/23)

## Del Escritorio del Obispo

### Podemos hacer que la navidad suceda cada día

**Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer**

Escuchamos en nuestro Evangelio de la Misa Navideña de Medianoche, las buenas nuevas proclamadas por el ángel de Dios de la primera Navidad tan esperada. El ángel les dijo: “No teman. Les traigo una buena noticia, que causará gran alegría a todo el pueblo: Hoy les ha nacido, en la ciudad de David, un salvador, que es el Mesías, el Señor. Esto les servirá de señal: encontrarán al niño envuelto en pañales y recostado en un pesebre.” El nacimiento de ese bebé, la Encarnación de Cristo, es el más grande evento de toda historia humana —el mismo Hijo de Dios, haciéndose humano, como nosotros.

Mi primer deseo para todos ustedes y sus familias y amigos, es que tengan una Navidad bendita y alegre mientras recordemos ese momento único en la historia humana del cumpleaños de la persona más grande que ha vivido, Jesucristo, verdadero Dios y verdadero hombre. Rezo en una manera especial en las misas Navideñas que la paz del niño Jesús, quien es aún el Príncipe y guía a la verdadera paz, llene a todos sus corazones y que podamos llegar a un mejor entendimiento del verdadero significado de la Navidad.

Mientras conmemoramos el cumpleaños del Príncipe de Paz, rezamos por la paz en el mundo, por el fin a la guerra y violencia, y por la protección de los que sirven en nuestras fuerzas armadas, y por paz en cada uno de nuestros corazones y de nuestras familias.

Para entender, comprender, en alguna manera, en cuanto nuestras mentes pequeñas puedan, les invito a ustedes a buscar y meditar sobre el divino misterio del maravilloso niño envuelto en pañales y acostado en el pesebre. Tomen (Mira OBISPO/21)
Advent: Preparing for history’s greatest event

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The season of Advent, the four weeks we spend in preparation for the birthday of Christ on Christmas, is a time to prepare for the greatest event of all of human history, our God becoming one of us in Jesus Christ. The true reason for the season is to remember that our God loves us to the point of asking His own Son to become one of us, to bring us God’s forgiveness and love and to show us how to live as children of our Heavenly Father. Hence, Advent is a call for a new beginning, for a new hope, a hope that goes out to people whose darkness is profound, a hope for people who feel abandoned, a hope for people who feel they need to be saved and rescued.

The Scriptural Readings for our daily Masses for the beautiful season of Advent remind us that we have a God who helps those who cannot help themselves. They need and want to be saved and rescued, and God has sent one who can fulfill all of our hopes and our desires in the person of Jesus Christ. As we prepare during Advent to celebrate Christ’s coming among us, we especially need to remember the principal reason why He came—to save us, to bring us God’s mercy and forgiveness, and to lead us to eternal peace with God, our Father.

As we go through the days of the Advent season, we need to cry out to Christ, who is our hope and our salvation, like the two blind men of the gospel—‘Jesus, have pity on us!’ We all need God’s pity and mercy, and during Advent we especially need to be God’s agents of mercy and compassion for others. Not everybody can take care of themselves, and whether they are materially poor or trapped in poverty or depression, compulsion, fears or addiction, their voices of need continue to beg us to be their advocates, to lend a hand to help them. Advent is about receiving new hope for life and sharing this hope with other people who are helpless and hopeless.

Advent is a time of preparation for the beautiful and joyful celebration of the birthday of Christ on Christmas.

Christmas truly needs to be celebrated during the Christmas season given to us by the Church, but we also need to remember that preparation for this joyful day is 90% of its celebration. Our Christmas does not end with the meals and festivities on Christmas day and the unwrapping of gifts, but rather we should strive to take part in new joy, hope and happiness that are being offered to us by our God as we prepare for His birthday and then live His birthday during the entire Christmas season. We need to take advantage of this time with colored lights and the music of Advent and Christmas to truly celebrate God’s gracious gift to us. Advent prepares us to capture the spirit of Christmas which is all about God’s loving care and compassion for all of us. Our God chose to come among us in the lowest of places and to reach out to those who feel they are helpless and hopeless.

Advent is a time for us to focus on the new hope and life that God will offer us in the Christ child on Christmas, and to capture the spirit of giving and sharing that are shown to us by our God. There is a reason for the season, and it is found in the process of giving, especially of our person, of our time, and our gifts to help others, and to help each other prepare well for the birthday of the greatest person who ever lived. During these days of Advent we need to spend time reflecting on the Word of God as given to us in the liturgy of each day, especially God’s hope that is offered us through the many readings of the prophet Isaiah. To truly capture the hope and joy of the season we need to spend more time and prayer with family, go to church together, celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation, and to reach out to others by sharing our gifts and our goods with those who have less than we do. Then Christmas will take on a new joyful meaning.

Advielo es un tiempo de preparación para el evento más grande de toda historia humana

Por el Obispo Miguel D. Pfeifer, OMI

La temporada de Adviento, las cuatro semanas en preparación para el cumpleaños de Cristo en la Navidad, es un tiempo para prepararnos para el evento más grande de toda la historia humana, cuando nuestro Dios llegó a ser como nosotros con el nacimiento de Cristo Jesús. La verdadera razón de la temporada es pura recordar que nuestro Dios nos ama hasta el punto de pedirle a su propio hijo que llegara ser como uno de nosotros para traernos el amor y perdón de Dios y enseñarnos como vivir como hijos de nuestro Padre Celestial. Esto inspira en nosotros una gran esperanza y confianza. Por lo tanto, Adviento es una llamada para un nuevo camino, para una nueva esperanza, una esperanza que inspira a los que están en una oscuridad profunda, una esperanza para la gente que se siente abandonada y sin dirección, una esperanza para la gente que siente la necesidad de ser salvada y rescatada.

Las lecturas de las Escrituras para nuestras Misas diarias durante la temporada de Adviento nos recuerdan que tenemos un Dios que ayuda a los que no se pueden ayudar a ellos mismos. Todos nosotros necesitamos y queremos ser salvados y rescatados, y Dios ha mandado el que pueda llenar todas nuestras esperanzas y nuestros deseos en la persona de Cristo Jesús. Al prepararnos para celebrar la venida de Cristo entre nosotros durante la temporada del Adviento, necesitamos especialmente recordar la razón principal por la cual Él vino—salvarnos, y para traernos la misericordia de Dios y el perdón, y para guiaros a una paz eterna con Dios, nuestro Padre.

Durante los días de la temporada de Adviento, necesitamos llamar a Cristo quien es nuestra esperanza y nuestra salvación como los dos hombres ciegos del evangelio—“Jesús, ten piedad de nosotros!” Todos nosotros necesitamos la piedad y misericordia de Dios, y durante el Adviento, a la vez, somos llamados a ser agentes de Dios de misericordia y compasión para otros mientras nos esforzamos a ver nuestra realidad por los ojos de Dios. No todos pueden cuidarse de sí mismos, y si sean pobres materialmente o atrapados en la pobreza o depresión, compulsión, temor o adicción, su voces de necesidad nos continúan rogando que seamos su intercesores, de darles una mano para ayudarlos. Adviento se trata de que recibamos el don de Dios de nueva esperanza para nuestras vidas y compartir esta esperanza con otras personas que se encuentran sin ayuda y sin esperanza.

Advielo es el tiempo de preparación para la celebración esperanzada y gozosa del cumpleaños de Cristo en la Navidad. La temporada de la Navidad ciertamente debe ser celebrada durante el tiempo de la Navidad dado a nosotros por la Iglesia, pero debemos recordar que la preparación para este día gozoso es 90% de su celebración. Sin embargo, nuestra Navidad no
New Church Rises in Iraan

IRAAN — The town of Iraan came into existence in the late 1920s when oil was discovered west of the Pecos. As towns develop and grow, one of the first things built are schools and churches. But for Catholics in Iraan such was not the case. The early Catholics of Iraan had to travel to nearby towns to attend Mass. Some people went to Sheffield or Rankin while others went to McCamey.

In the 1960s, for a short while, Father Alvin Wilde would travel from McCamey to Iraan and say Mass at the community center. Finally, after decades of being without a place of worship, the people of Iraan found a place to establish a church. The location had at one time been a medical clinic that belonged to Dr. Vincent Sharrod, who had moved his practice from Iraan to Odessa and, after his Iraan office had set vacant for many years, donated the building and property to the Catholic Diocese. Local residents helped to transform the former medical office and remodel it into a church.

When the church was nearly completed, a fire broke out. As a result, support beams had to be placed into the building to support the sagging ceiling as a result of the fire. While the beams kept the roof from collapsing, they also reduced the seating capacity of the church to about 50 and blocked the view of worshippers. On October 16, 1983, the newly converted church was dedicated and named after St. Francis of Assisi. The old church building, though small, has served as CCD classrooms.

About four years ago, parishioners started talking about the need for a new church. Some residents of Iraan preferred to travel to Ozona, Sheffield, or McCamey for Mass, while others simply stayed at home due to the inadequacy and poor condition of the old church. After much discussion, the parish was given permission by Bishop Michael Pfeifer to begin raising funds to construct a new church. The idea was

(Please See IRAAN/19)
Senior adult ministry must be given more attention in diocese

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

If we carefully review the ministries in our churches, it is evident that Senior Adult Ministry (SAM) is one of the least developed. Every other ministry that we can point to in the Church has much more development than the ministry geared to serve adults. Some casually brush aside the need for this ministry by saying: “Oh, they can take care of themselves. You know they go to be a certain age, what can we offer these old folks anyway?”

Senior Adult Ministry means many different things to many different people. To some it might mean Bible study, to others perhaps it means fellowship and transportation. Some have even referred to this ministry as bingo, brownies, and bus trips. Certainly there is a fellowship and socialization factor in Senior Adult Ministry, but we must give attention to what the main purpose for this ministry for adults is all about.

A good definition for Senior Adult Ministry is that it is the creation and the execution of spiritual development activities, opportunities and services, all designed to enrich the connection of the senior adult with God. The core of this ministry is relationship with God. We are never too young, nor too old, for this relationship, as this is what the Christian life is all about.

The ministry for senior adults must be personal, practical and relevant. In other words, we are talking about those issues and things that are important in the lives of senior adults. We can’t be talking about spiritual development as something that is divorced from and void of the real richness of what life is all about. Senior Adult Ministry, first and foremost, needs to be directed to the person of the senior. We are talking about individual people who are on an individual spiritual development path with Jesus Christ.

The vision for SAM encompasses the comprehensive needs of senior adults today. When we neglect the senior members in our Church, we are neglecting an essential power element of the Church. Senior adults are the people that laid the cornerstone in our churches. These are the people that gave the money to build the pews and put on the roofs. These are the people that brought their children to be baptized and to share in the Sacraments and services of the Church. Senior Adults are truly the backbone of the Church. We can’t turn our backs on them after all that they have given to our Church.

In so many ways, the future belongs to senior adults. Perhaps our culture will never again have the numbers and proportion of adults to youth as we do right now. Life extension efforts are succeeding and human longevity continues to march on and on.

In the communities of our diocese, we need a new agenda for senior life folks. This agenda must genuinely and sincerely include senior adults in the total life of the Church, inviting them to become creative and set new courses for holistic human productivity. We need to involve the senior adults themselves in this ministry, developing with them goals and objectives and directions that can help to enrich their total lives.

I strongly encourage all the priests, pastoral coordinators and pastoral leaders of our diocese to reflect seriously on developing ministries with and for our senior adults. I express my deepest gratitude to all the senior members of our diocese for the many contributions—both spiritual and material—that they have given to the Church of the Diocese of San Angelo.
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The Joy of the Gospel

VATICAN CITY — When the Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization met at the Vatican in October 2012, among the top items on the agenda was the threat of militant secularism in a post-Christian West.

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The same topic arose repeatedly in addresses by synod fathers, especially those from Europe and North America, and in the final propositions they gave the pope as the basis for his post-synodal apostolic exhortation. But Pope Benedict XVI resigned before he could write such a document, leaving the task to his successor, who finally responded with "Evangelii Gaudium" ("The Joy of the Gospel"), published Nov. 26.

In writing the apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis departed from usual practice and declined to use the draft provided by synod officials. The result is a text in which he finds a hindrance to the church's "missionary outreach." He laments its "excessive centralization" in the Vatican, which he finds a hindrance to the church's "missionary outreach." He complains about members of religious orders who show an "inordinate concern for their personal freedom and relaxation," and about priests "obsessed with protecting their free time."

The pope criticizes those who show an "ostentatious preoccupation with the liturgy, doctrine and the church's prestige, but without any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God's faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time." He upbraids Catholics with a "business mentality, caught up with management, statistics, plans and evaluations, whose principal beneficiary is not God's people but the church as an institution." And he regrets that women do not yet have a sufficient role in decision-making within the church.

Pope Francis also decries divisiveness within the church, writing: "It always pains me greatly to discover how some Christian communities, and even consecrated persons, can tolerate different forms of enmity, division, calumny, defamation, vendetta, jealousy and the desire to impose certain ideas at all costs, and even persecutions which appear as veritable witch hunts. Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act?"

Most remarkably, the pope devotes nearly a tenth of the entire document to suggestions for improving priests' homilies, which in his telling are all too often moralistic, unlearned, disorganized and verbose.

These problems matter, the pope makes clear, insofar as they impede efforts to make the church's structures "more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, and to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with him."

It is thus surprising that, with the possible exception of a reference to the "pain and the shame we feel at the sins of some members of our church," Pope Francis does not even allude to what most people inside and outside the church would regard as its greatest scandal of recent years: the sexual abuse of minors by priests. This scandal is not, strictly speaking, a question of evangelization. But as Pope Benedict wrote to the Catholics of Ireland in March 2010, church leaders' failures to prevent and punish clerical sex abuse "have obscured the light of the Gospel to a degree that not even centuries of persecution succeeded in doing."

Over the last decade, bishops' conferences in a number of countries, including the United States and Canada, have taken systematic action to protect children from this threat, and the Vatican has instructed the rest of the world's bishops to do likewise. Yet by all accounts the process is still far from complete. Carrying it out will presumably be a priority for Pope Francis, as part of his campaign to reform and purify the church at every level for the sake of its essential evangelical mission.

Pope Francis confronts internal concerns

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

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When in love, be prepared for the coming heartbreaks

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

"Be careful not to seek yourself in love, you can end up with a broken heart that way."

Therese of Lisieux wrote that. But what exactly does she mean, given that most of the time love will break our hearts anyway even if we're not seeking ourselves?

The heart breaks in different ways. It can break in a way that softens, purifies, and stretches it in love and selflessness, or it can break in ways that makes it bitter, jealous, and cold.

Heartbreaks can be warm or cold and, either way, the pain will bring us to our knees and that moment will define us, one way or the other. Let's look at an example:

At the end of the Victor Hugo's, Les Miserables, there's a particularly poignant scene where Jean Val Jean, now an old man, is praying in an inordinately lonely moment. It's the evening of his adopted daughter's wedding, a celebration he is unable to attend. He is on his knees, painfully alone, physically ill, emotionally drained, and acutely aware that the young woman who has brought so much joy and meaning to his life will now be drawing her life from someone else. Indeed she is dancing and celebrating at this very moment when his grief in losing her is so great.

But, despite the pain, his heart is at peace, joyful even, at the knowledge that the young man she has fallen in love with and is marrying will provide her with the very joy that he, as her father, could not give her. In the moment of his deepest loss, he is able to be happy for her and to withdraw quietly without bitterness into that self-effacement and solitude that loss and aging eventually ask of us all. As his heart is breaking, he blesses and lets go, knowing that what is most important, his daughter's happiness, is assured and that, given the mystery of love, his own relationship to his daughter is ensured by his gracefully letting go.

That's one example of a heart breaking, in a good way. The opposite is the heartbreak we experience when we lose somebody and our hearts freeze over in jealousy and bitterness. What that bitterness and coldness reveal in fact is that, all along, it was not the other's well-being we had been seeking, but our own. The proof is that now, when we can no longer be the primary relationship in that other person's life, we no longer really wish him or her well. Indeed, not so subtle is the wish that a certain unhappiness will befall that other, so that he or she will know that it was a mistake to no longer remain primarily invested in us.

That's the antithesis of the blessing we see at the end of Les Miserables where Jean Val Jean, despite the pain of his own loss, can rejoice that someone else can be a more powerful instrument of happiness than he in his daughter's life. He can be happy because his love is for his daughter, not for himself.

Notice what underlies a murder-suicide. There is a broken heart, but when it breaks a rage spews forth that reveals that, all along, the love has not been for the other but for oneself. The cold truth becomes clear: If I can't be the main person in her life, nobody will be! Better her dead, than without me! What kind of love has this been along the way?

We replicate this in subtle ways: Indeed many of the tears we shed are cried not for others but for ourselves. We may think we're crying about someone else's pain, but, more often than not, what is revealed in our tears is more our own possessiveness than our compassion, more our own brokenness than the wounds over which we think we are weeping. In our tears, just as in love, we are often unconsciously seeking ourselves.

C.S. Lewis: Evangelizing with the great teller of the Christian tale

By Fr. Robert Barron

Two famous men died on November 22, 1963. The first did so in the most dramatic way possible, assassinated in the full glare of publicity on the streets of Dallas; the second in relative obscurity, in the upstairs bedroom of his simple home on the outskirts of Oxford, England. John F. Kennedy's legacy has, of course, been enormous, but I wonder whether C.S. Lewis has actually, in the course of these past 50 years, had a greater impact on the culture than his counterpart. When he died at the age of 65, Lewis's reputation was on the wane, but he has enjoyed an extraordinary posthumous vogue, as two successive generations have delighted in his literary criticism, his novels, and above all, his clever and incisive Christian apologetics.

One reason why Lewis has proven so persuasive to so many is that he was compelled to undergo a transition—halting, painful, anguished—from non-belief to belief. Though he had been brought up in a Christian environment, he had lost his faith by the time he entered university. He was not someone to whom religious conviction came naturally or effortlessly; he had to work his way to it, in the face of often harsh opposition, both interior and exterior. This very personal struggle gives him credibility with the millions today who want to believe but who find ideological secularism and militant atheism enormously challenging.

A second reason why Lewis was successful was that he came at Christian apologetics primarily from a literary rather than a philosophical point of view. I want to be careful not to overstate the case here: Lewis certainly understood philosophy and used it at times in his apologetics both effectively and creatively. Think, for instance, of the subtle analysis offered in his book Miracles. But Lewis was, first and foremost, a man of letters—a poet and storyteller. His area of academic specialization was the literature of the 16th century—he wrote with tremendous insight on Milton—and his first published writings were poems.

This background allowed him to see something which is often overlooked in more academic and analytical presentations of the Christian faith, namely, that Christianity is, at bottom, a narrative, a story, an account of the dramatic things that God has done. Certainly doctrinal statements can be distilled from the Biblical revelation (in fact, that's what most of formal theology does), but revelation is contained primarily in narrative form—and this matters profoundly. The Bible tells the story of how God's good creation, sullied by sin, is restored through the return of God himself as king. This account contains many subplots and it is surrounded by a plethora of poetry, psalms, wisdom sayings, and other material that support it—but finally, the Bible is a rollicking adventure story, full of drama, reversals, adventure, and marked by a happy and triumphant ending.

Throughout his career, and in a variety of works, Lewis exulted in telling and re-telling this story. Thus, in his most famous work of apologetics, Mere Christianity, he explained that the one God had to do battle with the dark spiritual power that had unjustly taken possession of his world—which is why the Christ child was obliged to arrive so surreptitiously, so clandestinely, sneaking, as it were, behind enemy lines. The very same tale is told in the Chronicles of Narnia. But in that imaginative setting, the devil becomes the White Witch, who has plunged Narnia into a 100 years of
War on poor now the central defining issue in American politics

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

There is an ongoing war on the poor being waged in this nation, says Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman. "There is indeed a war on the poor, coinciding with and deepening the pain from a troubled economy. And that war is now the central, defining issue of American politics," he recently wrote in The New York Times.

"There's not much about fiscal responsibility, but there's a lot about how the government is rewarding the lazy and undeserving," he wrote.

On the front lines of this war, defending the poor, is the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. As regular as turkey and football on Thanksgiving, this time of year brings criticism of that agency for doing what the church should be about.

Some comes from a simple misunderstanding. It is a not the Catholic campaign for handouts, but for development: to develop is to empower.

The agency's mission is "to address the root causes of poverty in America through promotion and support of community-controlled, self-help organizations and through transformative education."

It is not similar to giving assistance to victims after a massive natural disaster. It is meant to change the system and that leads to a certain amount of discomfort.

Community organizing is about power and power engenders fear. Some feel the poor should accept their place and gladly accept assistance to cope with their miserable lot in life rather than to change what brings about poverty.

So many, myself included, are satisfied to use agents to carry out our responsibility rather than to directly encounter the poor. It is efficient and avoids encounter. Programs such as CCHD now have a strong advocate in high places. There's a new sheriff in town. Get used to the new reality.

Pope Francis is saying writing checks isn't enough. It is necessary to be closer to the disenfranchised and the poor. Even though Pope Francis is very close to his family, as archbishop of Buenos Aires he would often skip their barbecues to spend Sundays or holidays with the poor, the pope's sister said in an interview. His priority was the neediest in his archdiocese, which meant he often spent Sundays or holidays in the city's shantytowns instead of attending the family "asado" or barbecue, she said.

We look to some agents to implement our charity and so it should be. We all can't go to the storm-ravaged Philippines and offer direct assistance. But we can go to a soup kitchen and look the poor in the face (in addition to making financial contributions).

If the central defining issue of American politics is the attitude toward the poor, as Krugman says, that is where the church in the United States belongs. Right now.

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Kent is the retired editor of archdiocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle.

'Tis the season ... to calm down

By Maureen Pratt
Catholic News Service


Did last year's wishes as expressed in songs and greetings come to pass in 2013?

Or, as we approach another holiday season, with another round of carols and cards, are you feeling tired? Hollow? Discouraged? Unfulfilled?

Are you wondering, "What's the point to these weeks of celebration, gift-giving, sleep-deprivation-causing holiday responsibilities and reunions with people I don't have much contact with the other 10 or 11 months of the year, let alone really like?"

Are you already looking past December and into a new year when it might seem that troubles will only continue?

It is difficult to take off stress and put on cheer at any time of year, let alone during the jam-packed holiday season. Many people have spoken with, myself included, have had extremely difficult lives this year, peppered with loss, financial worry and health concerns.

It might even seem appealing to hibernate through the next six or eight weeks, only emerging when the new year is underway. But if we step back a bit from the adultness of how we feel, the bone-weary, emotionally drained individual buffeted by external pressures and internal angst, we might begin to feel differently.

This time of year, unlike other weeks and months, is not for the world-worn cynical, but for the child.

We can choose to focus on the child born in Bethlehem. This period is about the birth of Jesus Christ, in a manger, far from glitz and glamour. He is the point of this season, and no special interest group or hectic schedule can tear us from this wondrous, peace-giving gift from God, his only son, come down to earth. This season is for renewal of appreciation of our faith.

This season is for the children among us who have no inhibitions about expressing delight in laughter, unconditional love and even too-cute insistence in "how many more days until ..."

It is to these children that history, traditions and -- most important -- faith practices are passed. There is no time like the holidays to reinforce the values and faith that form the backbone for the oft-sung "people of good will."

The next few weeks is for the child in all of us. Medical studies show the importance of laughter and play, the human need to take time for rest and relaxation.

The days of Thanksgiving and Christmas are crucial for we who desire to be better, do better and reflect all the good that God has given us. We are celebrating a marvelous gift, one given freely, with complete love. Simply put, if we take the holidays too seriously, we will seriously miss the point.

Even if this year has been up and down, or more down than up, the point of the holiday season is not to erode well-being and heap stress upon stress. Let's take the opportunity to breathe deeply, enjoy the world with childlike eyes and renew our faith, energy and focus so that no matter what the next year brings we will meet it with courage and strength.

"YOU'LL NEVER FIT THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE AT THIS RATE."

2013 Catholic News Service
Making Sense of Bioethics

Sex, truth and the illumination of our guilt

By Fr Tad Pacholczyk

Guilt has gotten a lot of bad press recently. We live in an age where guilt is practically always something bad, something to get past with the help of a shrink. Particularly when discussing sex, people will declare that religion and morality do nothing more than make people feel guilty. Andrew Aaron, a sex and marriage therapist in New Bedford, Massachusetts seems to subscribe to this view: “Through centuries,” he writes, “religious education has associated sex with what is wrong and sinful rather than what is sacred. Instead of an expression of the divine, sex is suspiciously regarded as weakness of the flesh. The result of this influence is that sexuality, a natural part of being human, is tainted with shame, guilt, and ambivalence.”

Every instance of erotic satisfaction, sexual activity or orgasm, however, cannot be automatically branded as sacred or as a divine manifestation. We all recognize how easily the unbridled pursuit of sexual gratification can become an exploitative, self-centered and demeaning enterprise. “Context” matters critically when it comes to getting sex right, and it is too easy in the sexually permissive environment of today’s society to miss the core truth that the unique context for human sexual activity is a very specific one, namely, the beautiful setting of marriage, with its mutual commitment and openness to children.

Father Thomas O’Donnell, S.J. in his "Medicine and Christian Morality" distills the matter to its essence in this way: "In the moral order, all deliberately induced venereal pleasure is restricted to marriage and related in some way, either immediately or remotely, to a proper marital act." From this perspective, the real harms we bring upon ourselves and others when seeking to satisfy the sexual impulse outside of its specific context should, in fact, elicit feelings of guilt on our part.

To put it simply, there is such a thing as “good guilt,” which manifests our own inner awareness of how we have acted against what is good for us, and violated the objective moral order.

I recall a story of a woman who committed adultery, and over time she struggled with feelings of guilt. What she ended up doing, in this situation, was to rationalize her guilt away with the help of her therapist. He managed to convince her that she was a "genius of friendship." The woman became "spiritually thinner" in her relationships with men, and ceased to grow humanly and personally. Simply put, she entered into the worst possible state of spiritual affairs.

The potential that she had for any deep relationships with members of the opposite sex was dashed by the way she resolved her guilt: men became objects for her crafty genius, and her relationships were reduced to power plays and manipulation. She gradually became an empty shell of a woman, with little left that was genuine inside of her. She had encountered real guilt in her life, but had failed to engage it in a way that could lead to growth, conversion and fulfillment, and her therapist likewise failed her, because he was not sensitive to the value of true guilt and the deepest human needs reflected in that guilt — the need to forgive and to be forgiven.

A few years back, Naomi Wolf wrote about a friend of hers who was a "Cornell-educated, urban, Democratic-voting 40-year-old cardiologist." This friend had once had an abortion, and afterwards she said something Wolf found very interesting: "You know how in the Greek myths when you kill a relative you are pursued by Furies? For months it was as if baby Furies were pursuing me."

No matter what our education or background, no matter what our level of sophistication may be, we have all received the gift of conscience, and the gift of “good guilt” that is ordered to helping us confront ourselves and turn away from wrongdoing. Pushing away our good guilt or hiding it under the rug only makes our situation worse. We are the only creatures in the animal kingdom capable of illuminating our guilt, of asking why we feel guilty.

Guilt is like a pain of the soul, and pain often indicates that something is wrong and we should see a doctor. Our guilty feelings about wrongs or evils we have committed should lead us to seek the Divine Physician, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where God’s healing touch is personally experienced. Forgiveness from God and neighbor leads us to healing and wholeness. In this sense, "good guilt" points to possibilities of inner renewal and freedom. By becoming attuned to our guilt, and addressing it honestly, we discover a real cause for hope.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did postdoctoral 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.ncb-center.org

Bishops plan to address pornography issue in statement set for 2015

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — The U.S. bishops Nov. 12 approved the development of a pastoral statement on the dangers pornography poses to family life that would serve as a teaching tool for church leaders.

On Day Two of their annual fall general assembly in Baltimore, the bishops voted 226 to 5 to allow the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth to develop the statement.

Developing such a statement falls in line with an objective of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ 2013-16 strategic plan to address pornography and its dangerous effects on family life.

The committee planned to bring a draft to the bishops in 2015. It would be the first formal statement on pornography issued by the bishops as a body.

In presenting the case for such a statement, Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, N.Y. (and current administrator of the Diocese of Portland, Maine), the incoming chair of the committee, said that pornography poses continuing pastoral challenges for the clergy and the faithful.

"The more pornography spreads, the more violent and debased it becomes and the more it exploits the men and women who are part of the industry," he explained.

Citing the explosion of pornography on the Internet and its exploitation of women, men and children, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., outgoing chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, told Catholic News Service prior to the meeting that committee members felt it was time for the USCCB to bring its moral voice to the worldwide debate.

"There’s a lot of concern about the increasing availability and consumption of pornography and its effect on marriages and families and on youth," Bishop Rhoades explained. "Pornography has become more pervasive than it’s ever been in history."

"Pornography is having such a detrimental effect that we thought it would be good to have the bishops as a whole body address this issue. It’s not been before that whole body. It’s risen to that level of concern, I think," he said.

Family Safe Media, an online service offering families tips for dealing with profanity, promiscuity and violence in the media, estimates that 4.2 million websites -- 12 percent of the all websites worldwide -- feature pornography. It projects that the industry generates $57 billion annually through a variety of media.

Bishop Rhoades cited several concerns arising from pornography’s pervasiveness, including children facing increasing exposure to it, addiction, and marital infidelity and divorce.

"Another factor is priests reporting as confessor the growing number of those confessing pornography use," the bishop added. "Priests are seeking assistance on how to counsel people. There’s a growing number of women viewing it, but the vast majority is still men," Bishop Rhoades said.

"It has destroyed that trust and the intimacy between a husband and wife. That can be very tragic," he added.

Bishop Rhoades was ending his three-year term as committee chairman at the end of the bishops’ meeting. His successor, Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, N.Y. and apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Portland, Maine, will oversee the drafting of the statement.
Mertzon young people join 23,000 at National Catholic Youth Conference

By Sister Adelina Garcia
Office of Education and Formation
Diocese of San Angelo

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — On November 21, a group of young people and their chaperones from St. Peter Mission in Mertzon began their journey via shuttle and jet plane to Indianapolis, Ind., for the National Catholic Youth Conference held November 21-23. This conference, held biennially, counted 23,000 participants this year at Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indianapolis Conference Center downtown.

The theme of the conference was “Signed, Sealed and Delivered.” Emcee Jesse Manibusan stressed how the young people are the church right here, right now. They are called to welcome everyone. They are signed by their baptism, sealed by their confirmation, and delivered from sin by Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.

Keynote speakers included Bob Perron, Jackie Francois, and Ansel Augustine. They shared their thoughts of being adopted children of God who are part of a forever family, being a person of faith and discipleship, and how we bear crosses and how these experiences can bring us closer to God.

The theme park, Inspiration Junction, an exhibit hall set up to reflect the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and offered the participants opportunities to take advantage of resources, visit vocation and college exhibits, and take part in service opportunities. Some made baby blankets, scarves, and packed food for the poor and hungry locally and in other parts of the world.

Everyone had a wonderful time attending workshops, experiencing various forms of prayer, hearing great music, listening to challenging keynote speakers, meeting new people from all over country and celebrating their faith. In addition to other bishops present, our own Bishop Michael Pfeifer was in attendance as always. He truly affirms and supports the Young Church.

Many thanks to the community of St. Peter for their support in helping to make this trip possible. The conference certainly had a wonderful impact on the participants. The conference concluded with the celebration of Eucharist.

Diocese of San Angelo to begin Project Rachel Ministry

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In the forty years following the infamous Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions legalizing abortion on demand in our nation, the Catholic Bishops have responded with significant efforts of education, public policy, prayer, and pastoral care. Over these years, the Church has reached out with particular pastoral care to those who have been involved in the tragedy of abortion.

Recently, because of our many, many prayers and rulings by the Texas Legislature resulted in the closing of all three Planned Parenthood facilities in our diocese. As a result, there has been a significant increase in women seeking services. In seeking to rise up and meet some of the needs of these women, I am implementing Project Rachel, a post-abortion program approved by the USCCB. Project Rachel will begin by being implemented as a collaborative ministry between the parishes of the San Angelo Deanery and the Pregnancy Help Center in San Angelo. The Pregnancy Help Center already provides counseling services to post-abortive victims.

As we implement Project Rachel, our goal is to create joint awareness and outreach between the parishes in the San Angelo Deanery and the Pregnancy Help Center. Local priests, along with qualified parishioners, will be asked to provide pastoral counseling, spiritual guidance, prayer support, Sacrament of Reconciliation, support groups, and other liturgical opportunities. Be looking in your parish bulletins for dates and locations. For example, there is a pro-life Mass in the deanery each month and there will be an Evening of Prayer and Sharing for the unborn and victims of abortion at Christ the King Retreat Center (CKRC) on Wednesday, December 11, at 6:30 pm. CKRC will also host a citywide Mass for the unborn and victims of abortion on Friday, December 20, at 6:00 pm. and will offer two Rachel’s Vineyard weekends on January 17-19 and May 16-18, 2014. Later on, other dates will be shared as regards bringing people together for prayer and sharing.

Project Rachel is being established first as a pilot program in the San Angelo Deanery and already I and the Diocesan Pro-Life Director are asking the other deaneries, working with the deanery Pro-Life Director, to begin establishing similar programs to support the efforts of the Life Centers in Midland, Odessa, and Andrews, and the Pregnancy Resource Center in Abilene. These centers already have some post-abortion programs, helping women who have had abortions. In the months ahead we will report the progress and successes in the West Texas Angelus.

It is our hope that Project Rachel will help provide the assurance to those involved in abortion that will enable them to forgive themselves and others, which are essential steps to healing. We need to remember, that we Catholics have the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation, God’s merciful healing and forgiveness that can bring God’s mercy, pardon, and healing love to women who have had abortions.
West Texas raises $1.5 million for typhoon victims in Philippines

By Jimmy Patterson

Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, announced November 27 that $500,000 was raised in just one week and will be combined with $1 million gift pledged by an anonymous donor in the Permian Basin for a total gift of $1.5 million for the victims of the cataclysmic typhoon that struck the Philippines, November 8. More than 50 individuals, groups, churches and foundations played important roles in helping to raise $500,000 in donations; and the donor has indicated that the release of the $1 million will be sent to Catholic Relief Services to fulfill the commitment of the match. CRS is providing emergency food, water and relief to the victims and all funds collected will be directed to the people of the Philippines through CRS.

In November, an anonymous donor pledged to match 2-to-1 all donations raised up to $500,000 for the purpose of assisting the most severely affected victims of the typhoon. “I am ecstatic and filled with joy to know that through the generosity of many, many people, including the Diocese of San Angelo, with the encouragement and active assistance of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), that the $1M match has been met,” said Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, of the Diocese of San Angelo.

Bishop Pfeifer noted that he received the joyful news around noon, Wednesday, November 27, 2013 from CRS, that the match had officially been met and the donor would soon be meeting the match. Bishop Pfeifer said last week he was confident the $500,000 required by the anonymous donor could be raised within a week’s time; the donor had allowed for the match to be raised by the end of December.

Bishop Pfeifer points out that this generous donation comes in a wonderful time of the year as we celebrate Thanksgiving Day, a time to thank God for the many blessings we have, and a special way of thanking God for our blessings and gifts is to share our gifts with others who have much less than we do.

“We are helping to make Thanksgiving happen for the hundreds of thou-
sands of victims affected by the catastrophic typhoon in the Philippine Islands.” Pfeifer said. “I am sure those affected by this terrible disaster are very grateful for this generous, as well as other generous donations.”

To help meet the match of $1 million, the Diocese of San Angelo alone had given $96,820.57 as of November 27, 2013. Bishop Pfeifer points out that he is deeply grateful to the many generous donors who stepped forward to make this match happen and for the many other generous donations that are being sent to thousands and thousands who are struggling just to stay alive in the Philippines.

Bishop Pfeifer pointed out that the hopes that many more major donors will come forward individually, or as a corporation or commercial group, to pro-
pose similar fundraising matches. This is a splendid way of encouraging people to give generously when they know there is a particular goal in mind.

Bishop Pfeifer and CRS are deeply grateful to all those who have made this generous match possible, and an enormous gratitude is owed to the major donor who will release the $1M to be sent to the Philippine Islands through CRS.

Help for the Philippines

The Angelus

The Filipino-American Association of the Permian Basin sponsored the “Plate for a Cause” fund-raiser, raising $25,365 for Filipino victims of the November 8 Typhoon Haiyan.

Preparations for the fund-raiser, held November 24, started weeks earlier with the selling of tickets, requests for dona-
tion from organizations in the area and fellow Permian Basin Filipino and friends, a media campaign using Facebook, securing the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church Parish as well as the late-
night, early-morning cooking and plating of the food. The FAA pre-sold 550 tickets and were ready to sell as many as 600 plates.

The fund-raiser day started in 28-
degree temperatures but that did not deter the fire burning within all of the associa-
tion officers and volunteers who drive icy roads to get to the venue and help with the food preparation and plating.

“We were afraid nobody would come because of the weather and said that if we didn’t have anybody coming, the food will be donated to Jesus House,” said Allan Ertius, president of the FAA. People started trickling in after the 10 am mass. We even delivered some plates to hospitals in Odessa as there were numer-
ous officers, the support and selflessness of

“People started trickling in after the 10 am mass. We even delivered some plates to hospitals in Odessa as there were numer-
ous officers, the support and selflessness of

the volunteers, the charity of those who

donated the desserts and the overwhelm-
ning response and assistance that the peo-
ple of West Texas conveyed. We were able to raise $25,365 that day and more is coming in. The money will go a long way in the support of those stricken by the typhoon. We have sent the funds raised to assist organizations in almost all of the provinces affected by the calamity. Again, I would like to convey our gratitude to those who have heard our cause. We are very thankful for being heard and assisted.”

Filipino-American Assoc. raises $25k at SEAS event

The Angelus

By Jimmy Patterson

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DADE CITY, Fla. — Sister Pauline Block (Laura Elizabeth) of St. Leo, Fla., took her peaceful final journey to her heavenly home on November 14, 2013. She was born on the Bernard Matthiesen home place in Runnels County, Olfen, Texas, on January 28, 1915. Laura, the oldest of six, was often given the job of watching her younger brothers and sisters. Stories about riding a donkey, care-taking her little brothers, feeding cows, and the new Model T Ford car are all part of her history. Attending Olfen Catholic School until the age of 15, she traveled to St. Leo, Fla., to join the Benedictine Sisters. Laura's life was greatly influenced by the Benedictine Sisters of Olfen School. She liked the way their life was devoted to community, family, and unity. Because of this influence, she was one of five girls of the Olfen community that decided to join the Order of Benedictine Sisters of Florida. On July 30, 1930, age 15, Laura boarded a train called "the peanut pusher" at the station in Rowena, to begin her life as a Florida Benedictine Sister. At the convent, Laura continued her education. During her novitiate, Laura changed her name to Sister Pauline Block. She made her Final Vows on June 13, 1936. She said “It was a beautiful ceremony with a real commitment to Christ for life." She continued her education at Sacred Heart College in Cullman, Ala., and Saint Leo University. Gifted with the ability to reach small children, her focus during her 58 year teaching career (1934-1992) was in elementary education, specializing in reading at the primary level. Sister was committed to ensuring that every child she taught could read. Sister provided little ones with a firm grounding in the basics at parochial schools in New Orleans and slidell, La., Ocala; San Antonio; Sarasota and Miami, Fla.

She also served as Assistant Director of St. Benedict Prep School for boys. Former students who have become successful lawyers, doctors and school principals say they never forgot their grade school teacher … “She was tough!” Sister also prepared children for their First Communion and taught catechism at the Diocesan Summer Camp Good Council. Sister Pauline graciously undertook any task that she was assigned. For years she was the sisters’ champion coif-maker (the sisters’ head-dress) and was also assigned to helped cook in the kitchen at the priory. The clothing worn by Sister Pauline changed with the times. She started by wearing the black veil and habit. In the early 60s the habits changed to a black uni-

Sister Pauline Block

Obituary

Because of You My Life Has Changed

By Lauren Moeller

"Because of you... my life has changed."
I fold shut the letter and my eyes fill with tears.

For the past several years I have been a member of the Ministry of the Third Cross, which has traveled to Brownwood annually to put on a women’s ACTS retreat for juvenile inmates in the Ron Jackson Correctional Complex. When I first began this ministry, I had a conviction to reach out to the young women imprisoned in Texas, to share God’s love and my time. Today, three years after I first began, I realize that God didn’t lead me to this ministry to help others but rather he lead me to this ministry for healing and hope.

Teams members with the Ministry of the Third Cross, which takes the ACTS retreat into correctional facilities (Courtesy photo).

We all have our own plans for our how our lives should go and we all have our own philosophies about how God should use us to minister. However, God tells us in Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, ‘Plans to prosper you and not harm you; plans for hope and a future.’ Even in our hardest times, He knows what is best. And for me, He knew that the Ministry of the Third Cross would be a blessing. From the surface, this ministry has allowed its members to spread God’s love through song, prayer, scripture, smile, word, and hope. However, as any member of the Ministry of the Third Cross will tell you, prison ministry is a two-way relationship in which the inmates minister to the MOTC members as much as we
Cardinal DiNardo, of Galveston-Houston, chosen vice president of USCCB

Baltimore (CNS) -- Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., was elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops by a wide margin Nov. 12.

The archbishop, the current USCCB vice president, received 125 votes during the first round of balloting during the fall general assembly of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore.

In the voting for vice president, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston was elected to the post during the third round of voting.

He defeated Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, 147 to 87.

Archbishop Kurtz easily outdistanced the nine other candidates for president, who received a total of 111 votes.

Cardinal DiNardo tallied the second highest vote total with 25.

Cardinal DiNardo has headed the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston since 2006, when as coadjutor archbishop, he immediately succeeded Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza when he retired.

Then-Archbishop DiNardo was named a cardinal in 2007, making him the first cardinal from Texas.

The cardinal was set to begin a three-year term as chairman of the Committee on Divine Worship at the conclusion of the assembly, but he had to vacate that seat when he was elected vice president.

The bishops voted to elect Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, N.J., to the position over Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit, 114-112.

With the election of Archbishop Kurtz to head the USCCB for the next three years, the bishops returned to the practice of electing a sitting vice president to the conference presidency.

The archbishop, who has headed the Louisville Archdiocese since 2007, had no immediate comment after his election and acknowledged the vote with a simple wave to his fellow bishops on the floor of the assembly.

In 2010, the bishops elected then-Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York as president. His term was to end Nov 14 as the fall general assembly concluded.

The election of the New York prelate, named a cardinal in February 2012, marked the first time since the bishops' conference was reorganized in 1966 following the Second Vatican Council that a sitting vice president who sought the presidency did not win the election. He defeated then-vice president Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., on the third ballot.

In two previous elections, circumstances dictated that the vice president did not rise to lead the conference.

In 1974, Coadjutor Archbishop Leo C. Byrne of St. Paul and Minneapolis, vice president since 1971, died less than a month before his term ended. Three years later, Cardinal John J. Carberry of St. Louis as vice president declined to run for the top spot because he was 73 and due to retire before he could complete a three-year term as president.

The president and vice president are elected by a simple majority from a slate of 10 nominees. If no president or vice president is chosen after the second round of voting, a third ballot is taken between only the top two vote-getters on the second ballot.

In this year's USCCB election, the vote for vice president took three ballots to conclude. In each round, Cardinal DiNardo was the leading vote-getter. He received 51 votes during the first round and 78 votes during the second round.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Houston-Galveston, right, at the recent USCCB Annual Meeting, during which he was named the group's vice president.

Pope names Dallas seminary rector Fort Worth bishop

Washington (CNS) -- Pope Francis has appointed Msgr. Michael F. Olson, who is currently rector of Holy Trinity Seminary at the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas, to head the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Bishop-designate Olson, a Fort Worth diocesan priest. He succeeds Bishop Kevin V. Vann, who was named bishop of the Diocese of Orange, Calif., in September 2012.

The appointment was announced Nov. 19 in Washington by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the U.S.

Bishop-designate Olson, who has been Holy Trinity's rector since 2008, will be ordained and installed Jan. 29 at a Mass to be celebrated in the Fort Worth Convention Center. He will become the second youngest bishop in the United States to lead a diocese. The youngest bishop is fellow seminary classmate Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M. Both are graduates of the St. Mary's Seminary in Houston.

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December: The Fourth Period (1965), part 1

By Fr. Joe Uecker

December 2 found Pope Paul VI at the airport in Bombay, India. Today it is called Mumbai. This was another sensational media event; it was Paul at his best: compassionate, spiritually sensitive, as concerned about the plight of the world as much as the plight of the Church. He had told the Cardinal Archbishop of Mumbai that he wanted to visit with the poor rather than the rich. He came as a missionary with a new style, respectful of the indigenous religious traditions. This was an action to try to convince powerful nations to stop pouring so much money into arms and more into clothing, shelter and medical care. From every perspective the trip was a resounding success.

During the early days of December, this visit to India distracted the press from the black week. After returning, Paul tried to get some magazines to publish some articles to make known the positive results of the third period. While many bishops also revealed in the pope’s visit to India, they still had many disturbing questions arising from what had happened in St. Peter’s. In early January Pope Paul set the date for the opening of the fourth – and last – period for September 14.

During the inter-session, there was much work to be done. Beginning in March, Paul began to celebrate Mass at many parishes in Rome according to the new rite, thus showing his support for the Constitution on the Liturgy. Eleven documents still needed to be worked on. It was obvious to the commissions that the pope was going to take a more active role in supervising the procedures. He became much more of a micro manager. This was another sensational event in the media. Today Mumbai is the capital of India. It was a strategic move to show the world that India was no longer a sleeping giant, but a rising power.

(Please See VATICAN/23)

Por Padre Joe Uecker

El 2 de diciembre el Papa Pablo VI se encontró en el aeropuerto de Bombay. Hoy se llama Mumbai. Esto fue otro acontecimiento sensacional en la media. Fue Pablo a lo mejor: compasivo, espiritualmente sensible, tan preocupado por el destino del mundo como por el de la Iglesia. Había dicho al Cardenal Arzobispo de Mumbai que quería visitar con los pobres en vez de los ricos. Llegó como misionero con un nuevo estilo, respetando las tradiciones religiosas indígenas. Esto fue una acción en que trató de convencer a las naciones poderosas que dejaren de gastar tanto dinero en armas y más en ropa, casas, y cuidado médico. De cualquier perspectiva, el viaje fue un éxito espectacular.

Durante los primeros días de diciembre, esta visita a la India distrajo a la prensa de la semana negra. Después de volver, Pablo trató de convencer a unos periódicos que publicaran unos artículos para que la gente supiera los logros positivos del tercer período. Es verdad que muchos obispos estaban muy alegres por la visita del Papa a la India, pero todavía tenían muchas preguntas difíciles, a causa de lo que había ocurrido en San Pedro. En los primeros días de enero, el Papa Pablo fijó la fecha para comenzar el cuarto – y último – período: el 14 de septiembre.

Durante el tiempo entre los períodos, había mucho trabajo que hacer. Comenzando en marzo, Pablo comenzó a celebrar la Misa en muchas parroquias en Roma según el nuevo rito, así mostrando su apoyo por la Constitución Sobre la Liturgia. Once documentos todavía necesitaban trabajo. Era evidente a las comisiones que el papa iba a tomar un papel más activo supervisando los procedimientos. Llegó a ser más un micro-gerente. Esto tenía tres consecuencias: 1) Las comisiones eran más conscientes en su trabajo de lo que el papa quería o lo que ellos creían que quería 2) La Comisión Coordinadora llegó a ser menos y menos y más y más de la gerencia del Concilio se dio al Cardenal Felici. 3) En estas circunstancias, había muchas apelaciones más al papa.


Durante el mes de agosto, los obispos alemanes se mostraron más abiertos al documento sobre La Iglesia en el Mundo Moderno cuando se hicieron unos cambios. La Declaración sobre los Judíos y Religiones no-Cristianas despertó gran ansiedad entre todos los afectados. Había una parte chiquita tratando a los Hindus y Buddhists y más sobre los Musulmanes. Los obispos y patriarcas de los ritos orientales estaban muy preocupados por la parte sobre los Judíos por su locación geográfica y la cuestión de “deicidio.” Al fin, no se hizo ninguna declaración, ni acusando a los judíos de “deicidio”, no absolvíándolos de ello. Una balanza delicada en verdad.

En junio, el “Grupo” envió una carta al Papa Pablo pidiendo un cambio en los procedimientos. En agosto, el Cardenal Cicognani replicó a la carta con un regaño hiriente. Le dijo al Grupo que su mera existencia era una amenaza al éxito del Concilio y podría conducir a un cisma en la Iglesia.

El 14 de septiembre, el día en que el Concilio comenzó de nuevo, el Papa Pablo publicó una carta (motu proprio – su propia obra) Apostolica Sollicitudo, en que anunció el comienzo del Sínodo de Obispos. Esto parecía una respuesta a la cuestión de gobierno colegial, pero cuando uno lo examinó más detalladamente, fue evidente que nada se había cambiado porque el sínodo sería solamente consultivo y que el papa iba a controlar la agenda. En realidad era más una expresión de primacía papal que colegialidad episcopal. El texto quitó la colegialidad de la realidad institucional de la Iglesia.
Our Faith

Bishops’ meeting and poverty; baptism

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. I notice that the Catholic bishops of the United States are holding their annual meeting at the Marriott Hotel at Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. This strikes me as an expensive site for those who are constantly asking Catholics for contributions to the poor. (Don’t they know that most of the faithful could not afford to stay at such a place for several days?)

It strikes me that there are many Catholic properties around the country -- seminars, abbeys or convents -- which could accommodate them for much less money and would serve as a better example.

Why don’t the bishops take a page from Pope Francis and start acting like the original apostles whom they claim to represent? (Jamestown, Ky.)

A. Since his election in March of 2013, Pope Francis has continually called Christians to examine themselves against Christ’s own witness to poverty. On the feast of St. Francis, the pope hosted a lunch for the poor in Assisi; that same day he addressed townspeople in strong words, saying that “the church, all of us should divest ourselves of worldliness. Worldliness is a murderer because it kills souls, kills people, kills the church.”

Such a message rings especially true from a man who has chosen to live in a two-room modest apartment in a Vatican hostel for visitors and to eat his meals at a common table.

Prompted by your question, I looked into the U.S. bishops’ choice of the Baltimore Marriott for their annual meeting. What I found is that they are indeed sensitive to the Gospel’s call for simplicity.

In fact, some years ago their annual meeting was moved from Washington, D.C., (where the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is headquartered) to Baltimore precisely because hotel rooms in Baltimore rented for about two-thirds of what they had been paying in D.C.

Another reason for the change was that flights were generally cheaper into Baltimore-Washington International Airport than into Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Realistically, the options for such a large meeting are limited. It requires a facility that can host 600 attendees, be easily accessible from all parts of the nation and provide 60,000 square feet of space for meetings, religious services, news conferences, etc.

Sometimes what is ideal needs to be sifted through what is practical and possible. Your question, though, serves as a valuable reminder: Optics are important, and Christians need habitually to view things through the lens of the poor.

Q. How should I respond to a young couple (raised Catholic) who do not plan to baptize their infant children? (They intend to wait until the children are old enough to decide on a religion for themselves.) (Baltimore, Md.)

A. I would ask the couple whether they follow the same standard in other areas of child rearing. Since they’re not sure whether their son will grow up to like math, do they decline to teach him arithmetic when he is little?

The role of parents is to determine what opportunities they have benefited from, what virtues and values have helped them, what moral framework can offer guidance through life -- and then to pass on the best of what they have learned to their children.

What Catholic parents say by having their infants baptized is this: We believe (both from our faith and from our experience) that the sacraments and Catholic teaching offer a clear channel to God, and we want our kids to have that blessing.

Be courageous: Learn to accept and surrender

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service

The silence of God when you need him most is one of the most difficult mysteries a person of faith will ever have to face. Yes, prayer works, and we absolutely need to rely on the Lord’s strength when troubles come, but many of us lose confidence in God’s love when he doesn’t do exactly what we want.

Jesus felt this emotion on the cross, when he cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” in Matthew 27:46. Divine wisdom is beyond our comprehension. For instance, God takes loved ones home to heaven at the time that is best for them, but not necessarily at the time that is best for us.

If you ever feel let down by God, remember that like Jesus on the cross, we too must endure painful times.

One of the great mystics of the church, Meister Eckhart told us there would be times when we must suffer God, meaning that we must endure patiently what God imposes.

The single action of trusting God’s love in difficult circumstances is an act of faith far more meritorious than any of the long, verbal professions of faith recited in church.

Cardinal John Henry Newman wrote that one deed, done for God against our natural inclination, will win us great merit. That is another way of saying that our patience with God’s silence will be generously rewarded. Remain trusting when you are not getting your way.

It reminds me of the joke about the guy who went into a diner. He said to the waitress, “Just give me a kind word and a bowl of chicken soup!” She went right into the kitchen and came out with his order. He smirked, “What about the kind word?” She leaned over and whispered, “Don’t eat the soup!”

There are some messages and words we don’t like to hear. Some of them are “surrender” and “accept.”

Surrender because you are not in charge. The Lord is aware that life with its many sorrows is difficult. We all pine for paradise and yearn for God. He will always be with us. But when a loved one is taken from us, we should at least have the grace to acknowledge that the deceased person may be much happier. Let them be. God will supply all the support and solace you need.

Accept that you cannot control life. Life is consequential and time runs out for all of us. As you move into the future, choose your thoughts wisely. If you allow yourself to brood, your emotions will drown you in misery. Keep the faith. Believe in God’s love, no matter what.

Despite God’s silence, have the courage to surrender to life as it presents itself. Accept the sadness but reject thoughts of anger and desolation; they are merely toxic thoughts that will sabotage your happiness.

Your supreme purpose in life is to honor God, love your neighbor and save your immortal soul. Abandon all doubt and skepticism. The act of trusting the Lord, despite his silence, will give you the power to rejoice more in his glorious creation.

Our Holy Father’s 2013 Monthly Intentions

DECEMBER

Victimized Children. That children who are victims of abandonment or violence may find the love and protection they need.

Prepare the Savior’s Coming. That Christians, enlightened by the Word incarnate, may prepare humanity for the Savior’s coming.

JANUARY 2014

Universal: That all may promote authentic economic development that respects the dignity of all peoples.

For Evangelization: That Christians of diverse denominations may walk toward the unity desired by Christ.

Daily Offering Prayer

Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.
Children's books: History, Pope Francis, more

Reviewed by Regina Lordan
Catholic News Service

The following books are suitable for Christmas giving:


A forbidden friendship, a stubborn but likable protagonist and political turmoil make this novel a gem for young readers. Set during the months leading up to the Boston Tea Party midnight raid on three tea ships, "Friends of Liberty" is about two young girls who form a friendship despite their families' different economic and political status during a time when being a Whig or a Tory meant everything. Young readers will learn about taxation without representation and America's journey to independence while enjoying a great story with several twists and turns. Ages 10-16.


Young NASCAR racing and Matchbox car enthusiasts will delight in the vivid illustrations and simple, but exciting, words in this book. Toddlers and early readers will learn about car racing and colors while onomatopoeias give a soundtrack to the bright images of cars racing around a track. A nice little twist at the end will make adults smile as they read the book aloud to youngsters. Ages 2-5.


"Bambinelli Sunday" tells a Christmas tale of a lonely little boy who finds joy in his family and in sharing the baby Jesus with others. Beautifully illustrated scenes of water-colored Italian streets will keep the attention of little readers, and the cardboard cutout snowman on the front cover will be a treat for our readers.

(Please See BOOKS/22)

Today's tastemaker was yesterday's unpopular geek

By Karen Osborne / Catholic News Service

Have you ever heard of Felicia Day? She's a Hollywood actress and producer, and she's super cool, whether you're a geek or gamer. A few years ago, she shot the record-breaking web series "The Guild" on a shoestring budget in her house. These days, she runs one of the biggest channels on YouTube.

I've never met Day, but I imagine we'd have a lot to talk about. We both enjoy the same kinds of things. That's why I wonder if she went through what I did in high school, mainly getting teased and bullied because I liked "Star Wars," video games and other things that made me "nerdy." More than once, I thought of dropping those interests for something deemed more "popular."

I'm glad I stuck to my guns. I bet Day is, too. These days, she is seen as a cultural tastemaker when it comes to all things geeky because, unlike when I was growing up, all of those geeky things are "in." They're super popular: Batman, Captain America, "The Big Bang Theory" and "Game of Thrones." Geeky stuff is important, big business these days.

In magazine interviews, Day talks about getting pigeonholed into certain kinds of roles when she moved to Hollywood, roles that weren't getting her to where she wanted to be. Instead of waiting for others to change their minds about her, she went out and created the roles she wanted for herself. Because she didn't give up on what she loved, she's now a powerful producer and a cultural tour de force.

Culture changes. Public opinion is fickle. In 1995, if I'd gone to a superhero movie, most people would have pointed and laughed.

Cultural values often seem set in stone: cool or uncool, in or out. But just look at fashion to see that what's cool and what's not is as fluid as a river. Bell bottoms were popular in 1974. They were "out" and skinny jeans were "in" in 1982, but bell bottoms later made a comeback, skinny jeans were "out" and have come "in" once again.

Being cool is not about wearing the "right" clothes. The coolest thing is being who you are and there's no better time than high school to find that out. Try everything. Play sports, join the robotics team, try out for a band or a play, and volunteer at a youth group. You never know what you're going to discover.

Every tastemaker in the world today -- black or white, woman or man -- shares one specific habit: They didn't let others dictate what they thought was cool. They discovered it for themselves.

Every field needs people who love their work and are authentic about who they are and what they love. They need that to succeed and push society forward. That person could be you.
IRAAN

(From 5)

to match funds and grants that might be available from various foundations and organizations.

Groundbreaking for the new church took place on April 16, 2013 and construction began. The new church seats 110 worshipers and was constructed by N.C. Sturgeon, Inc. of Midland. The new church was dedicated on Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at a special Mass with Bishop Pfeifer presiding, assisted by the pastor, Fr. Isidore Ochiabuto and other priests of the diocese.

The parish is most grateful to Bishop Michael Pfeifer for his personal generosity and willingness to approach many foundations on behalf of the parish. The Catholic Extension Society, The Kenedy Memorial Foundation, The National Christian Foundation, and The Robison Xcelsior Foundation, have been most generous. A local business, Barrera Contractors, Inc., also made a generous donation towards the new church. Above all, the parish is most grateful to God for His many blessings and this great gift.

SISTER BLOCK

(From 14)

form with a partial veil covering the back of the hair. Gradually it went from the uniform with veil, to a suit and no veil, to a jumper and finally to regular clothes. Sister Pauline has loved doing many arts and crafts. She crocheted many blankets, doilies, dolls, and angel dolls. She quilted all types of fabrics into quilts and assortments of decorator items such as pillows and bedspreads. She always filled her sewing machine even though she had an ongoing trial with the bobbin. Her tiny room was always filled with her sewing machine even though she had an ongoing trial with the bobbin. Her tiny room was always filled with many arts and crafts. She crocheted clothes. Sister Pauline has loved doing what little she did have with such a generous heart. Sister Pauline was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the twinkle in her eyes only gave a hint to the spunk and zest she had for life. Sister Pauline was preceded in death by her parents Paul J. Block and Hattie Matthiesen Block; her brother Wilbert Block; brothers-in-law Weldon Kocich and Howard Gray; sisters-in-law Carmen Block and Sue Block; nephew Dennis Gray and niece Melinda Block Naugle. She is survived by her sisters Gladys Gray of Chula Vista, California, Frances Kocich of Wall, Texas; her brothers Andrew Block of San Angelo, Texas and James Block and wife Lillian of Olfen, Texas; numerous nieces, nephews and a host of first cousins of the Bernard and Elizabeth Matthiesen Family. Her Celebration of Life was held Sunday, November and Mass of the Resurrection on Monday, November 18 at in the Holy Name Monastery Chapels. Arrangements were handled by Hodges Family Funeral Home, Dade City, Florida. Memorials may be made to: Building Fund - Holy Name Monastery Special Gifts Campaign P.O. Box 2450 St. Leo, Florida 33574-2450

MOTC

(From 16)

do to them.

This year’s MOTC retreat was no exception. There is something very refreshing about the sound of off-key voices, stumbling through words of songs that they do not know, but coming together to praise God. There is something uplifting about seeing the wall of hurt and fear be broken down in the lives of young women. There is something pure about witnessing teenage girls receive the Body and Blood for the first time in many months and even years. There is something absolutely heart-touching when you see, at the end of the weekend, love and happiness in eyes that started out cold and isolated. But there is also something very healing when these young women can relate to you after a testimony. There is something so peaceful about the way they smile and comfort you in your own struggles. There is something so encouraging about watching your fellow ministers in Christ, fall in love with Him again and again. There is something Heavenly about bringing hope to a place where there is none.

God works in mysterious ways. He knows what He is doing and He is gladened when He sees His name proclaimed. And so, this ministry became a life-changing reality to me when I read the last verse of a poem that I received from one of the girls in the inside, “Because of you … my life has changed.” I can’t help but wonder if she realizes how much she has changed my life. I can’t help but hope she sees the beauty in the ministry that she does. I can’t help but see God’s love in my sister in Christ. And so, I pull out my pen and I began writing, “My dear sister, because of YOU, my life has changed.”

We ask that you keep all who minister to the incarcerated and those who are incarcerated in your prayers.

EDICTAL SUMMONS

November 14, 2013
CASE: McQUEEN -- RICHMON
NO.: SO 13/52

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Paula Dean Richmon.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2013, to answer to the Petition of Phillip Gene McQueen, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Phillip McQueen and Paula Richmon McQueen, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: McQUEEN--RICHMON; Protocol No.: SO 13/52, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.
You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.
Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 14th day of December 2013.

Reverend Tom Barley
MSW, MBA, M. Div., JCL
Judicial Vicar

EDICTAL SUMMONS

November 14, 2013
CASE: McQUEEN -- LOW
NO.: SO 13/53

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Marilyn Gay Low.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2013, to answer to the Petition of Phillip Gene McQueen, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Phillip McQueen and Marilyn McQueen, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: McQUEEN -- LOW; Protocol No.: SO 13/53 on the Tribal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.
You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.
Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 14th day of December 2013.

Reverend Tom Barley
MSW, MBA, M. Div., JCL
Judicial Vicar
MOVIE, VIDEO RATINGS

By Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Here is a list of recent films that Catholic News Service has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

CNS classifications: A-I -- general patronage; A-II -- adults and adolescents; A-III -- adults; L -- limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling; O -- morally offensive. MPAA ratings: G -- general audiences. All ages admitted; PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13; R -- restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; NC-17 -- no one 17 and under admitted.

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By Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Here is a list of recent films that Catholic News Service has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

CNS classifications: A-I -- general patronage; A-II -- adults and adolescents; A-III -- adults; L -- limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling; O -- morally offensive. MPAA ratings: G -- general audiences. All ages admitted; PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13; R -- restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; NC-17 -- no one 17 and under admitted.

FILMS

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OBISPO

(Para 3)
tiempo en el día de Navidad, y durante la temporada Navideña, para venir, especialmente en familia, y pasar un tiempo, en oración y meditación, ante este niño en el pesebre, y para alabar y glorificar mientras nos arrodillemos ante nuestro pequeño Rey y rogándonos que nos muestre el camino hacia la paz, la reconciliación y como descubrir la misericordia y perdón de Dios, y como ser agentes de la misericordia de Dios para otros. El niño—el hombre-Dios—en el pesebre es un signo y una fuente de la reconciliación y sanación que necesitamos en nuestras vidas individuales, en nuestras familias, y en nuestras comunidades y en todo el mundo.

Históricamente, asignamos un día para decir cuando nació Cristo. Sin embargo, por el misterio maravilloso de la sagrada liturgia, por el poder y presencia del Espíritu Santo, Cristo nace en una manera nueva cada día en cada una de nuestras Misas ofrendadas diariamente alrededor del mundo y tenemos el privilegio maravilloso de recibirlo en Comunión. Y, por el mismo poder del Espíritu, podemos decir que la Navidad pasa, o pueda pasar, cada día del año al hacer a Cristo presente en las vidas de otros por medio de nuestro amor, servicio, cuidado y compasión. La Navidad se trata del amor y misericordia de Dios viniendo a nuestro mundo para salvarnos de nuestros pecados y dejando al niño Jesús enseñarnos por su ejemplo y palabra como compartimos ese amor con otros.

Es Navidad siempre cuando en alguna parte del mundo nace o renace el amor; es navidad cuando siempre abrimos las puertas de nuestras casas o corazones a los que sufren o piden ser confortados especialmente al enfermo, al pobre, al inmigrante. Es Navidad siempre cuando perdonamos a quien nos ha herido, ofendido o pisoteado. Es Navidad siempre que renunciamos al egoísmo, sirviendo con generosidad. Es navidad siempre que sonreímos a alguien, aun cuando estemos cansados; siempre cuando en la Navidad cantamos o silbamos un rostro atribulado. Es Navidad siempre que extendemos la mano a una persona necesitada; siempre cuando nos ofrecemos al prójimo amor eterno y paz de Dios. Hay una razón para la temporada, y se encuentra en el proceso de dar, especialmente de nosotros mismos, de nuestro tiempo, nuestros regalos para ayudar a otros, y ayudar al uno a otro para preparar bien para el cumpleaños de la persona más grande que ha vivido. Durante estos días de Adviento necesitamos tomar tiempo para reflexionar en la Palabra de Dios tal como se nos dio en la liturgia de cada día, especialmente la esperanza de Dios que se nos ofrece por medio de varias lecciones del Profeta Isaias. Para realmente capturar la esperanza y el gozo de la temporada necesitamos tomar más tiempo y rezar más con nuestra familia, ir a la iglesia juntos, celebrar el acto de reconciliación, y llegar a otros por medio de compartir nuestros regalos y nuestros bienes con los que tienen menos que nosotros. Luego, la Navidad tendrá un nuevo significado más alegre.

OBISPO

(Para 4)
termina con cenas y festividades en el día de Navidad y en abrir regalos, más bien deberíamos esforzarnos a tomar parte en este nuevo gozo, esperanza y felicidad que se nos ofrecen por nuestro Dios durante toda la temporada de Adviento en preparación para la Navidad y luego vivir su cumpleaños durante el enteramente de la Navidad. Al concentrar en la razón primaria de la temporada, el nacimiento de Cristo, necesitamos tomar ventaja de este tiempo maravilloso de recibirlo en nuestras vidas diariamente alrededor del mundo, y pasar un tiempo, en la parroquia más cercana a usted, en la vísperas de la Navidad y celebración de cumpleaños de nuestro hijo, Jesús.

De José y María de Nazaret
[Mis hermanas y hermanos en Cristo – José y María me pidieron el favor de compartir esta invitación con todos ustedes para tomar parte en la celebración de cumpleaños de su hijo, Jesús, el 25 de diciembre del 2013. Por favor confirmar su asistencia por medio de arrodillarse y decir: “María y José, allí estaré.” Ellos están disponibles 24 horas al día para recibir la contestación a su invitación dondequiera que estén. – Obispo Miguel]

De José y María de Nazaret
Con gran alegría y cariño, les invitamos cordialmente a usted, su familia y amigos a la celebración de cumpleaños de nuestro hijo, Jesús.

IMMANUEL
En la parroquia más cercana a usted, en la vísperas de la Navidad y el 25 de diciembre, la Navidad y la recepción inmediatamente después en sus

CORAZONES
Se les pide, que al reunirse con sus familias, sus familiares y amigos para comidas y fiestas, que también inviten a los pobres, a los oprimidos, a los necesitados y especialmente a los niños, al celebrar este día y la temporada de Navidad con un espíritu de paz y gozo.

En su iglesia
En su propia casa
A gasto propio
Y a su conveniencia

Dones recomendados—Amor, perdón, compasión y servicio.
En retorno recibirá vida y amor eterno y paz de Dios.
Les deseamos una muy feliz y pacífica

NAVIDAD
Sinceramente,
José y María
Fecha: 25 de diciembre del 2013
Con los mejores deseos de los Ángeles, Santos y Ministros Celestiales

EWTN Radio Católica
Las estaciones de radio en las tres deaneries de la diócesis de nuevo están transmitiendo programas regulares en español cada fin de semana por las mañanas. Las siguientes son las estaciones y el horario donde usted puede escuchar EWTN y otros esfuerzos de programaciones católicos en español en Abilene, Midland-Odessa y San Ángelo:

Abilene – KKHR (106.3 FM) está transmitiendo La Hora Católica de EWTN en español los domingos a las 10 a.m.

Midland-Odessa – Padre Gilberto Rodríguez, el Vicario Parroquial de la parroquia San Esteban (St. Stephen’s Church) de Midland, presenta el programa los sábados desde las 5-10 a.m. en KQLM (108 FM) con entrevista cada sábado con el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI a las 8:45 a.m. Además, La Hora Católica de EWTN se puede escuchar los domingos a las 7 a.m.

San Ángelo – KSJT en San Ángelo está transmitiendo la Hora Católica de EWTN los domingos a las 7 a.m.

EWTN en Español
Radio stations in all three of the deaneries of the diocese are again running regular weekly programming on weekend mornings. The following is the stations and times where you can hear EWTN and other Spanish-programming efforts in Abilene, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo:

ABILENE – KKHR (106.3 FM) is airing EWTN’s Catholic Hour in Spanish, Sundays at 10 am.

MIDLAND-ODESSA – Fr. Gilbert Rodriguez, parochial vicar at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland, hosts a Saturday program from 5-10 a.m. on KQLM (108 FM). Additionally, EWTN Catholic programming can be heard Sundays at 7 a.m.

SAN ANGELO — KSJT in San Angelo is airing EWTN’s Catholic Hour Sundays at 7 a.m.
BISHOP

(From 2)

offered daily around the world and we have the wonderful privilege of receiving him in Communion. And, because of the same power of the Spirit, we can say that Christmas happens, or can happen, every day of the year as we make Christ present in the lives of others by our love, service, care and compassion. Christmas is about God’s love and mercy coming into our world to free us from sin and letting the Christ Child teach us by example and word how to share this love with others.

It is Christmas then, when in some part of the world, love is born or reborn in the heart of a human person. It is always Christmas when we open the doors of our houses, our hearts to those who suffer, to those who seek comfort and care especially the abandoned, the sick, the poor, the immigrants. Christmas happens especially when we pardon someone who has offended us, or who has hurt us, or taken advantage of us.

It is always Christmas when we refuse to give into our pride and our egoism, and when we reach out in service to others in generosity. Christmas happens when we smile at someone even when we are tried, even perhaps when we dislike a certain person. It is always Christmas when we wipe the tears of a suffering child or from the face of someone who is troubled. Christmas happens in a special way when we extend a hand to a person in need and when we do a favor for someone who asks for help.

An invitation from Mary & Joseph

[My sisters and brothers: Joseph and Mary asked me to please share their invitation with all of you to take part in the birthday celebration of their son, Jesus, on December 25, 2013. RSVP by simply falling on your knees and saying: “Mary and Joseph, I’ll be there.”

They are available 24 hours a day for you to reply to their invitation from wherever you might be. — Bishop Mike]

From Joseph and Mary of Nazareth—
With great joy and love we cordially invite you, your family and friends to the Birthday celebration of our Son, Jesus

EMMANUEL
At your nearest Parish Church, On Christmas Eve and 25th December, Christmas Day, and the reception thereafter in your
HEARTS.
You are requested, as you come together with your family,

Yours sincerely,
Date: Dec. 25, 2013
Joseph & Mary
With best compliments from the
Angels,
All Saints and Heavenly Ministers.

RECOMMENDED GIFTS
Love, forgiveness, compassion and service. In return you will receive God’s eternal life, love and peace. We wish you a very joyful and peaceful CHRISTMAS

An invitation from Mary & Joseph

(From 18)

Christian lesson is appropriate for all ages. Ages 4-8.


When an entire village moves to a new community to help build a free Tanzania, conflict arises. But are the problems the result of evil curses from disgruntled ancestors or is something -- or someone -- else causing the disruption? Set in mid-1960s Tanzania, "A Girl Called Problem" is a wonderful introduction to historical fiction that will teach young readers about the crossroads of tradition and modernization, culture and science. Readers will fall in love with the main character, a spunky young girl who teaches her village that girls are allowed to go to school, an entire community benefit. Ages 10-14.


We know by now that Pope Francis grew up in Argentina and studied chemistry before becoming a Jesuit. But did you know that as a student, the young Jorge Bergoglio liked playing basketball and worked at a sock factory cleaning floors and equipment? Young readers of this illustrated biography will enjoy interesting facts about Pope Francis’ life and discovering that the pope was an energetic student, helpful son and an ordinary child of God called to do extraordinary things. Ages 8-11.


This book’s clever illustrations and fun narrative about a well-known American president will wet the appetite of future historians. "Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library" is a nonfiction picture book that describes Jefferson’s love affair with books. Within the context of his literary obsession, readers also will learn a lot about the nation’s third president and early America. Ages 8-10.


This collection of poems dedicated to beloved fairy tales is witty and smart. Enchanting illustrations and charming poems will tickle the imagination of young children and adults alike. The book will allow readers to revisit their favorite fairy tales and think about them in a new way. This is one of those books that will be pulled from the shelf time and again. Ages 5 and up.


Sixth-grader Aaron Ajax is facing some real problems: His dad lost his job, and the family must move in the middle of a school year. How could God do this to his family? They pray and go to church; shouldn't that guarantee Aaron from being the dreaded new kid in school? "Dear God, I Don't Get It" is a well-written chapter book that will help readers trust in God and learn that God has a plan, even if it is not always immediately apparent. Although the predictable ending is perhaps tied up too tightly with a bow, that shouldn’t discourage young readers wanting to read more books like this. Luckily, another book about the Ajax family is due to come out next year. Ages 8-12.


This children’s picture book is the St. Francis’ prayer depicted in soft illustrations of a fox treating his furry friends with kindness, forgiveness and love. Although the prayer actually was written long after the beloved saint died, this simple and beautiful prayer along with the book’s pictures will help young children learn about St. Francis’ mission and what they are called to do as children of God. Ages 3-5.
had three consequences: 1) The commissions were much more conscious in their work of what the pope wanted or what they thought he wanted. 2) The Coordinating Commission became less and less while more and more of the management of the Council was given to Cardinal Felici. 3) In these circumstances, direct appeals to the pope inevitably increased.

No schema was without problems but four were in for serious problems. 1) The schema on revelation 2) The Decree on Religious Liberty 3) The Church in the Modern World 4) On the Jews and Non-Christian Religions.

In the month before the opening of the Council, the German bishops showed themselves more open to the document on The Church in the Modern World when some changes were made. The Declaration on Jews and Non-Christian Religions aroused great anxiety among all concerned. There was a relatively small part dealing with Hindus and Buddhists and longer section on Muslims. The Eastern rite bishops and patriarchs were extremely concerned about the part on the Jews because of their geographic location and the whole question of “deicide.” In the end, no statement was made, either accusing the Jews of deicide or absolving them from it. A delicate balance indeed!

In June the Group sent a letter to Pope Paul requesting a change in the procedures. In August Cardinal Cieognani replied to the letter in a stinging rebuke. He told the Group that their very existence was a threat to the success of the Council and might very well lead to a schism in the Church.

On September 14, the day the Council reconvened, Pope Paul issued a letter (motu proprio — his own doing) Apostolica Sollicitudo, in which he announced the beginning of the Synod of Bishops. On the surface, this seemed like an answer to the question of collegial government, but when examined more closely, it became obvious that nothing really changed since the synod would be purely advisory and that the pope would control the agenda. In reality it was more an expression of papal primacy than it was episcopal collegiality. The text cut collegiality off from grounding in the institutional reality of the Church.

PATTERSON

(From 3)

emotions in an especially compelling way.

▶ Love your country through it all.
Think we have problems in America? Despite our significant economic issues, what we do have — safety, opportunity, home — is what many Syrians describe praying they can one day have again. Living in tents or crowded apartments as refugees, they can’t wait for the day when they can peacefully return to their land, even if their house is no longer standing. It is home. Most of what we have in America the refugees in Jordan only dream of, yet since they spend most of their time just surviving, their dreams are often different from our dreams.

▶ Work. Next to having a healthy, secure family and a desire to return home, the men from Syria mostly just want to work. Not just so they can provide for their families, but because it gives them self-worth.

▶ Fall in love. Stay that way. I met one couple that was quite an inspiration. She is 33. Her husband 24. They married because they fell in love. In America, that’s understood. In the Middle East, it can fall somewhere between rarity and miracle. Seeing the embodiment of a love-created union in the middle of war and involuntary displacement is an emotional slice of life powerful to watch.

▶ Sometimes it’s OK to look back.
Especially when, like most refugees, that’s where you left behind most of what you had and many you cared about.

▶ Open your home to strangers.
Sight unseen, the Syrian families welcomed us, gave us tea, shared their life stories and blessed us and thanked us when we left. The appreciation they have for the kindness of others is difficult to put into words.

▶ Take care of the poor.
It is our mission. To do not so renders us poor in spirit, many times as difficult a place to be as physical poverty itself.

▶ No matter how hard you have it, someone else has it worse.
You may never meet that person, but he or she is always there.

▶ Whatever you do for the least of these, you did for me.
Whatever you did not do for the least of me, you did not do for me. Pray. Not just for people you know. Pray for those you will never know. They are counting on you to do so.

BARRON

(From 8)

winter, and Christ becomes Aslan the lion who offers his own life in order to liberate the land. In The Screwtape Letters, Lewis illustrates how the general calamity plays itself out in the life of a very ordinary Christian and the low-level devil assigned to torment him. It is precisely Lewis’s confidence in the victory of Christ that enabled him to disempower the devil through mockery.

J.R.R. Tolkien, who was a great friend to and Christian fellow-traveler with Lewis, presented his own version of the Biblical tale in The Lord of the Rings. In Tolkien’s invented world, the devil appeared as Sauron the Dark Lord and Christ under the guise of Frodo the priest, Gandalf the prophet, and Aragorn, the king who returned after a great battle to take possession of his rightful kingdom. Both Lewis and Tolkien wanted to “evangelize the imagination,” to plant the seeds of the Gospel and the rhythms of the Biblical narrative in the minds of their readers. The fact that both The Chronicles of Narnia and The Lord of the Rings have, in recent years, been made into wildly popular films can only be characterized, therefore, as a triumph of evangelization.

C.S. Lewis intuited something that has become a commonplace among postmodern philosophers, namely, that the avatar of one worldview overcomes another, not so much through argument, but through telling a more compelling story, by “out-narrating” his opponent. He knew that the Christian evangelist, despite any personal flaws he might exhibit or institutional baggage he might carry, still possessed the greatest story ever told. Lewis told that story with particular verve, bravado, intelligence, imagination, and panache — and that is why it is well and good that we should celebrate him on the 50th anniversary of his passing.

U.S. SENATE

-- U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Phone: 202-224-2934
Mailing Address: 517 Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510
Web: http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/public/

-- U.S. Senator Ted Cruz
Cruz, Ted - (R - TX)  Class I
Phone: (202) 224-5922
Mailing Address: B406 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
-- U.S. Congressman K. Michael Conaway (District 11—San Angelo, Midland-Odessa, Andrews, Stanton, Crane, Rankin, Big Lake, Colorado City, Sterling City, Robert Lee, Bronte, Ballinger, Winters, Miles, Christoval, Eldorado, Junction, Menard, Eden, Melvin, Brady, Coleman, Brownwood, Sonora, McCamey, Mertzon, Sweetwater )
Phone: 202-225-3605
Mailing Address: 511 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Web: http://conaway.house.gov/

-- Rep. Randy Neugebauer (District 19—Big Spring, Abilene, Clyde)
Phone: 202-225-4005
Mailing Address: 1424 Longworth HOB, Washington, DC 20515
Web: http://randy.house.gov/

-- Rep. Pete Gallego (District 23—Fort Stockton, Iraan, Ozona)
Mailing Address: 431 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC 20515-4323
Phone 202-225-4511
Web http://gallego.house.gov/
Midland

Bishop Pfeifer, center, and Msgr. Larry Droll, right, with pro-life supporters from St. Lawrence, left to right, Joyce Halffmann, Martha Schwartz, Lynette Jansa and Kay Donna Machicek at the recent Life Center fundraiser that featured Rick Santorum as the main presenter.

Merkel

A Town Square Rosary Rally was held in Merkel on October 12. Pictured, left to right, are Jocille Brady, Sylvia Ybarra (Rally Coordinator), Charlotte Starbuck, Jake Butler, Kay Amerine, Audye Butler and Becky Brown.

Rowena

Father Ariel Lagunilla stands before a banner presented to him by the CCD students of St. Joseph Parish in Rowena, on Priesthood Sunday, October 27. He was honored by the entire parish family with gifts, prayers, banners, song and cards to thank him for the many ways he helps its members.

San Angelo

Parishioners helped “Light up the Courthouse” during the first week of Advent in San Angelo. About 65 faithful gathered to pray at the event.

Odessa

San Angelo Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, presided over the 20th Anniversary of the Odessa Perpetual Adoration Chapel, located at St. Mary’s Church. Holy Redeemer Church in Odessa hosted the celebration beginning with Mass on October 17. A covered dish reception followed the Mass in the parish hall. With the bishop are, left to right, Fr. Mamachan Joseph, Fr. Santiago Udayar and Deacon Antonio Gonzales.