

West Texas ANGELUS

Serving the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas
Volume XXIX, No. 3 MARCH 2009

Miracle on the Conchos?

KC 4316: They came, they cut, they cleared: in 5 1/2 hours

SAN ANGELO -- Fifteen men, 25 trees cut and placed on seven trailers. All in 5 1/2 hours.

The volunteer Knights of Columbus from Wall's Council 4316 gathered at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo to ensure the safety of guests and

retreatants. They fell dead trees and trimmed living trees along the Concho River prayer path, all the while protecting the Stations of the Cross located along it.

David Mikulik, owner of Scherz Landscape Company in (Please See KC/16)



More photos, Pg. 16

Diocesan priest transfers become official Feb. 29

Transfers in the diocese, effective February 9, 2009:

- **Msgr. Francis Frey**, pastor of **St. Mary**, Odessa, has retired.
- **Fr. Santiago Udayar**, formerly the pastor at Sacred Heart, Coleman, has been assigned pastor of **St. Mary**, Odessa.
- **Fr. Romanus Akamike**, formerly the pastor of St. Charles, Eden has been assigned pastor of **Sacred Heart, Coleman** and its mission **Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Winters**.
- **Fr. Joseph Ogbonna**, formerly in residence at St. Mary, Odessa, has been assigned pastoral administrator of **St. Charles, Eden** and its missions, **St. Phillip, Eola** and **Our Lady of Guadalupe, Millersview**.
- **Fr. Mario Ortiz** arrived in the diocese to replace Fr. Leo Eke as Parochial Administrator of **St. Ambrose, Wall** and its mission, **Holy Family, Mereta**.
- **Fr. Leo Eke**, temporarily assigned to St. Ambrose, Wall has returned to Nigeria.
- **Fr. Andrew Okeke** arrived in the diocese and is assigned parochial vicar at **Sacred Heart, Abilene**.
- Effective January 12, 2009, **Fr. Tom Barley**, Dean of the San Angelo Deanery has been temporarily appointed to assist Msgr. Maury Voity at **Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo**.



Stories, viewpoints on
Lent 2009, Pages 10-11



THIS MONTH IN THE ANGELUS

Return to Me

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, and one of the Readings that we hear in the Mass for that day is from the Prophet Joel, who gives us the theme that should guide us through the Lenten season, leading us to the greatest feast of Christianity, the resurrection of Christ.

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Working through it with Christ



Bishop David Zubik of Pittsburgh has called on the Catholic community to face the nation's current economic crisis together in Christ. "When I think of the diocese, I think of a church sharing, reaching out to serve those who are in need," he wrote in the second pastoral letter he has issued as head of his diocese. / Pg. 9



Abilene effort kicks off

On Wednesday, February 25, Abilene area pro-life advocates will join together with people of faith and conscience from more than 130 communities nationwide to kick off the area's own version of the groundbreaking "40 Days for Life campaign,"

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From the Bishop's Desk

Lent: Return to me with all your hearts; rend your hearts not garments



**Bishop
Michael D.
Pfeifer, OMI**

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, and one of the Readings that we hear in the Mass for that day is from the Prophet Joel, who gives us the theme that should guide us through the Lenten season, leading us to the greatest feast of Christianity, the resurrection of Christ. The prophet tells us: "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your garments." [Joel 2:12-13]

Lent is a time to journey into our hearts and guided by the light of the Holy Spirit to humbly and truthfully admit what might be blocking God's loving grace from coming into our hearts. It is a time to reflect on how we can be better disciples of Christ, especially by sharing our lives in service with other people.

Lent draws us into the sanctuary of the soul. We go there not alone but guided by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who suffered and died to take away our sins, and then to bring us new life in His resurrection. As we journey through these days of Lent in prepara-

tion for Easter, in accord with what the Prophet Joel tells us, we are to break open our hearts so that God may break in. We are with God's grace called to open our hearts and souls in a spirit of repentance and conversion, so that God may touch them with tenderness, compassion and forgiveness.

The season of Lent is a time to fast by giving up uncharity. This is a time to take on a new attitude of love and compassion by giving up gossiping, giving up critical attitudes, giving up sarcasm, and giving up (Please See **BISHOP/18**)

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

New rosary CD for the faithfully departed

Five parishioners from the San Angelo Diocese have recorded a very unique Rosary CD for the Faithful Departed. Deacon Bob Leibrecht from St. Stephens in Midland leads the Rosary, and parishioners from St. Stephens and St. Ann's (Midland) and St. Thomas, (Midkiff) provide music and meditations.

Before each Hail Mary, different souls are prayed for who are in need of purification from various sins committed during life. Pope John Paul II stated in an Apostolic Letter, "The Rosary is flexible. When looking for ways to bring the rosary alive, adaptations are possible. Why not try it?" This Rosary uses all four mysteries in five decades: 1. The Nativity; 2. The Institution of the Holy Eucharist; 3. The Crucifixion; 4. The Resurrection & Ascension; 5. Pentecost & Coronation.

Prayers are supplemented with inspirational background music from Catholic singer and songwriter Julie Carrick.

When this CD is purchased for \$10, the money is used to have Masses celebrated for the souls in Purgatory. So the souls in purgatory are aided not only by the Rosary, but by the Holy Mass... the most powerful prayer of all!

A great gift for families at Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time, for Graduates, for Newlyweds, and for mourners in times of grief. The CD is available at Trudo's and Brother Leo's in San Angelo; The Carmelite Hermitage Gift Shop in Christoval; St. Stephens, St. Ann's, La Promesa, and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Midland; and Ave Maria in Odessa.

2009 Cursillo Dates

April 16-19 -- Women's Spanish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Midland

June 18-21 -- Men's Spanish
June 25-28 -- Women's English, Christ the King
Retreat Center San Angelo

July 23-26 -- Men's English, Christ the King
Retreat Center, San Angelo

September 24-27 -- Women's English, St. Thomas, Big Spring

October 15-18 -- Women's Spanish Cursillo, St. Mary's, San Angelo

October 22-25 -- 2009 Men's English Cursillo, St. Thomas, Big Spring

Anyone needing more information may e-mail cursillo.sanangelodiocese@gmail.com or call (432) 413-6136.

Appreciation award presented to Deborah Michalewicz

The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) has bestowed one of its annual Appreciation Awards on West Texas resident Deborah Michalewicz, in recognition of her leadership in organizing the "Music for Life" concert in San Angelo in June of 2008. The concert, which was co-sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo Criminal Justice Ministry and the First United Methodist Church of San Angelo, featured Austin-based singer-songwriter and musician Sara Hickman and San Angelo-based singer-songwriter Cindy Jordan. Aimed at starting a dialogue on the death penalty, the concert also featured remarks by Father Mark Miller of the Catholic Churches of South Odessa and Guadalupe and Emma Fabela, who spoke about their son's murder and the need for forgiveness.



Michalewicz

Deborah is the wife of Water Valley cotton farmer Arnold Michalewicz. She is the coordinator of Religious Education at St. Therese Catholic Church in Carlsbad, where she also services as Lector and Catechist.

The award was presented in Austin on February 21 in conjunction with TCADP's 2009 Annual Conference. Sister Esperanza Razura of Odessa accepted the award on Deborah's behalf.

Fall Festival Calendar

Sunday, October 25 -- St. Ann's Parish Festival in Sonora, celebrating 80 years.

Scheduled Executions

The Angelus will publish execution dates of Texas offenders on death row each month so that the faithful in the Diocese of San Angelo can pray for them. The following offenders face upcoming execution dates. Please pray for them:

Offender/Scheduled Execution Date:

James Edward Martinez/March 10

Luis Salazar/March 11

Jose Briseno/April 7

Michael Rosales/April 15

Derrick Johnson/April 30

LETTERS FROM THE BISHOP

March 22: Annual Catholic Relief Collection

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is important to remember our humanitarian obligations as Catholics. Our theme of Jesus in Disguise reminds us that Christ is present in those who suffer - and in those who respond compassionately to their needs. The Annual Catholic Relief Services Collection supports important Catholic organizations that carry out God's work around the world - providing refugee settlement, HIV/AIDS and international poverty relief, legal aid for poor immigrants, emergency and disaster relief, and advocacy for the promotion of global peace and justice.

In our diocese, The Catholic Relief Services Collection is scheduled for March 22.

This is the perfect opportunity for us to express our compassion and generosity by sharing with our brothers and sisters who have much less than we do.

Please know that your generosity gives hope to Jesus in Disguise. Please visit www.usccb.org/nationalcollections for more information about the collection and the essential organizations funded by it.

Thank you for your past generosity and let us pray for the success of this effort and especially offer prayers for the poor and needy of the world.

Your servant in Christ and Mary,

**Most Reverend Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo**

April 10: Collection for Churches in the Holy Land

My dear brothers and sisters:

May these days of Lent deepen our appreciation for all that Christ did for us during that first Lent, giving His life on the cross for our salvation and redemption.

By way of this letter, I remind you that the annual Good Friday will be taken up in all of our churches on Friday, April 10, 2009, and this collection goes to support the works of the Church in the Holy Land.

I encourage you to be generous in this collection that is so much needed for the ministries and programs of the Church in the Holy Land, which is still filled with much violence and division. Along with your generous offering, I ask you to please offer prayers for peace in the Holy Land and peace throughout the world. Jesus gave His life to bring us this peace, so let us all strive to be peacemakers right where we live.

Thank you and God's peace.

Your servant in Christ and Mary,

**Most Reverend Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo**

The Visiting Priest

Many parents experience similar shared sorrows

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service

In the 1970s a Senate juvenile delinquency subcommittee surveyed 750 public school districts and reported the following changes: School dropouts increased by 11 percent, drug and alcohol offenses on school property increased by 37 percent, burglaries of school buildings increased by 11 percent and assaults on teachers increased by 77 percent.



Catoir

On the academic level, reading scores were down substantially, thus revealing an intellectual impoverishment that continued to spiral downward.

In the subsequent 40 years those statistics have become progressively worse. By comparison, the Catholic school system, which teaches spiritual values, has performed much better.

The nuns, whose vision, intellectual drive and personal commitment to excellence benefited a whole generation of baby boomers, took a lot of ribbing over the years from their students who put them down for their strict rules and old-fashioned ways. Even so, these self-sacrificing women

managed to produce a rich legacy of honorable graduates who in turn have become responsible parents and grandparents.

What of the Catholic parents who lament the fact that some of their youngsters have fallen away from their faith?

In today's mixed-up world, this is not too surprising. I do not judge them. I simply advise them not to put down themselves or their children. For the most part, they did a good job protecting their children from the pervasive drug subculture and so many

(Please See **CATOIR/13**)

From the Editor

Ask not what your parish can do for you

By Jimmy Patterson

‘It seems like half a lifetime ago when my young family and I were new in town and attended a church where we didn't know many people,’ a friend of mine told me recently. “We would go and sit and kneel and stand and sit again and kneel again and then leave, smiling politely at whomever chose to return our friendly glances, and there often didn't seem like there were many. One day one of our children turned up sick and was hospitalized and we were mortified that no one came to visit during the entire stay and we decided we would wash our hands of that church.”



Patterson

My friend said he and his wife sat and whined and moaned and complained about how the church didn't do anything for them and he said one day they finally decided once and for all that they were done and wouldn't be going back, thanks for nothin', and so he walked out the door and didn't look back. Funny thing is, he said, when they left, arms crossed defiantly, no one still seemed to care.

Many years passed and our friends raised a family, attending another parish for much of that time. Ultimately, for whatever reason they said they decided they would again give their old church a try.

Even after praying about it, they were were unsure of their decision to return and even more unsure of how they would be received when they walked through the doors after so long away.

“We actually thought people had actually missed us and would actually remember the day we left so long ago. Why on earth would they?” he asked. “Truth is no one did remember, which is to speak ill of no one. We had just never given anyone anything to remember.”

Church is not about getting. It's about giving. You can't go every week and do nothing but sit there and hope to be warmly embraced. It's not about the church doing for you. It's about people doing for the church. Once you do for the church, it is then that the feeling of community, that great big group-hug feeling, can really be felt to its full extent.

“We realized that it wasn't the church that wronged us so long ago,” my friend added. “It was us who wronged us. And us who wronged the church by blaming it.”

A church will most definitely care about you, take care of you, comfort you, and visit you and your ill family members. But it has to know you are there. It's not practical to sit back and hope you will be fussed over just because you're you. It is only when you reach out and show your parish what you can do to glorify God's kingdom -- and that you're not just there for yourself -- when the beauty of the church family fully comes into that embrace.

Jimmy Patterson is editor of the West Texas Angelus and a parishioner at St. Ann's in Midland.

OBITUARY

Father Charles P. Vogel

MIDLAND - Father Charles P. Vogel passed through the door of death on Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009. He was the son of Charles Paul and Katherine (Klein) Vogel, and was born in Ridgewood, N.Y., on March 14, 1917. He was ordained to the Priesthood for the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 27, 1943. One of the Altar boys serving Father Vogel's First Mass was a young man, Robert Kelly, who later

became a priest and pastor of St. Stephen's Parish in Midland, Texas. Father Vogel served the Brooklyn parishes of the Transfiguration, Saint Leo, and Saint Sylvester. He retired in 1984. Following his retirement, Father began coming to Midland whenever Father Kelly needed extra help or had to be away. Fr. Vogel came to stay for several months during two despairing times. One long visit came while Fr.

Kelly recuperated from surgery and eventually, for health reasons, had to retire. Another time came with the untimely death of Fr. John Waldron, who was Father Kelly's successor. Bishop Michael Pfeifer asked Fr. Vogel to stay for six months till Father James P. Bridges could be assigned as the new pastor of St. Stephen's. Father

(Please See **VOGEL/18**)

Del Escritorio del Obispo

Vuelvanza a mi de todo corazon -- enluten el corazon y no sus vestidos



Obispo Miguel Pfeifer OMI

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer

La temporada de Cuaresma comienza con el Miércoles de Ceniza, y una de las lecturas que escuchamos durante la misa de ese día nos viene del Profeta Joel, quien nos da el tema que ha de guiarnos durante la temporada de Cuaresma, dirigiéndonos a la gran fiesta del cristianismo, la resurrección de Cristo. El profeta nos dice: “Vuélvanse a mi de todo corazón, con ayunos, con lagrimas y llanto; enluten su corazón y no sus vestidos.” (Joel

2:12-13)

La Cuaresma es un tiempo de viajar dentro nuestros corazones y guiados por la luz del Espíritu Santo a humilde y verdaderamente admitir lo que impida la gracia amorosa a entrar en nuestros corazones. Es tiempo de reflexionar en como podemos ser mejores discípulos de Cristo, especialmente por medio de compartir nuestras vidas en servicio a otras personas.

La Cuaresma nos atrae 3 dentro del santuario del alma. No vamos allí solos sino guiados por

nuestro Señor y Salvador, Cristo Jesús, quien sufrió y murió para perdonar nuestros pecados, y traernos nueva vida por medio de Su resurrección. Al pasar estos días de Cuaresma en preparación para la Pascua, de acuerdo con lo que el Profeta Joel nos dice, hemos de abrir nuestros corazones para que Dios pueda entrar. Con la gracia de Dios estamos llamados abrir nuestros corazones y almas en espíritu de arrepentimiento y conversión, para que

(Mira **OBISPO/17**)

DIOCESAN DATES**Bishop's Calendar****APRIL**

1 -- SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center – Staff Lenten Retreat -10:00 a.m.

1 -- SAN ANGELO, 12:05 p.m. Lenten Reflections at First United Methodist Church

2 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Chrism Mass, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Presbyteral Council

3 -- SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Staff Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Staff Meeting, 11 am.

4 -- ROWENA, St. Joseph – Confirmation at 5 p.m.

5 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Palm Sunday Mass, 9:45 a.m.

5 -- SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels – Seder Meal at 5:30 p.m.

7 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Lenten Penance Service at 7 p.m.

9 -- SAN ANGELO, 1:00 p.m. C.A.R.E.S. Meeting Sacred Heart Cathedral – Holy Thursday Mass at 7 pm

10 -- SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret - Way of the Cross at 1:00 p.m.; 7:00 St. Joseph – Good Friday Service

11 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Easter Vigil Service at 8:00 p.m.

12 -- SAN ANGELO, St. Mary - Easter Sunday Mass at 10:00 am

13 -- SAN ANGELO, Bishop's Residence – Dinner at Bishop's Residence for Priests, Sisters, Diocesan Pastoral Center Staff at 6 p.m.

14-16 -- Rest and Prayer

17 -- SAN ANGELO, American Cancer Fund Raiser – 11 a.m.

17 -- ODESSA, Holy Redeemer – Confirmation at 6:30 pm.

18-20 -- SAN ANTONIO, MACC Board Meeting

21 -- SAN ANTONIO – Father Ted Pfeifer's 50th Anniversary

22 -- OZONA, Our Lady of Per.Help-Confirmation, 6 :30 p.m.

23 -- ABILENE, St. Vincent – Dedication of St. Vincent de Paul Building at 6:30 p.m.

24 -- SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

25 -- MIDLAND, St. Ann – Confirmation at 5:30 p.m.

26-27 -- SAN ANTONIO, Meeting of Texas Bishops

28 -- COLEMAN, Sacred Heart – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

29 -- MIDLAND, St. Stephen – Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.

30 -- WALL, St. Ambrose – Confirmation, 6:30 p.m.

Christ the King Retreat Center**APRIL**

1 -- Bishop's Lenten Staff Retreat

3-5 -- St. Ann's Midland Confirmation Retreat

5 -- CKRC Confirmation Retreat

6 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group - Life in the Spirit Seminar

7 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6pm

10-12 -- Office Closed – Good Friday

12 -- Easter Sunday - Resurrection

13 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group - Life in the Spirit Seminar

14 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6pm

17-19 -- Deacon Training Program

19 -- Rowena Women's ACTS Mtg.

20 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

21 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6pm

23-26 -- Rowena Women's ACTS Retreat

27 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

28 -- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 5-6pm

NECROLOGY April

3 -- Deacon Edward Martinez (1985)

16 -- Deacon Eliseo Carillo (1989)

17 -- Rev. Lee Zimmerman, C.M. (2000)

19 -- Rev. John Lavin (1983)

19 -- Deacon Hubert Collins (1999)

21 -- Rev. Thomas Leahy, SAC (1969)

23 -- Rev. Louis Droll (2006)

25 -- Deacon John Munoz (2007)

29 -- Deacon Hubert Daigle (1986)

The facts about the Morning After Pill

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer

One of the most dangerous attacks on human life in recent years is the promotion of the so-called “emergency contraception,” also known as “the morning-after pill” or “Plan B.” Recently, the FDA approved nonprescription sales of this powerful drug to those who are 18 years or older.

Many people are not really informed about what these drugs do to a newly conceived human person. Nor, do they understand what these drugs do to a woman's body, not to mention the lasting effects on a mother's heart?

In this article I share with you some reflections taken from two fine articles in the December 2006 Ethics & Medics

(Volume 31, Number 12) on “Truth About Emergency Contraception”, and “How ‘Plan B’ Does Harm to Women”.

These emergency contraceptions often interfere with an existing pregnancy, and they are not safe as many would have us to believe. Certainly, they are not safe for the baby, whose life may be ended before he or she sees the light of day. Studies show that there is an increased evidence of tubal pregnancy that accompanies contraceptive use. This can be fatal for the mother as well as the baby.

Recent scientific studies provide support for the moral teachings of the Church as regards the consequences of Plan B. It is important that Catholics and all people of good will be informed about the effects of emergency contraceptives. Much educa-

tion needs to be provided about the truth of emergency contraception—medically, morally, and spiritually.

We know from the scientific study of embryology that at the moment of conception—the joining of sperm and egg—a unique set of DNA is formed, and a new human being is created. Even a zoologist would tell you that this entity is a homo sapien, a human being. It is not a tree or a cow, but a person. The newly conceived person does not “become” human, he or she is human. There is nothing that suddenly “happens” that would make this embryonic human being more human once the journey has been made through the fallopian tube to implant in the mother's uterus.

(Please See **PILL/17**)

March 22 designated as World Water Day

► Water is a right, and profits should not be the only reason to protect it.**By Bishop Michael Pfeifer**

The 3rd annual celebration of World Water Day, on March 22, reminds us of the precious gift of water, how we should appreciate and use it wisely, protect it, conserve it, and remember that it is meant for all people. Here in West Texas where dryness is more common and especially because we usually do not have an abundance of rainfall, water is indeed a very precious gift. Water is a right, and profits should not be the only reason to protect it. Pope Benedict XVI recently reminded us that there is a “right to water,” based on the dignity of the human person, and it is not simply an

“economic good.”

Water—no other substance on earth carries so profound a spiritual meaning. Looked at globally, the principal difficulty today is fairness of distribution of water and water quality; not absolute scarcity of water.

World Water Day is a time to thank God for the water we have and to renew our appreciation of this most precious life-giving gift. Our physical dependence upon water and the graciousness of a loving God, Creator and Father, is reflected in the central place that water takes in the practices and belief of world religions and the spirituality of indigenous people. Water, a creative force, is essential for all life. It is the common heritage of all creation, a sacred gift. Water cleanses: it washes away impuri-

ties, purifying objects for ritual use as well as for making a person clean, physically and spiritually. Preserving and making available fresh water as a sacred legacy is a collective responsibility that includes the involvement and participation of all.

Considering water as a right that is based on the dignity of the human person, reminds us that water should not be considered and treated only as an economic good. It must be used in a rational manner and in a spirit of solidarity, taking into account the needs of all people.

May World Water Day be the occasion for all of us to examine how we are to use and not abuse this precious commodity that is meant to help sustain all life on planet earth.

The meaning of indulgence as taught by the Church

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In recent weeks, there has been a renewed interest generated by the secular media about indulgences. Hence, this is a timely opportunity to present the clear teaching of the Catholic Church about the true meaning of indulgences.

To begin, I share with you the reflections of Pope John Paul II who taught as regards indulgences, “The truth about the Communion of Saints which unites believers to Christ and to one another, reveals how much each one can help others—living or dead—to become even more intimately united with the Father in Heaven.” The Pope pointed out clearly that all of us in the Communion of Saints

need to recognize that whatever help we can give each other ultimately comes not from ourselves but from Christ. John Paul II stated, “For when the faithful gain indulgences, they realize that by their own powers, they cannot atone for the evil that they have afflicted upon themselves and the entire community by sinning; they, therefore, are moved to healthy humility.” (Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences)

A number of popular devotions have indulgences attached to them. Indeed, the fact that a particular devotion has an indulgence attached to it is an indication that this devotional practice has proven itself within the Church to be helpful in bringing people closer to God. Because of the close association between popular

devotions and indulgences, a clear understanding of the Church's teaching on indulgences is necessary to appreciate the role of popular devotional practice in the life of the Church.

Hence in this article, I share with you the answer to the important question of: What are indulgences? The information that I share with you here and in future articles in the West Texas Angelus about indulgences comes from the publication of the United States Catholic Bishops on “Popular Devotional Practices: Basic questions and answers.” I point out that much of the answer

(Please See **INDULGENCES/18**)

Pro-life advocates in Abilene to launch groundbreaking '40 Days'

The Angelus

ABILENE – Abilene area pro-life advocates joined together with people of faith and conscience from more than 130 communities nationwide on February 25 to kick off the area's own version of the groundbreaking "40 Days for Life campaign."

"'Forty Days for Life' is an intensive pro-life initiative that focuses on 40 days of prayer and fasting, 40 days of peaceful vigil at abortion facilities, and 40 days of grassroots educational outreach," said Paula Matchen, campaign director for the Abilene "40 Days for Life campaign." "The 40-day time frame is drawn from examples throughout Biblical history where God brought about world-changing transformation in 40-day periods.

"As people here in Abilene join with others from across the country to pray and fast and take courageous action for 40 days to end the tragic violence of abortion, we look forward to seeing what kind of transformation God will bring about in our city and throughout America," said Matchen.

"40 Days for Life has already generated proven lifesaving results in cities across America," said David Bereit, national campaign director for 40 Days for Life. "During three national coordinated campaigns, a total of more than 180 communities joined together for nationally coordi-



nated 40 Days for Life campaigns. The efforts of thousands of people of faith helped

make a tremendous difference. Numerous cities reported a significant drop in abortions. Some abortion facilities either closed altogether or scaled back their operations during the campaign. New volunteers became active in local pro-life efforts. Churches of different denominations worked together to work for an end to abortion in their cities. Many post-abortive women begin programs to heal from the pain caused by previous abortion experiences. With such a strong track record of

results, we are excited to see what God has in store for this spring."

"We are expecting great things for our local 40 Days for Life campaign," said Matchen. "Our prayer efforts will be focused on the Planned Parenthood clinic as that organization is the largest abortion provider nationwide. It is exciting for our city to be a part of something that can have such lifesaving impact, and we can't wait to begin."

To learn more about 40 Days for Life campaign, visit: www.40daysforlife.com. For information about the Abilene campaign visit:

www.40daysforlife.com/Abilene

For assistance or for more information, please contact Paula Matchen at pmatchen@gmail.com or 325-260-3970.

San Angelo Heart of Mercy group hosts 'Life in the Spirit' Seminar

The Angelus

Many people doubt that the miracles that occurred on Pentecost and in the work of Christ and His apostle's still happen in our day and age. The feeling is that they weren't needed anymore when the last Apostle died. When Christ left this earth, He said that He would send a Paraclete, a helper. No where in the bible does it say that there was a deadline – in fact Jesus promised the He would be with us forever!

The power of the Holy Spirit was released on that long ago Pentecost day and wonderful miracles occurred. People were healed, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Pope Benedict affirmed this in October when he received in audience two groups attending conferences related to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. "The charisms arise "as visible signs of the coming of the Holy Spirit." They are not, "a historical event of the past," but an "always living reality."

That power is still available to us and when we open ourselves to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we become a well of God's love. And, as that well fills up, we want to empty it by sharing the joy and love that comes from our unique relationship with God. Miracles occur, healings are seen and the presence of God is experienced in a whole new way. When we empty ourselves to others, God constantly refills us, and we see that the Holy Spirit is indeed alive,

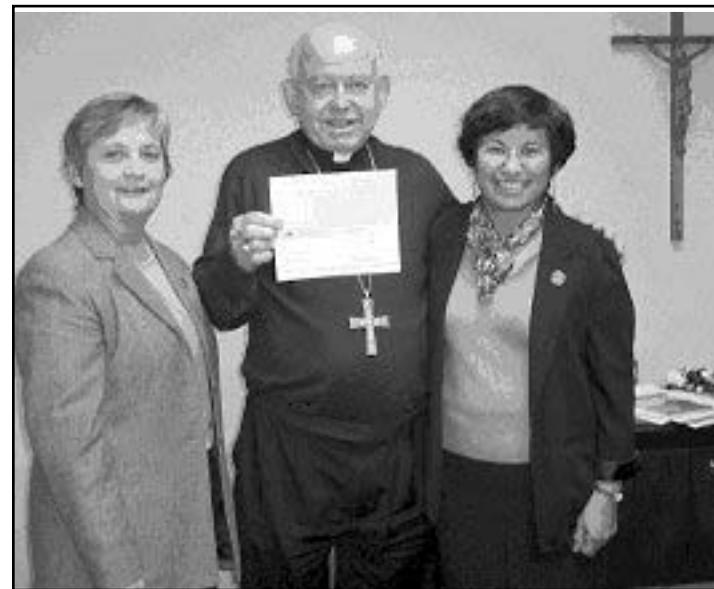
well and very active in our time. And, don't you think we need some miracles now?

The Holy Father affirmed that the "ecclesial movements and new communities, which bloomed after the Second Vatican Council, are a unique gift of the Lord and a precious resource for the life of the Church."

"They should be welcomed with trust and valued in their various contributions," he stated. "One of the positive elements and aspects of the communities of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is precisely the importance given by them to the charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit and their merit lies in having reminded the Church of the actuality [of these gifts]." A Spirit-filled life includes many ways of sharing what we have found with others. God sets our hearts on fire, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. "They said to each other, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

The Heart of Mercy Prayer Group would like to invite you to attend a Life in the Spirit Seminar. Learn how to receive all the gifts and blessings that God has waiting for you. Our Seminar is designed to run 7 Mondays, starting on Monday, March 2, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM and ending on April 13. It will be held at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo.

Please call 325-223-1509 for more information or with questions.



Bishop Michael Pfeifer, center, with Sister Hilda Marotta, Director of the Office of Education and Formation, and Sister Adelina Garcia of the OEF.

Diocesan OEF receives \$2,000 grant from Youth Foundation

The Office of Education and Formation recently received a \$2,000 from the Catholic Youth Foundation USA to be used for the MAKE A DIFFERENCE justice and service high school program this summer.

The Catholic Youth Foundation recently awarded \$68,000 in grants to various programs serving youth throughout the country.

The grant will be used for this summer's MAKE A DIFFERENCE week being held at the Christ the King Retreat Center June 7-12, 2009. Applications are available at local parishes or call the Office of Education and Formation (325-651-7500). The cost of the week is

\$125.00 per person. This includes registration and room and board. The facilitator this year is Marcos Martinez from Catholic Relief Services. Marcos served as a Diocesan Youth Ministry Director in the Diocese of El Paso and most recently on the staff of the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio.

"This program was initially made possible by a grant from the Catholic Extension Society three years ago. We are grateful that we will be able to offer it again this year. It is a wonderful opportunity for young people to learn about their faith and put it into practice in the local community," said S. Hilda Marotta, director of OEF.

Making Sense of Bioethics

Verbal engineering and the swaying of public conscience

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Over the years, a number of unjust laws have come to be replaced by more just ones. Laws overturning the practice of slavery, for example, were a significant step forward in promoting justice and basic human rights in society. Yet in very recent times, unjust and immoral laws have, with increasing frequency, come to replace sound and reasonable ones, particularly in the area of sexual morality, bioethics and the protection of human life. Whenever long-standing laws are reversed, and practices come to be sanctioned that were formerly forbidden, it behooves us to examine whether such momentous legal shifts are morally coherent or not.

Concerns about moral coherence have always influenced the crafting of new laws, as they did in 1879 when the State of Connecticut enacted strong legislation outlawing contraception, specified as the use of "any drug, medicinal article or instrument for the purpose of preventing conception." This law, like the anti-contraception laws of various other states, was in effect for nearly 90 years before it was reversed in 1965. It codified the long-standing dictate of the public conscience that contraception was harmful to society because it promoted promiscuity, adultery and other evils. It relied on the nearly universal sensibility that children should be seen as a help and a blessing to society, and that, as Joseph Sobran puts it, "a healthy society, however tolerant at the margins, must be based on the perception that sex is essentially procreative, with its proper locus in a loving family."

Such a view had been remarkably deeply engrained in Western society for millennia, and interestingly, until as late as the 1930's, all Protestant denominations agreed with Catholic teaching condemn-

ing contraception. Not until the 1930 Lambeth Conference did the Anglican church, swayed by growing societal pressure, announce that contraception would be allowed in some circumstances. Soon after, the Anglican church yielded entirely, allowing contraception across the board. Since then, every major Protestant denomination has followed suit, even though their founders, including Luther, Calvin and Wesley, had all unhesitatingly condemned contraception, and insisted that it violated the right order of sexuality and marriage. Today, it is only the Catholic Church which teaches this traditional view.

How is it that modern times have seen such a striking reversal of this ancient view of the moral unacceptability of contraception? How is it that our age continues to witness a seemingly endless stream of legislative activity that promotes contraception through exorbitant government funding initiatives in nearly every major country of the world, with American taxpayers providing, for example, more than \$260 million of Planned Parenthood's total income for 2004? Can something almost universally decried as an evil in the past suddenly become a good, or is such a legislative reversal not indicative of a significant misuse of law, and of a collective loss of conscience on an unprecedented scale?

Whenever widespread social engineering of this magnitude occurs, it is invariably preceded by skillful verbal engineering. The late Msgr. William Smith observed that the argument about contraception was basically over as soon as modern society accepted the deceptive phrase, "birth control" into its vocabulary. "Imagine if we had called it, 'life prevention'," he once remarked. The great G. K. Chesterton put it this way: "They insist on talking about Birth Control when they mean less birth and no control," and again: "Birth Control is a name given to a succession of different expedients by which it is possible to filch the pleasure

belonging to a natural process while violently and unnaturally thwarting the process itself."

Fast on the heels of such seismic cultural shifts over contraception was even more radical legislation permitting abortion-on-demand. Since the early 1970's, such legislation has effectively enabled the surgical killing of 1 billion human beings worldwide who were living in the peaceful environment of a womb. Here too, sophisticated verbal engineering was necessary, since nobody could reasonably expect the abortion ethic to advance by saying, "Let's kill the kids." Many things simply cannot be achieved when it is clear to everyone what is going on; obfuscation is essential.

The growing child in the womb was thus recast as a "mass of tissue" or a "grouping of cells." The abortion procedure itself was re-described as "removing the product of conception" or "terminating a pregnancy" or simply, "the procedure." Those who were "pro-choice" obfuscated as to what the choice was really for. As one commentator put it, "I think a more realistic term would be 'pro-baby killing'."

Euphemism, of course, has a serious reason for being. It conceals the things people fear. It is defensive in nature, offsetting the power of tabooed terms and otherwise eradicating from the language those matters that people prefer not to deal with directly. A healthy legislative process, however, will abstain from euphemism and obfuscation, zeroing in on truth and moral coherence. It will safeguard and promote an enlightened public conscience, particularly when crafting laws dealing with the most foundational human realities like sexual morality, bioethics and the protection of human life.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.



Pacholczyk

Un futuro embarazo sería demasiado arriesgado

Padre Tad Pacholczyk
Enero, 2009

(De la serie "Making Sense Out of Bioethics")

La capacidad de una mujer para sobrellevar un embarazo puede verse afectada por ciertas condiciones médicas, y en ocasiones hasta su propia vida o la del bebé se ven amenazadas. La hipertensión pulmonar, el síndrome de Marfan y algunos problemas congénitos con la arteria aorta son ejemplos de estas condiciones. Cuando el doctor informa a la paciente que un futuro embarazo tendría consecuencias serias para ella o para su bebé, la ligadura de trompas de Falopio puede parecer lo más indicado. Habrá quien hasta afirme que como la esterilización es "por razones médicas", se trata entonces de una "esterilización indirecta" y por lo tanto moralmente aceptable.

A decir verdad, la ligadura de estos conductos uterinos para evitar un embarazo futuro no es, de ninguna manera, una esterilización indirecta. Si la pérdida de la fertilidad fuera el resultado – no la intención-- de un tratamiento dirigido a un problema médico, entonces sí se trataría de una esterilización indirecta. Por ejemplo, cuando un paciente con cáncer recibe radiación y quimioterapia, un resultado secundario y no intencional puede ser la esterilidad. O en el caso de un paciente que lucha contra el cáncer testicular, es posible que se requiera la extirpación quirúrgica de sus testículos para atacar la enfermedad, con la consecuencia indeseable de quedar estéril. Las esterilizaciones indirectas son moralmente permisibles siempre que exista una patología seria y los efectos anticonceptivos no sean la intención.

Sin embargo, cuando una paciente con hipertensión pulmonar opta por ligar sus trompas de Falopio, el objetivo de este procedimiento no es tratar o curar su hipertensión, por lo tanto está

(Mira PADRE TAD/18)

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Diocese-Scenes

Midland



At left, Peggy McCall of Odessa snapped this photograph of an unidentified woman holding a banner praising President Bush for his Pro-Life stance when the former president visited Midland following the inauguration of successor Barack Obama.

Above, left to right, Liz Hellinghausen Zenteno, Gerard Alcalá and Sara Hellinghausen Welch were recognized as Distinguished Graduates from St. Ann's School February 6. The three qualified after having experienced success in their chosen vocations while leading lives of service to their church and community. Zenteno (St. Ann's 1968-72) was a member of the first girl's basketball team at St. Ann's, along with sister, Sara. Zenteno graduated from Notre Dame and during her time as a lay missionary with Holy Cross Associates in Santiago, Chile, she met her husband, Blas. Zenteno is currently Director of Midland College's Cogdell Learning Center. ... Gerard Alcalá (St. Ann's 1968-74) is former student body president at Midland High School, has a Master's Degree from Rice University and an MBA from The University of Texas. He is a small business owner of a high-tech sound system company in Austin. ... Welch (St. Ann's 1968-72) graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in Early Childhood Education and is a former teacher in Midland schools and coach at the COM Swim Center. She is currently in her 13th year as teacher of St. Ann's 4-year-old pre-school. She has been named St. Ann's Teacher of the year and has been selected to be a presenter at the National Catholic Education Association convention.

Prayer Sharing

Morning Prayer

Jesus, I consecrate my day to you. You are my Lord and Savior and you are my friend. I ask you to guard and protect my life and my family.

Evening Prayer

Jesus, I consecrate this night to you. You are my Lord and Savior. I praise you and thank you for this day. I ask your forgiveness for my sins. I pray you give my family protection and a peaceful night's sleep.

Submitted by Mrs. Mary Ann Book, Miles

Number of priests showing steady, moderate increase

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The latest church statistics show that the number of priests and seminarians around the world has been showing a modest, yet steady increase.

The statistics from the end of 2007 also showed that the number of Catholics remains stable at 1.147 billion people across the globe.

The sampling of statistics was released Feb. 28 in connection with the presentation of the 2009 edition of the Vatican yearbook,

known as the *Annuario Pontificio*, which catalogs the church's presence in each diocese.

The Vatican said the global Catholic population increased during 2007 by 1.4 percent, which more or less kept pace with the 1.1 percent global birthrate that year.

For the past two years, Catholics have made up 17.3 percent of the world's population, it said.

The number of priests in the world also rose, but just by 0.18 percent. At the end of 2007 there

were 408,024 priests in the world, 762 more than at the beginning of the year.

The figure on the number of priests was showing a continued "trend of moderate growth which began in 2000 after more than 20 years of disappointing results," the Vatican report said.

However, that growth has been confined to Africa and Asia, which showed substantial increases in ordinations with 27.6 percent growth and 21.1 percent growth, respectively, it said.

Catholic Voices

Putting hope, perseverance to work in bad economy

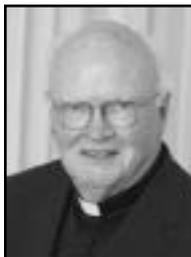
By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

Several weeks ago, Microsoft eliminated 5,000 jobs and IBM notified an undisclosed number of employees that they would be subject to a "resource action." That's a new term for layoffs.

Hundreds of thousands are out of work and looking.

Some job seekers find themselves for the first time asking someone else for help. They find this distasteful.

Unaccustomed as they are to asking for help, they are even less prepared for the refusal and rejection those requests will draw. Not flat-out rejections; those will be rare. But letters have a way of being set aside, resumes get lost, promised calls become promises broken.



Byron

This leaves the job seeker even more alone and much discouraged.

Below these surface-level disappointments lies a substratum of discouragement in many that calls out for the durability of hope, a call that does not ordinarily get an immediate response.

Hope is needed to provide the courage to endure. Those who experience job loss need immediate and repeated assurance that they have not been laid off from life.

Back in the '60s when college students were supposed to be unreflective activists, Jim Beek, a student at Loyola in Baltimore, wrote a poem for the campus literary quarterly that speaks to the heart of the problem the person searching for work has to confront.

The poem opened with the line: "I awoke in the silent fist of the night gagging on loneliness." Then, several lines later, Beek writes: "And the fear that my existence wasn't doing/anyone any good/Was under my fifth rib."

So he prays "to a god who would have nothing to do with a stained-glass window," and gets this reply: "Son --/ This is the pain that lets you know you're alive."

The fear that your existence isn't "doing anyone any good" adds a lot of heavy freight to a job seeker's discouragement. If, as the psychologists remind us, depression is inverted anger -- i.e., anger turned in on itself -- discouragement might be thought of as an aching awareness of not being needed. The pain is there "under my fifth rib" all right, but it can serve as a reminder that the job-seeker is alive, a full member of the human race, ready to contribute and walking a path of persistence that leads to another job.

There's that word: persistence. Discouragement erodes it, undercuts it, puts the fire out.

The really discouraged person stops looking. The persistent person never gives up.

Persistence can activate the optimism that lies hidden in the inner person, somewhere in the nervous system, ready to spring.

But you have to try it to become convinced. You have to believe that the other side of every "out" is "in," and that any exit is an entrance in reverse. Every ouster is the starting gate for a comeback.

You deal with discouragement by not giving up. You simply decide not to live your life "back there"; dredging up the past can be a real depressant.

You decide to take life one day at a time, asking yourself: What is most important in my life right now?

And you know, as you look at your potential, your family responsibilities and the economic realities of your existence, you realize that the most important thing for you right now is getting a job.

Add your personal "Amen" to Faulkner's line in his Nobel acceptance speech: "I believe that man [woman would, of course, be specifically included today] will not merely endure: He will prevail."

Humanizing our economic mess

By Tony Magliano
Catholic News Service

Though we are in the midst of an economic crisis, this need not imply disaster. In the original Greek, the word "crisis" means to judge or choose. A crisis is an opportunity to honestly judge where we have gone wrong, and wisely choose a new and morally better direction.

In many ways, the economic crisis could be a great blessing ready to unfold -- if we choose creatively to build an economic system based on social justice and love for all.

But if we primarily put our efforts into simply repairing a sick economic system, we will end up with a very similar market economy plagued with inefficiency, greed and injustice.

In his powerful encyclical on economic justice titled "Centesimus Annus," Pope John Paul II wrote that "there are many human needs which find no place on the market. It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied, and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish. ...

"There exists something which is

due to man because he is a man, by reason of his lofty dignity."

But an honest assessment of our so called free -- and often unfair -- market economy reveals an economic system that in many ways devalues human dignity. As long as the "almighty dollar" is the bottom line, people will simply be cogs in the corporate wheel, often abused and easily expendable when their profit-generating usefulness is deemed inadequate.

Charles Kernaghan is executive director of the National Labor Committee (www.nlcnet.org), an outstanding human and workers' rights organization. He told me that "the vast majority of corporations will always exploit misery." He said companies lobby hard to acquire legal protection for their trademarks, logos and intellectual property, yet they fiercely oppose legal protection for workers' rights.

The corporate world is in "a race to the bottom," said Kernaghan. For example, Mattel's Barbie doll has rights -- copyrights. This means that if the doll is significantly copied, the copier is sued. Yet the people in Mexico or China who make the dolls have no rights. These workers, like countless others in poor countries who make products for American corporations, are paid pennies an hour, have no benefits, labor in substandard conditions and work at least 14 hours

a day, six to seven days a week.

Kernaghan said that the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act, if passed by Congress, would force corporations to uphold the minimal labor laws of each country they are doing business in. It would also bind companies to honor internationally recognized labor standards like decent working conditions, no child or forced labor and the right of workers to organize.

You can make a real difference here in helping to lift poor workers out of misery. Please call (Capitol switchboard: 202/224-3121) and e-mail your U.S. senators and congressperson, urging them to introduce or co-sponsor the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act. And ask your pastor to help promote this effort.

During a pastoral visit to Canada in 1984, Pope John Paul II prophetically declared: "The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; production to meet social needs over production for military purposes."

If we take these principles of our late great pope seriously and strive to find ways to put them into practice, we will finally build an economic system worthy for humanity!

Astonishing times in a bad economy

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

The new model of Rockport shoes was just what I was looking for: smart-looking and well-constructed. Just before purchasing them, I cleaned out my closet and found two pairs of shoes in fairly good shape except for the heels. Suddenly I found myself confronted with a decision: Should I buy the latest model of Rockports or put new heels on the shoes I have?



Hemrick

This is one small example of what many Americans are doing -- choosing what to keep or let go, what to replace or repair.

We cannot go without the necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing, medicine, heat and lighting. Although these can also provide us with comforts, they are

nonetheless life-giving.

The tanking of the stock market, loss of homes and jobs have created a new era in which the necessities of life must be prioritized over life's comforts, and even some of these necessities are no longer affordable for a growing number of Americans. How to respond to this is the question of the moment.

Hopefully, stimulus packages, new programs and streamlining will come to the rescue. How long it will take is another question, and what to do in the meantime is even more the question.

As difficult as the times are, we have a wonderful oppor-

(Please See **HEMRICK/18**)

Nation/World

Women, men experience sin differently, papal theologian says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Of the seven deadly sins, men are more prone to be tempted by lust, while women more often succumb to the sin of pride, the papal theologian said.

In comments on a new book dedicated to St. Thomas Aquinas' teachings on the seven capital vices, Dominican Father Wojciech Giertych said men and women experience sin differently. His commentary was published Feb. 16 by the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano.

Father Giertych, who is theologian of the papal household, said he agreed with the findings of St. Thomas Aquinas -- a 13th-century Dominican theologian and philosopher -- that men were more inclined than women to pursue pleasure.

"Often the most difficult (sin) men face is lust, and then

comes gluttony, sloth, wrath, pride, envy, and greed," wrote Father Giertych.

"For women, the most dangerous is pride, followed by envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and lastly, sloth," he said.

The priest said personal experience seemed to confirm these theories.

"In convents, women religious are often envious of each other over little things, but when the church bell rings, everyone goes to the chapel to sing vespers," he said.

"Monks, however, aren't often interested in each other and, therefore, aren't jealous, but when the church bell rings, few take part in common prayer," he said.

He said St. Thomas Aquinas taught that pride is humanity's greatest enemy because it leads a person to believe he or she is self-sufficient and "hinders a person from having a relationship with God."

Lust and "the sins against chastity are less dangerous

because they are accompanied by a strong sense of humiliation and, as such, can be an occasion to return to God," said Father Giertych.

However, lust and unchaste behavior "are dangerous from the point of view of their social consequences" or the complications they cause in one's personal life, he said.

While some individuals and cultures may be more tempted to pursue power and wealth over pleasure, "human nature is always the same," he said.

Everyone must make a personal examination of conscience in order to discover which vices are his or her greatest obstacles to receiving God's grace, he said.

Because God is a merciful and loving father, people should not be afraid of his judgment, the papal theologian said. "His heart joyfully awaits the encounter" with someone who has sinned, he said.



Bishop David Zurek:

"When I think of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, I think of a church sharing, reaching out to serve those who are in need."

Pittsburgh bishop urges Catholics to face economic crisis together in Christ

PITTSBURGH (CNS) -- Bishop David A. Zubik of Pittsburgh has called on the Catholic community to face the nation's current economic crisis together in Christ.

"When I think of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, I think of a church sharing, reaching out to serve those who are in need," the bishop said in the second pastoral letter he has issued as head of the diocese.

The letter is titled "The Church Sharing!" Dated for Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25, it was released Feb. 18.

Bishop Zubik recalled the generous compassion and faithfulness of the peo-

ple of Pittsburgh during the Great Depression and reminded Catholics of a local tragedy that united citizens in 1931. A fire that broke out in a home for the needy elderly operated by the Little Sisters of the Poor. The death toll was 49, and another 175 were injured.

All but eight bodies of those who died were claimed by their relatives. Pittsburgh Bishop Hugh Boyle presided at a funeral Mass for the eight at St. Paul Cathedral, which drew one of the "largest crowds ever to gather at the cathedral," Bishop Zubik said.

"The people of the city filled every

pew. They spilled out onto the sidewalks and streets," he said. There were Catholics and Protestants, Christians and non-Christians, believers and nonbelievers, he said.

"It was if the city itself was coming to terms with its grief over the fire and, perhaps even more so, to come to terms with the Depression itself," Bishop Zubik said.

After the funeral, he said, Bishop Boyle made a radio appeal for \$300,000 to help the Little Sisters of the Poor rebuild the home. In three months, "people contributed that, and more," he added.

Papal trip to Holy Land takes shape

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI's planned trip to the Holy Land was slowly taking shape in February, and the tentative schedule included a number of important pastoral and interreligious events.

The proposed itinerary would take the pope to Jordan May 8-11, for a visit to the new King Hussein Mosque in Amman, meetings with Jordanian officials, a Mass for Catholics in a soccer stadium, a stop at Jesus' baptism site at the Jordan River and a pilgrimage to Mount Nebo, where Moses once looked out at the Promised Land.

The pope would travel from Jordan to Israel May 11 and visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem the same day. Over the next three and a half days, he would visit the Western Wall, sacred to Jews; meet with Jewish and Muslim leaders; hold talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders; visit a Palestinian refugee camp; and celebrate Mass in Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem.

Before returning to Rome May 15, the tentative schedule calls for the pope to hold a brief ecumenical encounter and visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. There was talk of a papal stop in war-devastated Gaza, but Vatican sources said there were no firm plans for such an event; instead, a delegation of Gaza residents was expected to attend one of the papal Masses.

The Vatican's chief papal trip planner was expected to meet with local organizers in late February to work out a definitive schedule for the visit.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Antonio Franco, the Vatican nuncio to Israel and Palestinian territories, said the importance of the papal visit to the small Catholic community in the Holy Land should not be overlooked.

"The visit of the pope is that of the spiritual head of the Catholic community, and so he is coming to visit his children who are here, in Jordan and the Holy Land," Archbishop Franco said.

Getting Lent off to a good start this year

By **Effie Caldarola**
Catholic News Service

I received an e-mail message forwarded from someone like me who never, ever forwards those annoying "send this to nine other people or your toenails will fall out" messages.

OK, maybe those emails don't say you'll forfeit your toenails, but some of them are pretty darn threatening or stupid.

But my friend didn't ask me to forward the message, she just liked it so much she had to pass it on.

I loved it too. It had a picture of a smiling Jesus embracing a young woman in jeans, and it said, "Be the kind of woman that when your feet hit the ground each morning the devil says, 'Oh crap, she's up!'"

Forgive the language, but boy, did I need that encouragement to arise this season. Am I the only one who thinks it's been an exceptionally long, cold winter?

Now I know there are some readers who may not live in the Northern Hemisphere, so bear with me. Even U.S. citizens down South have had to contend with severe ice storms this year.

And I live in Alaska, where the cold contends with the darkness to see which can drive us crazy first. At the height of winter in Anchorage, we get five hours of sunlight — and we live in the state's sunnier region. Travel up to Barrow and you won't see the sun at all.

But that five hours is a little deceptive. Our sun rises tepidly in the southeast, and it spends its few visible hours ambling along the southern horizon before sinking beneath the waters of Turnagain Arm in the southwest.

When I went to Phoenix this winter I was amazed to see the sun high up in the sky. I'd forgotten that's where it's supposed to be.

So this winter I've found myself yearning to turn the alarm clock off, scrunch down under my covers and go back to sleep. Unfortunately, my job has flexible part-time hours, so I confess I've given in to that impulse more than once.

Now, therapists will tell you that wanting to sleep all the time is a sign of depression, but I don't think I'm depressed. Once I do "hit the

(Please See **CALDAROLA/19**)



Pope says fasting in Lent opens hearts to God, hands to the poor

By **Cindy Wooden**
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Fasting from food and detaching oneself from material goods during Lent help believers open their hearts to God and open their hands to the poor, Pope Benedict XVI said.

The Lenten fast helps Christians "mortify our egoism and open our hearts to love of God and neighbor," said the pope in his message for Lent 2009.

The papal message for Lent, which began Feb. 25 for Latin-rite Catholics, was released Feb. 3 at the Vatican.

Cardinal Paul Cordes, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, the Vatican's office for promoting and coordinating charity, told reporters that Christian fasting brings together love for God and love for neighbor.

"The pope reminds us of our obligation to open our hearts and our hands to those in need," he said at the Vatican presentation of the message.

The Vatican invited Josette Sheeran, executive director of the U.N.'s World Food Program, to help present the papal message.

"Serving the hungry is a moral call that unites people of all faiths," said Sheeran, whose organization relies heavily on Catholic charities and other faith-based organizations to distribute food aid.

"At this time of worldwide economic challenges, let us not forget that the food and financial crises hit the world's most vulnerable the hardest,"

she said. "Since 2007, 115 million were added to the ranks of the hungry to create a total of nearly 1 billion people without adequate food."

Sheeran said that at a time when the U.S. and other governments are announcing multitrillion-dollar packages to bailout banks, car companies and other industries, the World Food Program is asking that 0.7 percent of all stimulus plans be dedicated to hunger relief.

"Financial rescue packages must serve not only Wall Street and Main Street, but also the places with no streets," she said.

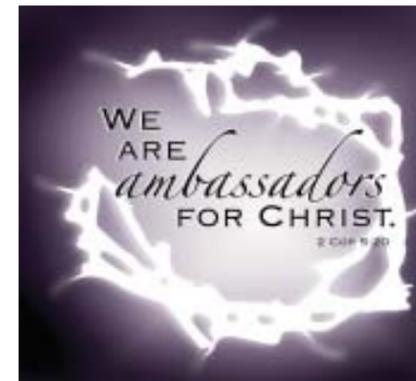
Cardinal Cordes and Sheeran agreed that the financial bailout plans are necessary not just for helping the world's richest nations, but also for preventing a worsening situation in poor countries dependent on exports, on development aid and on the money their citizens working abroad send home to support their families.

"If the financial system fails completely, it will hurt the poor first," Cardinal Cordes said.

Sheeran said the 2007-2008 food crisis — when the price of basic staples soared — combined with more recent job losses because of the financial crisis involved "two separate problems, but the result is the same: malnutrition and death."

In his message, Pope Benedict said the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are meant to help Christians focus on God and pre

(Please See **FAST/19**)



Lent 2009 Calendar

March 1 -- First Sunday of Lent

March 25 -- The Annunciation of the Lord

April 5 -- Palm Sunday

April 9 -- Holy Thursday

April 10 -- Good Friday

April 11 -- Holy Saturday

April 12 -- **Easter Sunday**

April 19 -- Divine Mercy Sunday

May 21 -- Ascension of the Lord

May 31 -- Pentecost Sunday

Popular Catholic Web site content put out in book, sent to pastors

By **Chaz Muth**
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — In the 10 years since Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., began offering ministry guidance and aids on its Web site, the technology has exploded and so has the audience of the Catholic Web site, which received more than 21 million hits in the past year.

The site has become so popular that a Catholic publishing house in Chicago has published some of the content in book form and sent a complimentary copy to every Catholic parish in the U.S.

"I know that it may sound a little odd that a book would come out of stuff from a Web site, and not the other way around," said Jesuit Father Andy Alexander,

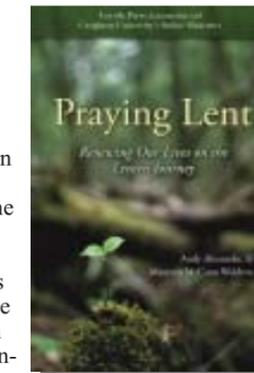
one of the founders of the Web site that inspired the book. "But we're hoping to expand our audience, and this book will help, especially if parishes begin using it."

The book, "Praying Lent: Renewing Our Lives on the Lenten Journey," is a guide for Catholics about how to celebrate an often misunderstood season.

Father Alexander and Maureen Waldron — staff members of the Jesuit-run university's Collaborative Ministry Office — set up the Creighton University Web site in 1998 to provide

daily reflections for the faculty and staff to help them understand the school's mission.

During Lent that year the daily reflections focused on the 40 days leading up to Easter and provided



Fr. Andy Alexander and Maureen McCann Waldron.

information about what that period means to Catholics and what the church expects from them.

"At the end of Lent of 1998, when we first went online with daily reflections, a woman wrote to us and said she was visiting Hong Kong and heard about our site from a priest from Baltimore and told us how much our post

(Please See **CREIGHTON/19**)

Foley: The deeper one's faith, the greater one's generosity

By **Catholic News Service**

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. — Noting that churchgoers' generosity to charity has declined in recent decades, U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley told a Catholic donors group that "generosity is related to faith; the greater and deeper our faith, the greater will be our generosity."

In an address Jan. 29 to a meeting of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, or FADICA, Cardinal Foley, grandmaster of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, recalled his childhood and young adult years when even children commonly tithed a percentage of their allowance or other earnings to their churches and other charities.

An advance copy of the text of his speech was released by his Vatican office.

"What has happened in the years since the 1950s," when people like his parents "gave easily," he asked.

He recalled his mother and father donating "at least 10 percent and as much as 20 percent of their income to the church, depriving themselves of new coats or a new car because they knew that the Little

Sisters of the Poor or the Dominican sisters who cared for those dying of cancer needed the help much more than either of them needed a new coat."

A survey done last spring of Christians about their donations found that 46 percent had reduced their contributions to charity because of the economy. The worst plunges of the stock market and the related job loss and corporate cuts of 2008 occurred in the last four months.

The poll by Wilson Research Strategies for Dunham+Company noted that the more committed people are to their religious practices, the less likely they were to say they had reduced their charitable giving.

The poll also found those most affected by the economic downturn at its worst point last year were those over age 55, which also is the segment of the population most supportive of non-profit organizations.

Cardinal Foley cited the book "Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money," by Christian Smith, Michael Emerson and Patricia Snell, which notes that in 2005 U.S. Catholics who regularly practice their faith had an average income of more

than \$57,000.

"They conclude that if all committed Christians, not just Catholics, could be moved to more generous giving, say to 10 percent of income, a total of more than \$133 billion — that's \$133 billion — more dollars could be raised for worthy causes each year," said Cardinal Foley, who headed the Pontifical Council for Social Communications for 23 years until 2007.

The authors noted that one in five Christians gives nothing to the church and that a small minority of generous donors contribute most of the money used by Christian charities, he said.

The book also said that despite a massive growth in per capita income the percentage donated has declined, and that wealthier U.S. Christians give little or no more money as a percentage of their income than do poorer Christians.

Cardinal Foley said the authors suggest that one reason why U.S. Christians donate relatively little to the church is that giving patterns in general in the United States are "occasional and situational, not a consistent, structured, routine practice."

Q&A Covering church statues, art with purple for Lent

By **Father John Dietzen**
Catholic News Service

Q. At the start of Lent in our parish, the statues and pictures in church are covered with a purple cloth. Other churches in our area do not do this. Is there a rule about this, or is it up to each parish? (New York)

A. I've never heard of statues being covered during the whole of Lent. Before 1970, crosses and other images in Catholic churches were traditionally covered with purple veils during the final two weeks of Lent, during what was then called Passiontide.

When the revised missal was published in 1970, however, it included a different regulation, which is found at the end of the Mass for Saturday of the fourth week of Lent.

"The practice of covering crosses and images in the church may be observed, if the episcopal conference decides." In that case, beginning on the second Sunday before Easter, "The crosses are to be covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord's passion on Good Friday. Images are to remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil."

These rubrics were repeated by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1988.

As of now, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has not voted to continue the rule of covering images. Thus the practice has not been permitted in this country for 38 years. Individual parishes have no authority to reintroduce the practice on their own.

Q. My wife is Catholic and I was raised Protestant. Since our marriage six years ago, we have attended Mass together, especially during Lent.

Neither she nor I, however, understand what I and others who are not Catholic should do or not do at Mass. I know we should not receive Communion, but how about bowing or genuflecting before entering the pew?

Can we go forward at Communion time with others who cross their arms for a blessing? May we stand for the Gospel, for example? And give the sign of peace? Make the sign of the cross at the sprinkling of holy water?

I'm sure this is trivial, but I know others in the parish are as confused as I am. (Ohio)

(Please See **Q&A/19**)

HOW TO GET 'PRO' ACTIVE



Members of the Sisters of Life cheer at the beginning of a pro-life youth Mass at the Verizon Center in Washington Jan. 22. Young people from across the nation packed the arena for the events held in advance of the annual March for Life. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz) (Jan. 23, 2009)

Speakers suggest ways to join pro-life, social justice efforts

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON - At a Feb. 25 workshop during the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington, speakers asked for a show of hands from those who worked in pro-life ministries for their diocese or parish. A majority of workshop participants raised their hands.

Next came a request for a show of hands of how many worked in social justice ministries for their parish or diocese. Again, a majority of participants raised their hands.

The group was asked a third question: How many were responsible for both pro-life and social justice ministries? Another majority of hands, nearly as many who responded the first two times, went up.

It seemed, then, that most of those at the workshop, "Promoting Human Life and Dignity: Working Together for Families at Risk," were already integrating their pro-life and social justice efforts.

But they recognized shortcomings in their work and ministry that they wanted the U.S. bishops to address.

John Carr, executive director of the bishops' Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, established the linkages at the workshop's start. "Without life, we can't have dignity," he said. "Without dignity, our life isn't truly human."

Deirdre A. McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications for the bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, detailed her efforts as a young volunteer work-

ing at a pro-life pregnancy center in South Bend, Ind.

Noting the need to support a pregnant woman throughout her pregnancy, McQuade said, "You just can't say, 'Go to town, girl, you can choose life now.'" What they need help with, she said, ranges from big things, like getting a high school diploma, to seemingly little things, like transportation to prenatal appointments.

While at the center, "my appreciation for people who were working on all these issues skyrocketed," McQuade said.

She listed the "four pillars" of the bishops' pastoral plan for pro-life activities: public information and education, public policy, pastoral care and prayer. "If building a culture of life is weak in one of those four areas, it won't have the strength it needs," she said.

Participants then voiced dozens of suggestions for the bishops' Task Force on Human Life and Dignity to consider when they meet later this year.

Among them were:

- ▶ Creating diocesan advisory boards to acquire a consistent voice on life issues.
- ▶ Halting criticism of social justice ministries that are trying to do good. One example cited was criticism of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development for its past ties with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, known as ACORN. Last year CCHD cut off grant funding to ACORN, citing ACORN's financial irregularities.
- ▶ Working together instead of fighting for scarce dollars,

an effort one participant called "co-branding."

- ▶ Coordinating legislative advocacy.
- ▶ Changing diocesan personnel policies that offer little in the way of paid maternity leave and charge high sums for family members to be part of an employee's insurance coverage.

One participant called for the creation of a "Catholic Party" to challenge the Democrats and Republicans.

Saying he was "sick of talking about working together," Carr exhorted people to really work together instead.

"Hold up the consistent life ethic, but don't use it as a weapon," he added. "If you use it as a test, test yourself first."

The Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, which drew 550 participants, was co-sponsored by 18 agencies, including five agencies of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: CCHD, the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church, the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, Migration and Refugee Services, and the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.

Other co-sponsors were the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, Catholic Charities USA, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, the Catholic Health Association, Catholic Relief Services, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, JustFaith, the Ladies of Charity, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the National Council of Catholic Women, the National Pastoral Life Center, the Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

*Neighbors in peril***As drug violence rises bishops urge reconciling with God**

By David Agren
Catholic News Service

MEXICO CITY -- Catholic bishops in Chihuahua urged local residents to "reconcile with God" during the Lenten period as they confront increasing drug-related violence that has claimed nearly 400 lives so far this year in the northern Mexican state, which borders Texas and New Mexico.

A letter from the bishops followed the recent acknowledgment by federal officials that the ongoing war against drug cartels claimed nearly 6,300 lives nationwide in 2008 and more than 1,000 lives nationwide this year.

"It's not only the government or the soldiers or prisons that can provide a solution to what happens. All of us, changing from inside, can build a new world. Only new hearts will make a new society. And only God can, if we allow Him, change our hearts," the six bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Chihuahua said in a March 1 message published in local newspapers.

"We shout with the hearts of pastors: Repent and change your life. God is willing to forgive, but this forgiveness entails being willing to go back to repair the damages and withdraw from this activity of death," they said.

The letter was signed by Archbishop Jose Fernandez Arteaga of Chihuahua, Bishop Renato Ascencio Leon of Ciudad Juarez, Bishop Jose Corral Arredondo of Parral, Bishop Gerardo



FEDERAL POLICE
PATROL BORDER
CITY OF CIUDAD
JUAREZ

Federal police patrol the border city of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, March 2. Nearly 5,000 Mexican soldiers and police have been deployed to Ciudad Juarez to restore law and order to the country's most violent city. (CNS photo/Tomas Bravo, Reuters)

Rojas Lopez of Nuevo Casas Grandes, Bishop Juan Lopez Soto of Cuauhtemoc-Madera and Bishop Rafael Sandoval Sandoval of Tarahumara.

The violence has been especially fierce in Chihuahua, which security analysts say is a key corridor for cartels wanting to smuggle drugs into the United States and import weapons for turf wars and assassinations.

Things became so dire in southern Chihuahua that Bishop Corral declared in November that those killed in drug-related activities would be denied funeral rites.

In Ciudad Juarez, meanwhile, 250 people were killed in drug crackdowns in February,

and the federal government ordered another 5,000 police officers and soldiers into Chihuahua and Ciudad Juarez, which borders El Paso, Texas.

In Ciudad Juarez, Bishop Ascencio used a pre-Lenten message to urge residents to depend more on God during the crisis.

"The evil is so large that, on its own, it makes us think that we need the strength that comes from God for overcoming the evil that there is in our own hearts and the evil that is around us," the bishop said in a message published Feb. 21 in *Presencia*, a diocesan publication.

CATOIR: Parents often share similar sorrows

(From 3)

other damaging distractions. Compared to having a juvenile delinquent on their hands, this disappointment pales in comparison.

I am proud of those parents who tried so hard to do their best for their children. And yes, I am also proud of the Catholic school system for teaching the words of Jesus, "Seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides" (Mt 6:33).

Recently I saw the movie "A River Runs Through It" for the second time. Brad Pitt plays

the son of a Protestant minister who instructed him well in the faith. But the boy has a flare for dangerous risk-taking, calling the other boys "chicken" if they don't follow him in one reckless prank after another. As he gets older, he begins defying the wisdom of his father by drinking and gambling. Then the dreaded day comes when his parents receive news that their beloved son was beaten to death in a local bar.

At the funeral, his father holds back tears as he tries to preach the eulogy. He manages to make the point that sometimes parents are unable to help those who are dearest to them. Shaking his head sadly, he adds, "It seems the

ones who need the most help refuse that help when it is offered to them."

How many good parents and grandparents have experienced this same kind of sorrow?

My heart goes out to all of you, especially those of you who have children who do not practice their faith. You have given so much for your children. Oftentimes you were rewarded with ingratitude and grief. But do not be disheartened. God is merciful!

Forgive yourself for not being a perfect human being. You did your best. Remember, the Lord loves you and your children. Trust him and all will be well.

ARE YOU QUALIFIED?

Are you...

- ▶ Unhappy with your current job (underpaid, overworked, blocked from promotion)?
- ▶ Currently looking for a new career (sending out resumes, asking about opportunities, unemployed)?
- ▶ Facing an uncertain future (downsizing, involved in a family business, in an appointed position)?
- ▶ Being paid less than your worth (maxed out in pay, subject to pay limits, can't go any higher)?
- ▶ A member of the Knights of Columbus (or eligible to join)?
- ▶ Personable and outgoing?
- ▶ Anxious to earn an income equal to your worth?
- ▶ Seeking independence and control of your own destiny?

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Family/Humor

If the pope blogs, what can be next, a papal Twitter?

By Dan Morris
Catholic News Service

I think I have just become overcome by Technonewness-itis. It's a new disease. I know it is new because I just made it up. However, I have been coming down with it for several years. An early onset happened while I was reading a fax machine manual.

I could actually feel a Technonewness-itis fever coming on a few minutes ago. My ears are still ringing a little. Or maybe that is my cell phone. Or my grandson's iPod.

Hey, ringing ears are ringing ears. This latest inception can be laid directly at the doorstep of the vice president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Tucson's very own Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas.

Yep. You will not believe this. Bishop Kicanas has actually advocated that Pope Benedict XVI consider doing a blog. For the seven of you out there who are not up to speed on blogs, bless you and keep you. I only know that they



Morris

(blogs, not you seven compatriots) seem to be something that a whole lot of people do on the Internet, and it basically sounds like an individual posting (you seven, look it up) words, images and/or sounds of their choosing and inviting other people to enjoy them. Or not.

Some blogs let the bloggerreaderperson (aka Internet addict) interact, interface, interfere and/or intergalacticize with the bloggerproprietor. Some don't.

Candidly, I don't know how Pope Benedict XVI could handle all the feedback he would be receiving from about, oh, a billion people or so -- and in roughly more languages than you could shake a mouse at.

That's maybe why he doesn't exactly spread around his e-mail address. OK, that is a lie. He has already done that. It's benedictxvi@vatican.va. Or, if you'd like it in Italian: benedettoxvi@vatican.va.

I cannot wrap my head around the concept of how much spam he must receive.

But a blog?

Blogs are a kind of back door. So pretend the church is a mongo (aka really, really big) mansion sort of like the Hearst Castle only with cheaper tickets. Most people stand

in the front yard (aka "the grounds") and look at it. As it should be.

But if it wanted to offer a blog, that would be around back where the groceries are delivered and where the real people work and get inside.

A papal blog would let just about anyone (even my seven compatriots and I) know what the pope was thinking or wanted us to think he was thinking or wanted us to know or learn or think about -- without writing an encyclical, gathering a zillion people at St. Peter's Square or filling up Yankee Stadium like he did in April.

I know what you are thinking. Bishop Kicanas might be onto something. I do have to admit that reading the bishop's blog during the world Synod of Bishops on the Bible made it feel like you really did understand what was going on. It was like being there and a lot more "real" than Associated Press stories.

It does raise fears, though, of an epidemic of Technonewness-itis.

I wonder if "House" could do an episode on it.

Bill & Monica Dodds

Ten things to do before Easter Sunday

By Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

It can be hard when Lent seems like something added to your to-do list (or a lot of somethings!). If you're a parent, your everyday list is long.

So what do you bump or put on hold or admit to yourself you're never going to accomplish until the kids grow up and move away?

On the other hand, if you don't bump, put or admit, then Lent can be like any other time of the year, and that would be a shame. Not "shame on you," but a shame your family -- and you -- missed this opportunity.

It's good for your children to know, it's good for their parents to remember, that sacrificing is possible. More than a few families, no doubt including some in your parish, are already making a number of sacrifice this Lent and beyond because of current economic conditions. They're cutting way back and doing without because they have no other choice.

Lent is about choice. About many choic-

es. About, time and again, deciding to do something more or not to do something you customarily like to do.

And Lent is about focusing. It's looking at what really matters and trimming away what doesn't.

If you'd like some ideas of what you can do from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, here are some suggestions:

1. Donate to the local food bank. These wonderful organizations have been under a lot of stress lately as they try to help more and more families. Can't get over there with a bag of groceries? Send a check. Or go online. Many have ways to donate that way too.

2. As a family, read one complete Gospel. Yes, the first three (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are similar -- synoptic -- but each of them and John is unique.

3. Quit smoking. Yikes, that's a hard one, isn't it? A true sacrifice. Not a smoker? Pray for those who are quitting. Pray for those who are suffering health problems related to smoking. (Looking for help? A few years ago Bill wrote "1440 Reasons to Quit Smoking: One for Every Minute of the Day.")

4. Get to at least one weekday Mass every week.

5. Learn to weave palms. A number of

Web sites offer directions, including www.italiansrus.com/palms/palmpatterns.htm.

6. Post a prayer request list on the refrigerator. It's an easy way to remind yourself that "I'll pray for you" is a promise that matters. It's an easy way to teach your children how to become people who make those promises.

7. Learn a new recipe for fish. All those meatless Fridays offer the family a chance to try something new. A vegetarian menu could be a good choice. In either case, in keeping with the spirit of Lent, keep it simple.

8. Ask forgiveness from someone you've hurt. Forgive someone who has hurt you. What a difference either can make.

9. Thank God for the gifts of faith, hope and love.

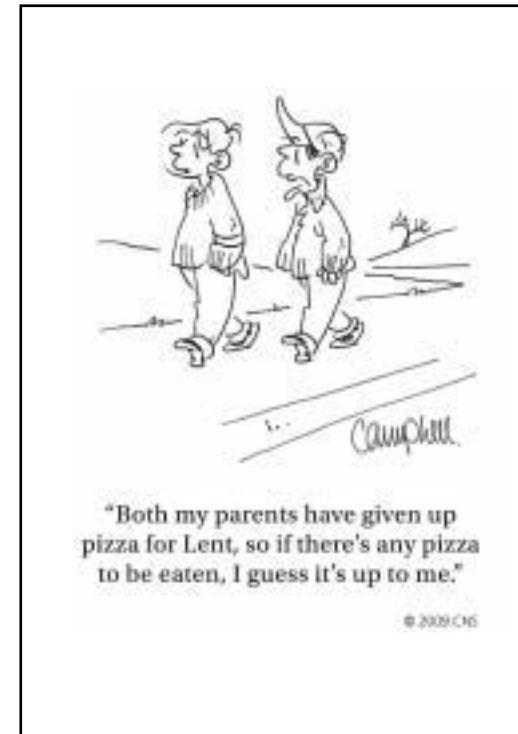
10. Hug your children and kiss your spouse!

On the Web: Find Your Local Food Bank Feeding America (formerly known as America's Second Harvest) has made it easy to find your local food bank. Just type in your ZIP code at www.feedingamerica.org. Another way is to call your parish or local St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Next: Elder Care: Preventing Slips and Falls



Monica and Bill Dodds



ANSWERS

1. Abram,
2. Sarai,
3. Ishmael,
4. Sodom,
5. Isaac,
6. Hagar.



BIBLE ACCENT

Abraham is one of the most important men in our religious heritage. God promised him that he would become "the father of a host of nations." Abraham always trusted God, even when he did not understand why God asked him to do certain things. Abraham obeyed God, even when he thought he would have to kill his own son.

The Book of Hebrews tells us, "By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac."

The first verse of the Gospel of Matthew makes another important statement about Abraham when it says, "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The earthly lineage of Jesus can be traced back all the way to Abraham.

The Apostle Paul tells us that God rewarded Abraham for his faithfulness: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

KIDS' CLUB

Share your thoughts on this week's Bible story with family and friends by writing an essay in response to this question:

What might have happened if Abraham refused to obey God?

PUZZLE

Using the Book of Genesis as a guide, circle the words that answer the following questions. Chapter numbers are provided as hints:

1. What was Abraham's name before God changed it? (12) Hammel, Abram
2. Who was Abraham's wife? (12) Sarai, Esther
3. What was the name of Abraham's first son? (16) Ishmael, Lot
4. What was one of the cities God destroyed? (19) Sodom, Babylon
5. What was the name of Sarai's son? (21) Armand, Isaac
6. Who was Ishmael's mother? (25) Hannah, Hagar

JUST 4 KIDS

God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son

Abraham and his wife, Sarai, had not had any children until they were very old. When Sarai finally presented Abraham with her son by a miracle from God, they called the boy Isaac. Then one day, God called Abraham by name.

"Ready!" Abraham answered.

"Take your son Isaac," God told him, "your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you."

Abraham was heartbroken by what God had asked him to do, but he obeyed. Before the sun had barely risen into the sky the next morning, Abraham called two of his servants and he loaded his donkey. And he took Isaac with him.

After traveling for three days, Abraham saw the place where God had told him to go. He stopped and told his servants, "Both of you stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over yonder. We will worship and then come back to you."

Abraham took the wood the donkey had carried that was for the fire to burn the offering and gave it to Isaac to carry. Abraham carried a knife and a torch to light the fire.

Along the way, Isaac asked, "Father!"

"Yes, son," Abraham replied.

"Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the holocaust?"

Very softly Abraham said, "Son, God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust." Then he continued walking on with Isaac in silence.

When they arrived at their destination Abraham built an altar and piled the wood for the fire. Then he tied up Isaac and put him on top of the wood and raised his knife over his head.

Suddenly a messenger from God appeared and called out, "Abraham, Abraham!"

"Yes, Lord."

"Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son."

Abraham breathed a sigh of relief and lowered his knife. Immediately he saw a ram that had gotten its horns caught in a tangle of bushes. Abraham set his son free and used the ram for the holocaust. Then he named the place Yahweh-yireh, which means, "On the mountain the Lord will see."

Is Facebook a friend or foe to real communities?

By **Therese J. Borchard**
Catholic News Service

Let me utter my full disclosure upfront: I spend way too much time on the social networking site Facebook, and there is a very real possibility that I'm addicted to it. In fact, I'm developing my own 12-step program to manage this behavior in case my friends and family decide to do an intervention on me. You know, when they simultaneously confront me on how my addiction is affecting them.

Recently Time magazine's Lisa Selin Davis asked the question I've been posing to myself ever since the day I set up my profile on the site: Does Facebook replace face time or enhance it?

I have been pondering that question during the six weeks since I "friended" my first person, back before I got click-happy on a mission to have at least 500 friends because that's how many the



Borchard

successful New York Times journalists had.

Facebook may have started as an online gathering place for college and high school kids, but if you throw out the term at a dinner party like I did the other day you'll immediately learn that half of your friends and their friends have profiles on the site and have already joined a handful of groups and "causes."

No one is too old for this online community. In fact, lately most of my friend requests have come from the parents of friends of mine.

But does my time at the computer contribute to what Lisa Davis calls "Facebook recluse syndrome" -- a hermit type of existence?

I don't think so. I agree with her subtle supposition at the end of her Time piece that my Facebook time enhances my relationships. That is, if I can practice good enough personal boundaries that I'm not "poking" (a Facebook term) friends and writing all day to former classmates I haven't connected with since my Girl Scout days so much that I'm ducking out of helping David with his homework.

For Davis and others mentioned in the article, Facebook has

contributed to friendships, not stolen from them.

"The constant stream of data is a digital form of closeness," writes the Time magazine author. It's a way of catching up on the details of a person's life so that when you do get together in person, you don't have to go through all the introductory stuff. You can get to the guts right away.

For example, if I run into a Facebook friend when I pick up David from school, I can ask her about the tennis tournament she described as part of her "status" ("What are you doing right now?"), instead of starting at "What are you up to?" And at a happy hour last week with some mom friends, one of them, a Facebook friend, said, "So you're trying to write a book in an hour. ...Good luck with that!"

What would we have talked about in a non-Facebook world? Possibly the same thing, but this social networking site facilitated the conversation in a way that I suspect might contribute to our community-building efforts today, that might actually help us in the pursuit of intimacy.



Wall's Knights of Columbus Council brought down enough trees for 20 loads of cut brush at the Christ The King Retreat Center in February.

KC: 15 men, 20 loads of cut brush, five hours

(From 1)

San Angelo, did much of the supervision, determining which trees needed to be removed and which limbs needed to be trimmed. Work began at 8 a.m. and concluded (miraculously) at 1:30 p.m. Daryl Schniers donated his John Deere 310E front-end loader and backhoe. Paul Jost was its masterful driver. The dead trees were so brittle that Paul would push them over with the tractor, snapping them at the base. One tree was filled with a hive of bees that were inhibited from flying because of the cold weather. Wasp and hornet spray killed them and no one was stung. Another tree was home to yellow

jackets and no one was stung. After being awakened rudely from its morning nap, a raccoon, resting peacefully in the hollow end at the top of a tree, scampered away to the safety of the river. Throughout the day, Paul would scoot from tree to tree, raising the "bucket" with a Knight and his chainsaw. Tree limbs fell continuously to the ground and the Knights would carry them to an awaiting trailer.

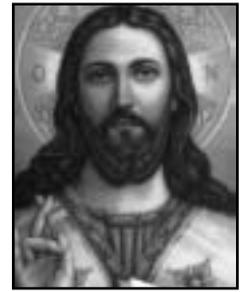
When the dust cleared, seven trailer loads of timber were taken from the property and dumped into a nearby pit...free of charge. This work would have cost thousands of dollars had a private company been contracted. All the Knights were given for their hard work and generosity

was a simple meal of hamburger and fries.

Bishop Pfeifer came and thanked the Knights for their kindness and generosity. He was impressed by how much was accomplished by these few men in only five hours. He told them that they improved the Retreat Center grounds in a "magnificent way."

Many more trees and tall grass located away from the river walkway need to be trimmed. If there is another Council of the Knights of Columbus that would like to donate their time and talent to beautify our Concho River location, please contact Mr. Tom Burke, Director of Christ the King Retreat Center at (325) 651-7500.

Our Holy Father's Monthly Intentions 2009



March

General: That the role of women may be more appreciated and used to good advantage in every country in the world.

Mission: That in the light of the letter addressed to them by Pope Benedict XVI, the Bishops, priests, consecrated persons, and lay faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China may commit themselves to being the sign and instrument of unity, communion and peace.

April

General: That the Lord may bless the farmers with an abundant harvest and sensitize the richer populations to the drama of hunger in the world

Mission: That the Christians who work in areas where the conditions of the poor, the weak and the women and children are most tragic, may be signs of hope, thanks to their courageous testimony to the Gospel of solidarity and love.

Daily Offering Prayer

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

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

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INDULGENCES: By its nature, all sin causes suffering

(From 4)

comes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the teaching of recent Popes.

What are indulgences?

An indulgence does not confer grace. An indulgence is not a remission of the guilt due to sin. The guilt due to sin is ordinarily taken away by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance (confession), in which we receive forgiveness for sins through Jesus Christ. Although guilt is taken away, and with it the eternal penalty that is due to sin—namely, damnation, the eternal loss of the presence of God—there remain consequences for sins that those who have committed them must bear. There is what is traditionally called the temporal punishment for sin.

By its very nature, every sin inevitably causes suffering for the one who has committed it. Every sinful act creates a disorder within the soul of the human person; it distorts our desires and affections, leaving us with “an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory.” (57)

Furthermore, sin disrupts one’s relationships with God, with the Church, with other people, and with the world as a whole. The communion intended by God is damaged or lost. Those who have received forgiveness for their sins still have an obligation to undergo a difficult and painful process (the temporal penalty for sin) to be purified of the consequences of their sins and to restore the disrupted relationships. “While patiently bearing sufferings and trials of all kinds and, when the day

comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace.” (58) The necessary and painful process that brings restoration and purification can take place either in this life or in Purgatory, as whatever part of the process remains unfinished at death must be completed in Purgatory. (59)

Through an indulgence, God grants the prayer of the Church that the temporal penalty for sin due to someone be reduced (or possibly eliminated). By God’s grace, participation in a prayer or action that has an indulgence attached to it brings about the necessary restoration and reparation without the suffering that would normally accompany it. The granting of an indulgence by the Church is “the expression of the Church’s full confi-

dence of being heard by the Father when—in view of Christ’s merits and, by his gift, those of Our Lady and the saints—she asks him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment by fostering its medicinal aspect through other channels of grace.” (60) Excerpts from Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions and Answers Copyright © 2003, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright holder.

OBISPO

(Para 3)

Dios pueda tocarlos con ternura, compasión y perdón.

La temporada de Cuaresma es un tiempo para ayunar por medio de dejar el egoísmo. Este es un tiempo de tomar una nueva actitud de amor y compasión por medio de dejar el chisme, dejar la actitud crítica, dejar el sarcasmo, y dejar el deseo de siempre estar correcto.

La jornada de la Cuaresma también es un tiempo para dedicarnos más a la oración, primeramente por medio de ser fieles en tomar parte en la celebración de la Eucaristía, la celebración del Sacramento de Reconciliación, compartiendo en la Adoración Eucarística, y por medio de pasar más tiempo con nuestra familia en oración.

La Cuaresma también es una ocasión para hacer más obras de caridad, especialmente

por medio de compartir nuestros dones con nuestros hermanos y hermanas que tienen menos que nosotros. El lugar de comenzar es con nuestras propias familias y amigos, y luego con la comunidad en general. En todas nuestras comunidades, hay mucha, mucha gente que carece de las necesidades básicas de la vida, quien necesita nuestra caridad y compasión. ¿Quiénes son estas personas? Búsquenlas.

El rajar de nuestros corazones como nos recomienda el Profeta Joel puede ser deletreado en una manera práctica en el siguiente Plan de dar en la Cuaresma:

► **Renunciar**—las actitudes, las palabras, las maneras de actuar que no están de acuerdo con el Evangelio de Cristo. Para ayudarnos a crecer en la gracia de Dios, es bueno de renunciar ciertas cosas materiales, comidas y bebidas, pero sobretodo, debemos de renunciar actitudes y practicas que impi-

den la gracia de Dios entrar en nuestros corazones.

► **Dar a otros**—Desgarramos nuestros corazones por medio de dar y compartir nuestros bienes con esos que tienen menos que nosotros. En dar a otros cosas materiales, nosotros, a su vez, crecemos y recibimos nuevas bendiciones espirituales en nuestros corazones. Damos a otros, compartimos con otros, y a su vez somos enriquecidos con la gracia de Dios.

► **Dar a Dios**—Primeramente, necesitamos dar nuestro tiempo a nuestro Dios y dar gracias a Cristo por todo lo que ha hecho para traernos el amor de Dios y la salvación. Necesitamos darle el primer lugar a Cristo en nuestra vida por medio de organizar nuestras prioridades, para ver si están de acuerdo con las normas de Dios. Necesitamos dar más tiempo a leer la Biblia, oración familiar, y a reconciliación.

► **Entregarnos**—Necesitamos entregarnos—desgarrar nuestros corazones—a los impulsos del Espíritu Santo. Tenemos que cedernos a la gracia de Dios. A la medida que damos a Dios, en la misma medida encontraremos nuestra paz y nuestra verdadera felicidad en esta vida, y esto nos prepara para recibir los muchos dones maravillosos que Dios quiere compartir con nosotros al prepararnos para la resurrección de Cristo Jesús.

Que su jornada de Cuaresma los dirija a una transformación y a un nuevo aprecio de todo lo que Cristo hizo por nosotros por medio de su sufrimiento y por medio de haber dado Su vida por nosotros en la cruz. La Cuaresma termina con la muerte de Cristo en la cruz y nos prepara para la gran fiesta del cristianismo, Su Resurrección—nueva vida, gozo y esperanza.

PILL: God’s love does not differ between unborn, aged

(From 4)

The proof is evident in the biological facts. From the moment of fertilization we are in the presence of a new, independent, individualized being which develops in continuous fashion. There is no moment which is less necessary than another, and each stage is strictly dependent upon the stage which precedes it and which determines it. [From the Pontifical Council for Life—“The Embryo: A sign of Contradiction”]

Church teaching affirms the significance of the dignity of the human person in the earliest stages of existence. In February 2006, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the topic of “The Human Embryo in the Pre-implantation

Phase.” He noted how sacred scripture shows God’s love for every human being even before he has been formed in his mother’s womb, and points out:

God’s love does not differentiate between the newly conceived infant still in his or her mother’s womb and the child or young person, or the adult and the elderly person. God does not distinguish between them because He sees an impression of His own image and likeness in each one.

The evidence that birth control pills sometimes act as abortifacients, and that emergency contraceptives have a similar and even stronger effect, leads us to conclude that, with the widespread use of contraception in our society, the potential number of abortions that

have taken place in this manner, albeit unknowingly, is absolutely staggering.

The FDA decision about “Plan B” does not settle moral dilemmas, but rather creates more questions than it answers. Plan B may not end a pregnancy according to some people’s novel definitions, but it always has the potential to end the fragile new life of one of our youngest brothers and sisters growing beneath his or her mother’s heart.

If we really want to do everything possible to prevent women from being hurt by the morning-after pill, we ought to prevent it from becoming available over-the-counter, so that patients unaware of its dangers, both medical and moral, are not encouraged by society to use it.

The answer to the Plan B disaster, as well as the contraceptive mentality as a whole, is the message of chastity. By making Plan B available over the counter, the FDA, Barr Pharmaceuticals, and the promoters of the drug are telling our young people that sexual self-control is not possible.

The Church commissions young people to live for the Gospel in the reception of the sacrament of confirmation. One of the great fruits of the Holy Spirit through this sacrament is chastity. Through prayer, the fulfillment of this great gift—a hope-filled message of redemption from the culture of death—is certainly possible.

PADRE TAD

(Para 6)

optando por la esterilización directa. De igual manera, cuando a un hombre le preocupa el riesgo de transmitir a sus futuros hijos un gen defectuoso y para evitarlo opta por la vasectomía, está optando también por la esterilización directa. Este tipo de esterilización es moralmente inaceptable ya que implica la decisión de mutilar, directamente y con fines anticonceptivos, un sistema sano del cuerpo que funciona normal y saludablemente. Violaciones como estas son comunes hoy en día. Se estima que en Estados Unidos unas 700,000 mujeres al año se someten a la ligadura de trompas falopianas y 600,000 hombres se practican vasectomías.

Ni la vasectomía ni la ligadura de trompas tratan ninguna enfermedad o patología existentes. Cuando una mujer se liga para quedar infértil, lo que está decidiendo es lesionar una importante facultad de su cuerpo porque ella y/o su esposo no desean practicar la abstinencia en ciertos períodos y así evitar un embarazo potencialmente peligroso. Una ligadura en estas circunstancias no sería, de hecho, por razones médicas sino por razones de conveniencia conyugal. Tenemos el deber de respetar la integridad y totalidad de nuestros cuerpos, y cortar los conductos uterinos sanos de una mujer nunca será una decisión médica moralmente defendible.

Uno de los errores clave detrás de la decisión de esterilizarse quirúrgicamente es la creencia de que tanto hombres como mujeres son incapaces de controlar o dominar sus impulsos sexuales. Al parecer muchas personas han renunciado a practicar el autocontrol en lo referente a la sexualidad. Si bien es cierto que no se puede sobrevivir sin agua o sin alimento, es falso asumir, como al parecer nuestra cultura lo asume, que no podemos sobrevivir sin gratificación sexual. El sexo no es necesario para la sobrevivencia individual ni tampoco indispensable para una vida personal saludable y plena. Tratándose de una persona soltera, de hecho, una vida sana y completa dependerá del ordenamiento de sus facultades sexuales mediante la autodisciplina de la abstinencia y del crecimiento en las virtudes. Esto también aplica en el matrimonio, donde los esposos deben esforzarse por lograr la disciplina de la continencia sexual en determinadas circunstancias, lo cual hace que la relación matrimonial madure y florezca. De hecho, algunas situaciones obligan a poner en práctica esta disciplina, por ejemplo por actividad militar, por razones de trabajo o por enfermedades crónicas o agudas.

Siempre que haya motivos legítimos para evitar un embarazo, como cuando hay riesgo serio para la vida de la madre o la del bebé, los matrimonios pueden practicar la autodisciplina y recurrir únicamente a los medios que respetan tanto el don de su sexualidad como el de su respectiva masculinidad y feminidad. Esto implica la abstinencia durante los períodos fértiles del ciclo femenino para evitar el embarazo. En las últimas décadas los métodos naturales de planificación familiar se han ido sofisticando para determinar con precisión el momento en que la mujer es fértil. Los datos que se obtienen con estos métodos ayudan a los matrimonios para que sus relaciones sexuales sean sólo en los períodos infértiles y practicar la abstinencia durante los períodos fértiles, cuando existen razones serias que lo justifiquen. Al respetar de esta forma la sexualidad conyugal y negarse a lesionar las facultades sexuales con vasectomías o ligaduras, se promueven virtudes personales muy importantes dentro del matrimonio a la vez que se respeta el diseño de nuestro cuerpo, regalo de Dios para dar vida.

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

BISHOP: Following a Lenten plan this year

(From 2)

always wanting to be right.

The Lenten journey is also a time to dedicate ourselves to more prayer, first and foremost by being faithful to taking part in the celebration of the Eucharist. Then we also need to make time for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, sharing in Eucharistic Adoration, and spending more time in prayer with our families.

Lent is also the occasion to perform more works of charity, especially by sharing our gifts with our brothers and sisters who have less than we do. The place to begin is with our own families and friends, and then with the wider community. In all of our communities, there are many, many people who lack the basic necessities of life, and who need our charity and our compassion. Who are these people? Seek them out.

The rending of our hearts as recommended by the Prophet Joel can be spelled out in a practical way the following Lenten Giving Plan:

► **Give Up** – attitudes, words, ways of acting that are not in accord with the Gospel of Christ. To help us grow in God's grace, it is good to give up certain material things, food and drinks, but most of all, we should give up attitudes and practices that block God's grace from coming into our hearts.

VOGEL

(From 3)

Bridges urged Fr. Vogel to continue his pastoral ministry among the people of St. Stephen. He began, spending half of his time helping priest friends in Brooklyn and the other half at St. Stephen's. Father's traditional and deeply conservative values as well as his primary focus on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Mother of Jesus fit the people of St. Stephen's very well. He was a strong advocate for the unborn. Father loved fishing and boating. Three years ago Father suffered a disabling stroke. This limited his ministry greatly

HEMRICK: Hard times can bring success

(From 8)

tunity to live God's life more fully. For those of us who enjoy an abundance of life, it is expedient for us to open our hearts and share our resources with those experiencing difficult times. In this way we will mirror a loving, giving Christ.

Our history is filled with success stories of Christlike neighbors pulling together to assist those in need. Examples abound of people sharing unused space with those needing a roof over their heads. Co-opts and food pantries have been created to stave off hunger. To cut costs, neighbors have helped with repairs and practical advice on how to make ends meet.

► **Give Away** – We rend our hearts by giving and sharing our goods with those who have less than we do. As we give away material things, we in turn grow and receive new spiritual blessings in our hearts. We give away, we share with others, and in turn we are enriched by God's grace.

► **Give To** – First and foremost, we need to give our time to our God and to thank Christ for all he has done to bring us God's love and salvation. We need to give Christ first place in our life by organizing our priorities, to see if they are in accord with God's standards. We need to give more time to reading the Bible, to family prayer, to reconciliation.

► **Give In** – We need to give in—rend our hearts—to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We need to yield to God's grace. The more we give in to God, the more we find our peace and our true happiness in this life, and this prepares us to receive the many wonderful gifts that our God wants to share with us as we prepare for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

May your Lenten journey lead you to transformation and to a new appreciation of all that Christ did for us by His suffering and by giving His life for us on the cross. Lent ends with the death of Christ on the cross and prepares us for the greatest feast of Christianity, His Resurrection—new life, joy and hope.

but the people of St. Stephen's considered him to be no less than a holy man bringing great blessings to the parish by simply spending, his last years in their midst.

Fr. Vogel is survived by his sister Virginia-Kathryn Doherty who resides in Fairfield, Conn. His rosary service was at St. Stephen Church, Midland, on Feb. 12. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Stephen's on Feb. 13, Bishop Michael Pfeifer officiating. There was also a memorial Mass and final interment in the Diocese of Brooklyn, NY.

May he rest in peace.

Numerous examples exist of doctors, nurses, lawyers and accountants providing pro bono services that have saved people from destitution and health care to help them maintain fitness. Heart-wrenching stories abound of people finding ways of providing an education for young men and women.

Although no one likes bad times, they can result in astonishing success stories because of the Christlike spirit behind them.

Presently we are being challenged to share our blessings with our neighbors, to do everything in our power to help them maintain a dignified life.

FAST: Going without, pope says, a way for believers to humbly submit to God

(From 10)

pare for the Easter celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death.

Focusing his message specifically on the practice of fasting, the pope said it is a way for believers to submit themselves "humbly to God, trusting in his goodness and mercy."

"Denying material food, which nourishes our body, nurtures an interior disposition to listen to Christ and be fed by his saving word," the pope wrote.

"Through fasting and prayer we allow him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God," he said.

While some people fast to cleanse their body or to lose weight, Christians fast during Lent in order "to heal all that prevents them from conformity to the will of

God," he said.

"Freely chosen detachment from the pleasure of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of nature, weakened by original sin," the pope wrote.

At the same time, he said, "fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live."

By fasting in solidarity with the poor, "freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger," the pope said.

Editor's Note: The text of the pope's message in English, Spanish and other languages is posted online at:
http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/23311.php?index=23311&lang=en

CREIGHTON: Book contains ideal content for Lenten prayer group

(From 11)

ings meant to her during her time overseas," Waldron told Catholic News Service. "That's when it occurred to us, 'We're not just a campus ministry. We're reaching out globally.'"

As they added faculty and staff to their roster of daily reflection writers, they also started hearing from more people from all corners of the planet.

"We started to realize two things," Father Alexander said. "People were very hungry for spiritual guidance, and the World Wide Web is a very powerful tool."

With little technical savvy or computer training 10 years ago, Father Alexander, now 60, and Waldron, now 55, learned the ins and outs of Web-site design and maneuvering using the trial-and-error method.

Over the years they have added online translations of spiritual exercises from St. Ignatius, established interactive retreats, posted Lenten recipes, installed audio downloads, provided Advent instructions for Catholics, given advice for dealing with grief and created a weekly guide for daily prayer, Father Alexander said.

"People kept saying they were too busy to pray," he said. "So this reviews all of the readings of the week and instructs people how to practice their faith. For lack of a better phrase, it's religion for the busy person."

However, the online ministry isn't a substitute for Mass, Father Alexander said.

"It's not replacing church," he said. "This is spirituality online. It helps people strengthen their relationship with God when they are not in church."

Since they were hearing from people from Saudi Arabia to Siberia, Father Alexander and Waldron translated some of the retreats into Spanish, Japanese and Russian.

"Loyola Press started watching our numbers, and even though they said they had never published anything that had already been available for free, the numbers were staggering," Father Alexander said. "They asked us if they could put our online retreats in books, so that people can have them in hand."

The book will be handy for people who are traveling without Internet access, or for those who just haven't embraced the new technology, said Michelle Halm, a Loyola Press spokeswoman.

"We saw how the retreat on Lent inspired so many people to sign onto their Web site," Halm said. "We thought it would be great to put that information into a book to reach even a broader audience. It's very practical and hands-on. It even has recipes and (information on) how to make the most of Lent. We wanted to get it into more hands."

Since Loyola Press would also like to see pastors all over the U.S. use this book as an

Q&A: Many Catholics have no idea how uncertain, confused non-Catholics can be

(From 11)

A. It's not at all trivial. My mail regularly brings the same questions from others like yourselves.

Most Catholics, it seems to me, have no idea how uncertain and confused those not of our faith can be about how to act at Mass and other ceremonies, even after years of being there week after week.

The short and simple answer is that people who are not Catholic are welcome, even invited, to do everything Catholics do, except, as you say, receive Communion. Participate in the prayers, sing, make the sign of the cross, bow or genuflect as you wish.

In fact, the liturgy should become a more genuine act of worship for you if you participate in this way, as long as you

feel comfortable doing so and if your actions reflect your interior attitude of prayer and devotion with the people worshipping alongside you.

It would perhaps not be a bad idea for parishes to place an occasional note in the bulletin on these matters to put you and others like you more at ease.

(A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612.

(Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address, or e-mail: jjdietzen@aol.com.)

instructional guide for members of their congregation, the company has sent every parish in the country a complimentary copy along with inexpensive order deals, she said.

"This would be ideal for a prayer group, or a special Lenten instruction group," Halm said.

Msgr. Damien Nalepa, pastor of St. Gregory the Great in Baltimore, received his copy during Advent and decided to read it sometime in January. However, the idea of a book to help guide members of his congregation through the practical aspects

of Lent intrigued him.

"I like the idea," he said. "This is the kind of tool that I think would be valuable for our parishioners. I am always looking for tools to help Catholics really understand Lent."

A second book containing information from Creighton University's online ministry site, which can be found at www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html, is planned for the near future, most likely as a guide for Advent, Halm said.

CALDAROLA: Be careful what you love

(From 10)

ground" I'm active and engaged all day, but I can see how the chilly darkness tempts me to be less productive than I should be.

The late Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe wrote a beautiful prayer which began, "Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, falling in love in a quite absolute final way."

He went on to pray that what you are in love with "will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning."

I need to think about that prayer, especially on mornings when I don't feel like getting out of bed at all. What do I have to

share? What great gifts do I bring to this day? How excited am I to share this One with whom I've fallen in love? And what wonderful gifts and surprises will the day offer me?

My friend's message almost seems like the upside-down version of that. It's amusing to think of the devil actually not wanting me to get up, because I have so much goodness to bring to the day. Imagine how I might, by my good cheer, prayer and compassion, thwart some nasty, evil plan.

My Lenten goal is to make sure I get up early and "hit the ground" with as much enthusiasm as I can muster. And I'll laugh when I imagine that old devil saying, "Oh, crap, she's up!"

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Editor's Note

Photos on this
page were
taken one
month before a
costly fire hit
the Holy Name
Cathedral in
Chicago.
Firefighters are
seen atop the
cathedral's roof
at right.



Great Cathedrals of America



Another great American city, another historic place of worship

My family and I have been blessed to visit some of the most beautiful cathedrals in America in the last year. New York's St. Patrick's and all its history and beauty, the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., in what most certainly may be the single most visually impressive Catholic Cathedral in the country, and the four cathedrals within walking distance in San Antonio, steeped in rich Hispanic heritage. Recently we had the opportunity to step inside the recently-renovated Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago, home to a huge Catholic population. With architectural similarities to St. Patrick's, Holy Name looked like a revamped and updated version of the famed St. Patrick's, and it was interesting to see the contrast in the exterior architecture of the cathedral with the Sears Tower rising in the background (above left photo). -- Jimmy Patterson



Above, a shot of the inside of Holy Name Cathedral from just inside the main entrance. Top, the outside of Holy Name with the Sears Tower just to the right of the steeple; top right, a beautiful crucifix and seasonal foliage adorned the altar area of Holy Name and at right, the ambo, where the gospel is presented.