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ANGELUS

Serving the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume XXVII, No. 5

MAY 2006



Just 4 Kids

Jesus encountered much persecution and ultimately death. Read about it/Pg. 13

Cardinals visit White House, Hill on immigration

Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, of Washington, speaks at a photo opportunity with Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) in the U.S. Capitol in Washington April 28.



By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Several U.S. cardinals had a busy morning in Washington April 28 urging humane and compassionate immigration legislation as the Senate prepared to debate immigration reform.

The U.S. bishops want a “comprehensive reform” that deals compassionately with the millions of undocumented aliens in the United States, Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington said in brief remarks at a photo opportunity between meetings on Capitol Hill.

(See IMMIGRATION/14)

Chancery change

Bishop Michael Pfeifer announced last month that Mike Wyse, who has served as Victims Assistance Coordinator and Personnel Director for the last two years, has been named Chancellor of the Diocese of San Angelo while Les Maiman has been appointed the diocese’s finance officer and business manager/Pg. 2

DiOrio’s return set

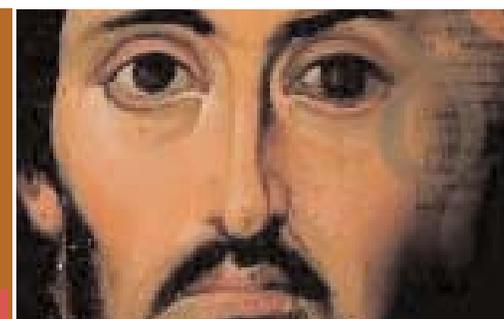
Fr. Ralph DiOrio will return to Midland’s Chaparral Center August 6 for a special healing Mass. He will also conduct teaching days in the Midland-Odessa area, August 3-4./Diocesan Briefs-Pg. 2

May is Catholic Communications month

The Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC), in partnership with our diocesan communications office, has been our voice in the media: educating, entertaining, inspiring and informing the public about Gospel Values. The CCC plays an important role in our society. It merits our continued support. The CCC’s 2006 theme, “Have you heard the good news today?” will remind us that the CCC makes it possible for all of us to access the Good News each and every day of our lives. Read more/Pg. 4

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Dissecting the ‘Da Vinci Code’

By Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop of San Angelo

Millions have read “The Da Vinci Code” authored by Dan Brown, and millions are expected to see the movie version, projected to be released in May.

Clarity needs to be brought about this book, because it adversely affects the most sacred beliefs of some billion and a half people largely by attacking the very person and mission of Jesus Christ, by rejecting his divinity. For those who say the book is just a story,

they simply do not understand that deception is part of the book’s power. Although a work of fiction, the book claims to be meticulously researched, and it goes to great lengths to convey the impression that it is based on fact.

In “The Da Vinci Code” there are many factual errors and outright untruths, large and small, about many subjects Brown addresses in art, history, and theology. The book begins with the premise that the famous artist, Leonardo da Vinci used his art to communicate secret knowledge about the Holy Grail. It then claims that early Christians did not see

(Please See FUSS/15)

RELATED
Pgs. 6-7, 16

MOVIE

“The Da Vinci Code” opens in wide release at theaters across the country on May 19

BOOK

“The Da Vinci Code” was just released in paperback and has sold 1.4 million copies in its first month

From the Bishop’s Desk

Mary said yes ... Happy Mother’s Day to all moms

“May it be done to me according to your Word.”
(Luke 1: 38)

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

When Mary, the simple peasant girl of Nazareth, was asked to give her free consent to the invitation of God for the most unique role in all of human history, Mary said “yes.” Mary was invited by God through

the Angel Gabriel to become in God’s mysterious way the mother of the God-man – Jesus Christ. She said “Yes” in a spirit of trustful surrender without knowing the future or how things would work out.

Mary’s “Yes” is one of the most profound statements in all of Sacred Scripture. We read in the Bible how some of the prophets when they were invited to

(Please See BISHOP/3)



Bishop Pfeifer

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mitting letters.



Wyse named chancellor, Maiman financial officer

Miek Wyse, who for almost three years has served the diocese as Victims Assistant Coordinator and Personnel Coordinator, has been appointed Chancellor of the diocese, according to San Angelo Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI.

Additionally, Les Maiman has been named Finance Officer/Business Manager of the diocese.

"Mike brings much experience to this new ministry of service for the priests and people of our Diocese," said Bishop Pfeifer. "I ask you to please give Mike your support and understanding as he begins this new ministry of service for

all."

Wyse will continue in his ministries of Personnel Coordinator as well as oversee the Safe Environment program, but will step down as Victim Assistance Coordinator because of the duties demanded as chancellor.

Maiman, who has served the diocese for two years as chancellor will continue to oversee the administration of the Christ the King Retreat Center in addition to remaining as Finance Officer/Business Manager for the diocese. The Christ the King Retreat Center is without a fulltime director.

"I want to take this opportunity to

thank Les for his service for all as Chancellor," Pfeifer said. "I am happy that he will remain as Finance Officer/Business Manager for our Diocese and Administrator for Christ the King Retreat Center."

Pfeifer also announced Lori Hines of Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo, as Victim Assistance Coordinator.

"The position of Victim Assistance Coordinator is required by the Charter of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, but is not a full time position," Pfeifer said. "

Hines will be employed in this position on a yearly retainer basis were a case to arise in our Diocese.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Spanish radio change in Odessa

Due to the overwhelming popularity of Fr. Gilbert Rodriguez's Spanish language Catholic radio programming, KQLM general manager Ben Velasquez announced weekend programming would now be heard on Midland-Odessa's top-rated station and additional programming will also be featured on KOZA, which is KQLM's sister station. The new schedule in Odessa is as follows:

Fr Gilbert: Saturdays, 6-10 a.m., KQLM - FM.

La Hora Catolica: Sundays, 10-11 a.m., KQLM-FM and Sundays, 11 a.m.-Noon, KOZA-AM

Criminal Justice Ministry training

Four training sessions are planned throughout the diocese over the next couple months. These sessions are being held to bring everyone up to the same level of knowledge regarding our ministry along with guidelines and policies. In the fall of 2006, we will hold commissioning ceremonies, at the parishes for which our volunteers belong. As a prerequisite for being commissioned as a Criminal Justice Ministry volunteer for the diocese, Bishop Michael Pfeifer is asking that everyone (priests, deacons, religious and lay) attend one of these trainings. The four upcoming training sessions are outlined below:

Tuesday, May 30 -- Holy Angels, San Angelo, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 6 -- Immaculate Heart, Big Spring, 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 10 -- St. Francis, Abilene, 9 a.m.

Saturday, June 24 -- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Odessa, 9 a.m.

Each session will be about 2 ½ hours long. Select the one that best fits your schedule and please attend. If you attended the training session in Abilene on March 6 or in Midland on March 23, you have already completed the required training. Call Deacon Bob Leibracht at 432-889-3858 if you have any questions.

DiOrio returns for healing Mass

Fr. Ralph DiOrio will return to Midland's Chaparral Center August 6 for a special Healing Mass. He will also conduct teaching days in the Midland-Odessa area, August 3-4.

"His presence last year made a big impression upon our people," said Fr. Frank Chavez, pastor at Midland's Our Lady of San Juan. "As Bishop Michael Pfeifer stated last year 'The Holy Spirit was very alive and present with all of us ...How beautiful it was to see so many people being healed from their sicknesses and especially seeing the conversions of heart that were taking place.' Additional information will be published in future issues of *The Angelus*, or you can call Fr. Frank Chavez at Our Lady of San Juan, (432) 570-0952.

Abortion bumper stickers

Bumper stickers that read "ABORTION = CHILD ABUSE ... PLANNED PARENTHOOD = ABORTION" are being offered by sending a Business #10 envelope and 39 cents postage to Goodfellow AFB parishioner Bill Chrididino, LCSW, 4912 Greenbriar, No. 128, San Angelo, TX 76904. For more information about the bumper stickers, please call Bill at 325.942.8619.

USCCB report

The USCCB has released the 2006 John Jay Supplemental Data Analysis of The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2000. The Conclusion of the Report states, "The results of these analyses are important in their explanation of the nature and scope of the problem of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. The multivariate analyses give insight into the distribution of the problem over the past half-century, the situational nature of most of the offenses, and heterogeneity in offender characteristics." The results of the John Jay Study will involve a future study on the causes and context of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. This report is available for viewing at the USCCB web site, www.usccb.org. See *related story, Page 5*.

Obituary

Fr. Louis James Droll 1933-2006

Served diocese for 27 years

The Rev. Louis James Droll, 73, passed away Sunday, April 23, at Padua Place in San Antonio. Droll served the Diocese of San Angelo from March 9, 1968, until his retirement on May 16, 1995.

Fr. Droll's funeral Mass and burial was held in Rowena.

Fr. Droll was born April 3, 1933, in Rowena, to Louis A. and Odelia Droll, both of whom preceded him in death. He is also preceded in death by a brother Victor Droll and a sister-in-law Frances Droll. Fr. Droll is survived by a sister, Alma Mixon, and her husband, E.C., of Georgetown and children Gerald, JoAnn, Suzanne, Dennis, Timothy, and Exley III; a brother, Daniel Droll and his wife, Kathy, of McAllen, and their children Mary Ellen, David and Dina; and Victor and Frances' children, Maureen and Charles.

While with the Diocese of San Angelo, Fr. Droll was assigned to Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo, as pastor; Sacred Heart, Abilene and St. Joachim, Clyde, assistant pastor; Central Catholic High School and Grade School, Abilene, principal; Holy Angels, San Angelo, associate pastor; St. Joseph's, San Angelo, administrator; St. John's Hospital, San Angelo, chaplain; Catholic Charities, San Angelo, and Social Action, director; St. Therese, Carlsbad, and St. Paschal Mission, Sterling City; Angelo State University, San Angelo, chaplain; St. Margaret, San Angelo, pastor. Fr. Droll also worked served chaplaincies at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington D.C.; the Federal Correctional Institute in Texarkana, and at the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo.

He was educated at St. Joseph's Elementary School, Rowena; Stephen F. Austin High School, Austin; the University of Texas at Austin; St. Mary's Seminary in Houston; Immaculate Conception Seminary, Conception, Mo.; and the University of Texas Graduate School, Austin (Master's in Education).



Fr. Droll

The good news-bad news about Catholic youth and religion

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The research report of the 2005 National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), conducted by the University of North Carolina, a four-year project funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., under the direction of Dr. Christian Smith, a professor in the department of Sociology, was prepared for the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). This report is a bad news/good news message as regards Catholic youth and religion.

"The 2005 National Study of Youth and Religion" found that:

▶ 84% of Catholic youth say faith is somewhat (42%), very (31%), or extremely (11%) important in shaping their daily life.

▶ 76% of Catholic youth plan to attend a Catholic parish and to remain Catholic in their adulthood.

▶ 39% report attending Mass at least weekly, with 52% attending Mass two or three times a month or more.

▶ 50% of all Catholic youth have never read from the

Bible alone.

▶ 54% of all Catholic youth have not been to confession in the past year.

▶ 17% of all Catholic youth use alcohol once a month or more." (March, 2006 letter of Robert McCarty, Ex. Dir. NFCYM)

Though there is some question about how the data should be interpreted, the challenges from this report are still real. The good news is that the NFCYM has already taken several steps to address the challenges described in the National Study of Youth and Religion. Those in charge of the youth ministry for the Diocese of San Angelo are carefully studying this report to see how this information and recommendations would apply for our own Diocese.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Based on the findings reported by Dr. Smith and the authors of the Catholic Report, here are five specific conclusions and corresponding recommendations for the Catholic Church's ministry with young people:

1. Religion is a significant presence in the lives of Catholic young people and many express this importance through participation in Catholic liturgical and spiritual practices.

Recommendation: Catholic faith communities must provide a comprehensive ministry to, with, for, and by young people, "drawing young people into responsible participation in the life, work, and mission of the faith community" (USCCB 11).

2. Catholic young people are incredibly inarticulate about their faith, unable to adequately express what they believe, including the basic teachings of Catholicism.

Recommendation: Our pastoral ministry with young people in parish and school settings requires a comprehensive vision for adolescent catechesis; a practical blueprint for developing an effective catechetical program with varied formats, settings, and approaches; and opportunities for faith formation and developing spiritual practices.

3. Young people faithfully "mirror" the religious life of (Please See **YOUNG/14**)

BISHOP: Mary invites us all to look at God

(From 1)

take on special roles by God had some hesitancy and they questioned God. Moses complained about his lack of eloquence; Isaiah lamented over his sinfulness; Jonah took flight, buying a one-way ticket to Tarshish. Jeremiah, when invited, said that he was too young.

Mary, on the other hand, when invited by God demanded no conditions. She must have known that there would be a price to pay for her consent, and that there would be questions for which she would have no answers. For example, she could have been stoned to death for adultery once her pregnancy became public. From the very beginning, Mary simply surrendered herself to God, giving her free consent to whatever God wanted. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Mary's "yes" invites us to look at how we respond to God, during those great moments and small moments of our lives. For most of us, wanting to be in complete control of our lives is perhaps the primary block for God accomplishing what God wants in us. For many, fear is another obstacle. It is only when we surrender to God like Mary that we can find a new freedom and peace.

Mary, with her surrendering "Yes" is a beautiful model for all of us as regards the spirit that we should bring to the Year of Reconciliation for our diocese. Reconciliation ultimately is about opening our lives totally and completely as did Mary to the will of God and constantly saying "Yes" to God's love and mercy. Mary, our sinless sister in faith and our loving Mother, who is full of grace, is our inspiration and a source of strength to be always faithful to her Son, Jesus Christ, as we always strive to capture her spirit of sorrow, anguish, and suffering at the foot of the cross as we seek forgiveness for our own sins. The more we imitate Mary's "Yes" to God's will, the more we are constantly being reconciled to our God.

May is a month dedicated to mothers. The first mother that we want to honor as we remember our mothers on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11, 2006 is Mary, our mother. This is a splendid opportunity to renew our devotion to Mary and to capture her spirit of saying "Yes" to God as we ask her to intercede with her Son to bless our own dear mothers. May our mothers who have been taken from us have eternal peace with Christ and Mary in heaven, and may all of our mothers who are still with us be filled with a new spirit of love and joy. Happy Mother's Day to all mothers.

por del escritorio de obispo

María dijo 'sí': feliz día de las madres!

"Que haga en mí lo que has dicho." -- San Lucas 1:38

por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI



Pfeifer

Cuando se le preguntó a María, una muchacha simple y pobre de Nazaret, que diera su consentimiento

to a la invitación de Dios para el papel más único en toda la historia humana, María dijo "sí". María fue invitada por Dios por medio del Ángel Gabriel a ser en una forma misteriosa la madre de Dios-hombre-Jesucristo. Ella dijo "Sí" en un espíritu de entrega confiada sin saber el futuro o como las cosas iban a pasar.

El "Sí" de María es una de las más profundas declaraciones en toda la Sagrada Escritura. Leemos en la Biblia como algunos de los Profetas cuando fueron invitados a tomar papeles especiales por Dios tenían algunas vacilaciones y ellos cuestionaban a Dios. Moisés se quejaba de su falta de elocuencia; Isaías lamentaba sobre sus pecados; Jonás huyó comprando un boleto de ida a Tarshish. Jeremías,

cuando fue invitado, dijo que él estaba muy joven.

María, por otra parte, cuando fue invitada por Dios no exigió ningunas condiciones. Ella seguramente sabía que iba ser un gran precio pagar por su consentimiento, y que iban a ser preguntas por las cuales no iba tener respuestas. Por ejemplo, María podría ser matada a pedradas por cometer adulterio cuando su embarazo se supiera. Desde el principio, María simplemente se entregó a Dios, dando su consentimiento a lo que quería Dios. "Yo soy la esclava del Señor; que haga en mí lo que has dicho."

El "sí" de María nos invita a ver como nosotros respondemos a Dios, durante esos grandes y pequeños momentos en nuestras vidas. Para la mayoría de nosotros, queriendo tener control completo de nuestras vidas es quizás el obstáculo primario en lograr lo que Dios quiere en todos. Para muchos, el miedo es otro obstáculo. Solamente cuando nos entregamos a Dios como María podemos encontrar una nueva libertad y paz.

María con su "sí" de entrega es un bello modelo para todos nosotros en cuanto al espíritu que debemos traer al año de reconciliación para nuestra diócesis. Reconciliación básicamente se trata de abrir nuestras vidas total y completamente como lo hizo María a la voluntad de Dios y

constantemente decir "sí" al amor y la misericordia de Dios. María nuestra hermana en fe, libre de pecado, y nuestra Madre amorosa, es nuestra inspiración y una fuente de fuerza para ser siempre fiel a su Hijo, Jesucristo mientras siempre luchamos para evitar el pecado y las ocasiones del pecado. En este año de reconciliación vamos con María antes el Cristo crucificado en la cruz y nos esforzamos para capturar su espíritu de dolor, angustia y sufrimiento al pie de la cruz mientras buscamos perdón por nuestros propios pecados. En imitar más el "sí" de María a la voluntad de Dios, lo más constantemente estamos reconciliados a nuestro Dios.

Mayo es el mes dedicado a madres. La primera madre que queremos honrar mientras recordamos a nuestras madres en el Día de las Madres, Domingo 11 de Mayo de 2006, es María, nuestra Madre. Esto es una oportunidad espléndida para renovar nuestra devoción a María y capturar su espíritu de decir "sí" a Dios mientras le pedimos su intercesión a su Hijo para bendecir a nuestras propias queridas madres. Que nuestras madres que han sido tomadas de nosotros tengan la paz eterna con Cristo y María en el cielo, y que todas nuestras madres que están con nosotros sean llenadas con un nuevo espíritu de amor y gozo. Feliz Día de las Madres a todas las mamas.

May designated Catholic Communications Month

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer

The Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC), in partnership with our diocesan communications office, has been our voice in the media: educating, entertaining, inspiring and informing the public about Gospel Values. The CCC plays an important role in our society. It merits our continued support.

The CCC's 2006 theme, "Have you heard the good news today?" will remind us that the CCC makes it possible for all of us to access the Good News each and every day of our lives.

This year's collection date is the weekend of May 20-21, 2006. Since 50% of your contribution to the CCC annual campaign stays right here to support our own local projects, your generosity has a direct effect here at home, helping to cover the cost of the publication of our diocesan newspaper, the West Texas Angelus.

The remaining 50% supports CCC's national activities such as:

- ▶ American Catholic Radio, Catholic Bookmarks, Catholic Radio Weekly, Lino at Large, and Personally Speaking with Msgr. Jim Lisante heard on many radio stations across the country and on the Internet.

- ▶ Financial assistance to dioceses impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and

▶ **A second collection will be taken May 20-21 for the benefit of the Catholic Communications Campaign.**

Rita to help rebuild their communication ministries.

▶ Faith Works: Across the USA 2005, a documentary profiling how our Catholicism is lived throughout the country which aired on ABC stations. La Familia Unida Esperanza en la Vida: family unity announcements airing on 450 Spanish radio stations, plus Univision and Telemundo TV stations, reaching over 28 million Hispanics. Streaming video stories highlighting news events such as the death of Pope John Paul II, the election of Pope Benedict XVI, and relief and recovery efforts in the Gulf region.

I invite you to visit the Web site: www.CatholicCommunicationCampaign.org and to explore all the materials available to you and your family. Finally, I ask that you make a generous contribution to this year's collection. With your help, the CCC will continue to proclaim the Good News each and every day. Thank you for your past generosity and let us together ask God's blessing upon this campaign and all our efforts to communicate the Good News of Christ and our Catholic Church.

Diocese of San Angelo in 'full compliance' with national charter for protection of youth

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has released its annual report titled: 2006 Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Prepared by the Office of Child and Youth Protection for the National Review Board and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the report summarizes the findings of the Gavin Group of Boston which conducted 191 audits of the dioceses and eparchies of the United States, from July through December 2005, to determine compliance with the provisions of the Charter as called for by the USCCB.

The Diocese of San Angelo, which is included in the national report, was audited in September 2005 and found to be in full compliance with all articles of the USCCB Charter. Bishop Michael Pfeifer, Bishop of San Angelo, is pleased and encouraged by the results of both the national and local audit. He stated that the sexual abuse scandal has been a terrible evil that has been visited upon the Catholic Church, and that he will continue to support the efforts of the USCCB through our own diocesan efforts to create a safe environment for our children and youth, as well as educate people about preventing the sexual abuse of minors.

To date, the Diocese of San Angelo has conducted background checks and provided ethics workshops for over 5,000 clergy, sisters, employees, and volunteers in the diocese, as well as conducting safe environment training throughout the 29 counties of the diocese for over 13,000 children since the implementation of the Bishops' Charter.

In his preface to the report Bishop William S. Skylstad, USCCB President, stated, "This is the third Annual Report which has been published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on how we bishops are doing regarding the imple-

mentation of the Articles in the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." He went on to say that the Charter is monitored by the National Review Board, the Office of Child and Youth Protection, and the Committee on Sexual Abuse - a standing committee for the protection of children and for the healing of those harmed by individuals acting in the name of the Church. Bishop Skylstad continued, "Through this monitoring, and especially evidenced by the audit of the Charter, it is clear that the Church is moving forward and that we will continue to move forward." In his remarks, Bishop Skylstad renewed the commitment of the Catholic Bishops stating, "Those strong (audit) results will not, however, be cause to rest. We will continue in our efforts to protect all children in our care to reach out to those who have been harmed."

The annual report revealed that, nationwide, 98.6% of all individuals requiring background checks have had them completed, 94.8% of all individuals requiring safe environment training have completed it, and that all 191 dioceses have Outreach Programs in place for victims/survivors and their families for those who were abused as minors. William Gavin of the Gavin Group, Inc., the organization which conducted the audits, stated, "Perhaps the most impressive statistic from the entire audit is the number of children who have received safe environment training as promised by the bishops in the Charter. There were 5,760,333 children (94.8%) trained during the 2005 audit period as compared to 3,139,441 children (51.1%) trained during the 2004 audit period."

A complete copy of the 2006 Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is available for viewing on the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops web site at www.usccb.org.

Traditions of the Church

'We believe in one Holy Catholic Church'

Each of the words in the Apostles' Creed are critical, few if any could be spared. Take for instance Article 9: "We believe in one holy Catholic Church ... and the communion of saints."

Each word is critical, Bishop Michael Pfeifer, of the Diocese of San Angelo, explains, because, "Catholic is a Greek word that means 'universal' and that means it includes all people. We welcome all people to the church, it is not limited. 'Catholic' extends beyond borders, time and space."

Pfeifer noted that other Christian denominations have

begun using the word 'Catholic' in the meaning of the universality of Christ. Even though we say Catholic Church, while it means universal and all are accepted it does not mean all are in the Roman Catholic Church. Pfeifer, though, said that on the night before his death, Christ prayed that 'we would all be one.'

"One day we hope that we can have the wholeness and the fullness that Jesus wanted."

As for the second part of Article 9, '(We believe) in the communion of Saints,' Pfeifer said:

"Catholics have a strong belief since the time of the

first community that those living on earth had a link to those who had been taken from earth to their final home.

"It is in the Mass because of Jesus Christ who is with us yesterday, today and tomorrow that we are united in a most intimate way with those who have been taken away who are saints. The word communion means in union with.

"That is most profound because of Jesus Christ who is present for all time and it is in him that brings us into union and communion that all these people have gone before us and are actually here with us."

Rita of Cascia

c. 1381-1457
feast - May 22

Born near Spoleto, Italy, Rita wanted to be a nun but married in deference to her parents. For nearly 20 years, she endured her profligate husband's mistreatment. Following his violent death, she was admitted after three refusals to an Augustinian convent at Cascia, where she spent the next 40 years. She is remembered for her devoted care of sick nuns and for a deep forehead wound that lasted 15 years, caused she said by a thorn from Christ's crown of thorns. She has a large popular following, and is invoked in Italy for difficult situations.



DIOCESAN DATES**Bishop's Calendar
MAY**

10 – MIDLAND: Confirmation Mass, St. Stephen, 6:30 p.m.

11 – BALLINGER: Confirmation Mass, St. Mary, 6:30 p.m.

12 – FORT. STOCKTON: Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph/St. Agnes, 6:30 pm

13 – SAN ANGELO: Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart, 5 p.m.

14 – SAN ANGELO: Youth Mass, Holy Angels Hall, 10:45 a.m.

15 – WINTERS: Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, 6:30 p.m.

16 – MIDLAND: Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of San Juan, 6:30 p.m.

17 – ODESSA: Confirmation Mass, Holy Redeemer, 6:30 p.m.

18 – SAN ANGELO: Rosary, Mary's Grotto, Christ the King Retreat Center, 6:30 p.m.

19 – SAN ANGELO: Staff Mass/Staff Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Center, 8:30 am.

20-21 – LUBBOCK: Wedding

22 – SONORA: Confirmation, St. Ann, 6:30 p.m.

23 – BIG LAKE: Confirmation Mass, St. Margaret, 6:30 p.m.

24 – ODESSA: Confirmation Mass, Holy Redeemer, 6:30 p.m.

25 – STANTON: Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph, 6:30 p.m.

27 – SAN ANGELO: – High School Graduation

27-28 – Rest and Prayer

29 – SAN ANGELO: Memorial Day Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 9 a.m.

31 – BIG SPRING: Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart, St. Thomas, Immaculate Heart and Coahoma, 6:30 p.m.

JUNE

1 – COLORADO CITY: Confirmation, St. Ann, 6:30 p.m.

2 – ODESSA: 30th Priestly Anniversary of Father Frank Chavez, Holy Redeemer, Mass at 6:30 p.m.

3 – SAN ANGELO: Priestly Ordination of Ruben Covos and Ariel Lagunilla, Sacred Heart, 10 a.m.; Confirmation; St. Mary, 6 p.m.

4 – SAN ANGELO: Sacred Heart Cathedral - Mass at 2:00 p.m. Diocesan Celebration of Confirmation for Adults

5 – SAN ANGELO: Presentation to the Democratic Club of San Angelo, 7 p.m.

6 – SAN ANGELO: Presbyteral Council at 2:00 p.m. Christ the King; Retreat Center - Dinner with Priests of the Diocese of Lubbock and Diocese of San Angelo, 5:30 p.m.

7 – ABILENE: Confirmation, St. Vincent, 6:30 p.m.

8-10 – NOTRE DAME, Ind.: -- South Bend, Notre Dame - 2006 First National Encuentro for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry

11 – SAN ANTONIO: -- 50th Priestly Anniversary of Bishop Thomas Flanagan at 3:30 p.m.

12 – SAN ANGELO: Prayer for

Charismatic Group at Christ the King Retreat Center, 9:30 a.m.' St. Mary's Barrio Mass at 6:30 p.m. at Pete Chapa Park

13 – COLEMAN: Rural Life Mass, Beck Knox Ranch, 6:30 p.m.

15-17 – LOS ANGELES: Spring Meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

18 – SAN ANGELO: Marriage Jubilee Day Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 2 p.m.

20-21 – SAN ANTONIO: Wedding Anniversary

22 SAN ANGELO: St. Joseph's Barrio Mass at 6:30 p.m.

23-25 – MEXICO CITY

27 – ABILENE, Sacred Heart - 6:30 p.m. Meet with Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Councils

29 – SWEETWATER: Immaculate Heart - 6:30 p.m. Meet with Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Councils

Chancellor's Calendar

(CKRC = Christ the King Retreat Center)

MAY

18 -- Joint Finance, Presbyteral Council meetings, 11 a.m., Pastoral Center

19-21 -- Engaged Encounter, CKRC

21 -- Catholic Communications Campaign

29 -- Memorial Day, DOSA Offices closed

JUNE

3 – Ruben Covos & Ariel Langunilla's Ordinations, Sacred Heart Cathedral

5-9 – Lubbock Priests at CKRC, Retreat

7 – Presbyteral Council, DOSA.

7 – DOSA priests' dinner with Lubbock priests, CKRC.

8-11 – Young Adult Encuentro, Notre Dame Indiana

9-11 – Beginning Experience, CKRC.

9-11 – Rachel's Vineyard, CKRC.

12-17 – Love & Mysticism Seminar, with Msgr. Joe James, CKRC.

17 – Deacon Discernment, CKRC.

26-30 – "Make A Difference" Justice Service Experience, CKRC.

JULY

1 – Deacon Discernment, 9 a.m., CKRC

2 – Peter's Pence Collection

4 – Independence Day, Offices closed..

13-16 – Women's English Cursillo, CKRC

29-30 -- Vocation Retreat, CKRC

Necrology-June

7 – Rev. Ray Corr, O.P. (2005)

13 – Rev. David Espetia (2003)

18 – Rev. John Lucassen (1993)

20 – Deacon William Smith (2003)

22 – Rev. Msgr. Alvin Wilde (1996)

28 – Bishop Stephen Leven (1983)

Letter to the Editor

Holy Redeemer will miss Fr. Frank**Fr. Chavez will be missed in Odessa**

On a recent Sunday, I made a change in plans and attended Holy Redeemer Catholic Church instead of the usual St. Elizabeth. And I had the honor of listening to one of my favorite priests, Fr. Frank Chavez.

As in past sermons, he addressed the youth in the audience who had just finished the Sunday afternoon Catechism. I observed a large amount of kids who were very attentive and very respectful to what he was saying. They seemed to be hanging on his every word.

On this particular Sunday he announced that he would be re-assigned to another church in the near future and that he would miss the congregation.

He addressed the issue of the importance of morals in our society and how important that they understood a clear distinction of right and wrong in determining how to live.

He specifically challenged the youth to commit to living the best life possible, to make choices that are morally right and to find the right spouse because as he stated, "A strong union of two plus God leads to good kids and a quality life."

Fr. Chavez has a large following of Hispanic youth. Consistently they have gathered in large number to listen to his message Sunday after Sunday.

Father Alonso & Father Jose – Precious in God's Sight**Poetry submitted by Debbie Bayer**

Editor's Note: This poem is written to remember the destruction of the Fransiscan Mission destroyed in March 1758 and read at a ceremony held in Menard in March. The priests she writes about are considered martyrs.

On March 16, 1758, the call to give their lives came thundering all around,
when in the midst of danger, these men of God were found

They had given of themselves all they had to give,
Their lives had shown God's goodness and how one ought to live.

They had come to the new world to spread the light of Christ
knowing all along their lives could be the price of answering God's call to give their all in all.

The Holy Spirit was their guide to quench the thirst of man,
to spread hope and inspiration throughout the entire land.

Tirelessly, with Faith, they served God ever day.

even with the warning that hate was on the way
Holy ground was formed when the incident occurred, many a prayer was prayed, and in heaven they were heard.

My nephew, Nathan, is one of his youthful listeners. Every Sunday he loyally devotes two hours of his time to learn the lesson of Catechism and of the Mass that follows. I have seen in him the results of a very good mother, a loving father and of a committed priest.

Has Fr. Chavez impacted many? The answer is absolutely YES. The fruits of his labor walk the halls of many of our schools.

So often we hear of the few who cause problems that we tend to forget the ones who try to do their best to do the right thing and make the right choices.

We tend to forget that less than five percent of our kids cause the majority of problems in our schools. The other 95 percent will become productive citizens who become law-abiding adults.

Through each of our resident clergymen, he will offer many answers to our nation's problems and to our society's ills. When the Fr. Chavezes of the world leave our communities may there always be those who follow him and lead the way for others.

Fr. Frank Chavez, you will be greatly missed by many. Thank you for having served our country during the Viet Nam war and for the many years of service to our kids and to our community.

-- Adela Larrea Vasquez
Odessa

Their souls were winged to heaven on that seemingly fateful day,
and 'Well done my faithful servant' are the words they heard God say.

'Accept your Heavenly word that I've prepared for you
for you were found worthy when your life on earth was through.'

'I am the vine, You are the Branches,' the voice of God did say
others will follow behind you and new branches will show the way.

Your work on earth is done for you have answered my call,
those left behind will tell ... the story of it all.

Deep in the soil of Texas lies the fruits of all your labor,
unearthed by those who seek and find God's blessed favor."

"Many lives will be changed and touched by what is found,
these relics of the past, buried in hallowed ground.

Mission Santa Cruz, your ruins have found new birth
again you'll serve God's people from the ashes of the earth."

Bayer is a parishioner at St. Theresa's in Junction.

The Da Vinci Code



What do you say to a Da Vinci Code believer?

By Amy Welborn

Just as in any religion, there are different levels of Da Vinci Code faithful:

Those who believe every assertion made in the novel is true. These people come to my talks clutching copies of *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar*, one of Brown's main sources for the novel. They stand in front of reproductions of Leonardo's Last Supper and solemnly point out the presence of Mary Magdalene.

Those who are startled by the claims of the novel, suspicious because they've never heard them before, but at the same time accepting of the possibility. These folks usually lack any background in history and suspect that there's no way to know the truth anyway.

Finally, there are those who really don't care about the exact content of *The Da Vinci Code*, but are glad that it subverts Christianity, and so "believe" in the project in general, and heartily approve of it.

So...how to deal with them?

What do you say to a Da Vinci Code Believer?

In answering the questions of those first two groups, "evidence" is the word to keep in mind at every point, and to stay focused on the basics.

The Da Vinci Code is a mess, a riot of laughable errors and serious misstatements. Almost every page has at least one of each. It would be easy to get swamped up in the small stuff, to spend hours debating the relationship of Marian imagery to Isis or who's who in Leonardo's Virgin of the Rocks. The good news is, however, that's not necessary. When discussing the factuality of *The Da Vinci Code*, all you really need to do is stick to a few fundamental points – and stick to them!

They say..... "But there's a page in the front of the novel that says "Fact." There's a bibliography in the novel and on the website – those are real books – I've seen them in the library. His characters say that historians believe that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married, for example."

You say...There is enough truth in *The Da Vinci Code* to be seriously misleading. Yes, the sources – like Holy Blood, Holy Grail and *The Templar Revelation* exist. But they don't reflect serious historical scholarship. You're not going to find a university history department on the planet that uses the works that provide the meat of *The Da Vinci Code* theories as part of the syllabus.

What's also important is what Brown doesn't use. There are scores and scores of texts that have survived from the mid-1st century through, say, the era of Constantine in the 4th, that tell us very clearly what early Christians believed. Brown uses none of these.

It might be interesting to ask – and discuss – why. What do these reliable sources say that Brown would prefer to ignore?

What do you say to a Da Vinci Code Believer?

They say....The case is pretty convincing – that the Priory of Sion has been protecting this secret about Mary Magdalene, the real Jesus and the real Holy Grail. It sounds like a tight case to me.

You say...Well, maybe – until you consider the following:

The Priory of Sion, as Brown describes it, did not exist. The Priory of Sion was a small group of disaffected right-wing anti-semitic monarchists founded in 1956 in France. They forged the documents Brown describes in this book, and snuck them into French libraries. The fraud was widely exposed in the early 1970's in France. Repeat: There was no Priory of Sion for Leonardo to belong to or to hide secrets.

There's actually no evidence to support a marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The Gnostic writings that suggest a special relationship between them were written at least a century after Jesus actually lived, and reflect, not the events of Jesus' life, but the Gnostic interpretation of them. Mary functions as a symbol within those narratives, not as a historical person.

There are voluminous studies done on the myth and legend of the Grail. Mary Magdalene factors in exactly none of them. That association is a modern invention of

20th century pseudo-histories.

What do you say to a Da Vinci Code Believer?

They say...Well, there's probably no way to know the truth anyway. Jesus lived so long ago; we can't know for certain who he was or what he said. This explanation is as good as any of them.

You say...That is simply not true! Historians apply the same standards of evidence to early Christian documents as they do to any other text, and the general conclusion is that there is a consistent picture of Jesus and the early Christian movement that arises from those texts. There are ambiguities and differences of ultimate interpretation, but it's generally agreed that:

Jesus preached in a Jewish environment, drawing on the themes and traditions coursing through the Hebrew Scriptures.

Central to his preaching was the "Kingdom of God."

He preached, did mighty deeds (miracles), told parables, and was finally arrested and executed by the Romans

His disciples claimed that he rose from the dead, and made this the center of their earliest preaching about Jesus.

Note how radically different this is from the Da Vinci Code scenario. It's different for a reason: the Da Vinci Code version is fabricated from whole cloth and bears no relationship to the evidence.

Yes, there may be different interpretations of what Jesus meant by "Kingdom of God" or the precise shape of the early Christian communities. But hold fast to this basic truth: There may be different theories about some aspects of early Christian history, but Jesus wedding Mary Magdalene, his chosen successor...is not one of them.

So, as we discuss these particular points, here's where we need to focus. We need to challenge the evidence used in *The Da Vinci Code* and not let up. These works aren't serious history. Why use them? There are plenty of interesting texts, easily available on the Internet, that

(Please See DA VINCI/15)

The Da Vinci Code



Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone of Genoa, Italy, speaks out against Dan Brown's novel, "The Da Vinci Code," in a March 15 interview with Vatican Radio. The cardinal called the book a "castle of lies" and urged Christians not to read or purchase the book.

(CNS Photo)

Cardinal: Movie plays on anti-Catholic sentiment

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The success of Dan Brown's novel, "The Da Vinci Code," is the result of a marketing strategy playing on anti-Catholic sentiment, said Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone of Genoa, Italy.

The cardinal told Vatican Radio he was particularly concerned about the fact that the book, first published in Italian in 2004, now is available in paperback and is popular among high school students.

"There is an idea circulating in the schools that one must read this book to understand the dynamics of history and all the manipulations carried out by the church in the course of history," Cardinal Bertone told Vatican Radio March 15.

"This is truly sad and terrible," he said, explaining why he had scheduled a public discussion about the

book in Genoa.

Cardinal Bertone said the most ridiculous premise in the novel is the Catholic Church's alleged "obliteration of the feminine aspect from the Gospel narratives and in the life of the church."

"There is nothing more false," he said, pointing to the importance the church gives to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the attention the Gospels pay to Jesus' female disciples, including the women who announced to the male disciples that Jesus had risen.

"There is nothing more false than the need to rediscover a — how can I say it — an 'amazon' Mary Magdalene in order to recuperate the presence of women" in the church, he said.

"The more mystifying element" of the book, Cardinal Bertone said, is its

"denial of the death and resurrection of Jesus."

Cardinal Bertone, calling the book a "castle of lies," said he thinks promotion of the book is an anti-Catholic reaction to all the positive attention paid to the Catholic Church and the Christian faith during the Holy Year 2000.

The cardinal said it seems acceptable to be anti-Catholic; "I ask myself what the reaction would be to a similar book, full of lies, about Buddha or Mohammed or if a novel came out manipulating the whole story of the Holocaust, the Shoah."

Part of the book's marketing strategy, he said, is to try to convince people "that one is not an adult Christian if one has not read this book. But I say, 'Do not read it and, especially, do not buy it.'"

Vatican officials relatively mum on 'Code'

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Is "The Da Vinci Code" on the Vatican's radar?

You wouldn't know it by public pronouncements. Vatican officials have said little or nothing about the book, which has sold more than 40 million copies worldwide, or the upcoming movie, expected to open the Cannes Film Festival in May.

The dominant school of thought at the Vatican is that it is always best to ignore a book or film that presents the church unfairly.

"You're only feeding the publicity," said one Vatican official. "I don't think the Vatican will say much about this movie when it comes out — if anything."

But not everyone feels that way, and there are signs that the Code phenomenon may be reaching the critical mass necessary to provoke something stronger from the Vatican.

Last year, Italian Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, formerly No. 2 at the Vatican's doctrinal congregation, said it was "truly sad and terrible" that "The Da Vinci Code" had become such a popular book among Italian high school students. What left him aghast was that young

people were uncritically accepting the novel's premise that the Catholic Church had tried to obliterate the feminine aspect from the Gospel narratives and from the life of the church.

"There is nothing more false," Cardinal Bertone said. He pointed to the importance the church gives to Mary and the attention given in the Gospel to Jesus' female disciples, including the women who announced to the male disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead.

"There is nothing more false than the need to rediscover a — how can I say it — an 'amazon' Mary Magdalene in order to recuperate the presence of women" in the church, he said.

The papal preacher, Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, also blasted "The Da Vinci Code" in one of his last sermons to Pope John Paul II last year.

"In an unending stream of novels, films and plays, writers manipulate the figure of Christ under cover of imaginary and nonexistent new documents and discoveries. 'The Da Vinci Code' is but the last and most aggressive episode of the series. It is becoming a fashion, a literary genre," he said.

"The Da Vinci Code" is loosely based on writings called the Gnostic gospels, which the church rejected as part of the Christian canon many centuries ago.

'Da Vinci Code' author says novel overcomes religious 'apathy'

By Catholic News Service

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — The author of the "The Da Vinci Code" said his best-selling novel goes beyond its "commercial value" to discuss "big ideas" about the role of religion in history.

The book also has sparked lively debate and dialogue on Christianity, overcoming the "apathy" that can envelop religion and people of faith, said Dan Brown.

His novel, which has been criticized for its treatment of Catholic figures and institutions, has been turned into a movie, which is scheduled to be released nationwide May 19.

"Religion is a work in progress. We learn by our mistakes," he said April 23 on the New Hampshire Public Radio program "Writers on a New England Stage." The program was broadcast from Portsmouth but was made available on the radio station's Web site.

A main plot element in the novel is that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had children and their descendants live in secret today. Important clues to this are hidden in the paintings of Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci. The novel has sold more than 40 million copies worldwide.

Controversy is bound to be created "when you write a novel that says history is not what you think it is," said Brown, who lives in Rye Beach, N.H. He was born and raised in New Hampshire.

"It's about great ideas. You can like them or not," he said of his novel.

The ideas about Christianity discussed in the book help overcome a "lazy faith," he said.

"When we turn to faith to become comfortable, we put on blinders to what is uncomfortable," he said.

Brown welcomed Christian critics who debunk the historical and religious accounts in the book.

"These books that debunk are absolutely wonderful. The dialogue created is powerful and positive," he said. "The more we debate, the more we deepen our theology."

Brown said that he has talked with some of his critics but has not read their books.

Religion creates a "God of the gaps" because it attempts to explain things that people do not understand, he said. "We fill the gaps with God."

The ancients had a pantheon of gods to explain natural phenomena, he said.

"Science fills the gaps and the pantheon of gods decreases," he said.

"But the need for God has not decreased. It has evolved," he said.

There are still the big questions of "why are we here?" and "what happens when we die?" he said.

"We still believe in the God of the gaps," he said.

Science and religion are actually partners, he said.

"They are two different languages trying to tell the same story. Science dwells on the answers. Religion savors the questions," he said.

Where people are born often is the key factor in their religion, he said.

"There is nothing in our DNA that determines that we are Christian. We are born into a culture," he said. "We worship the God of our fathers. If we were born in Tibet, we'd be Buddhists."

Brown said that he was born an Episcopalian but his faith "now is a work in progress."

His wondrous glory

Just a short drive, Big Bend, Guadalupe offer stunning look at God's artistry



TOP PHOTO: The Chisos Mountains as seen from the east.
ABOVE: The Window, Chisos Mountains, at dusk.

Let's admit it. Much of the lay of our diocesan land is not much to look at. We do have a few nice spots. Junction, Brady and what some could consider the western edge of the Hill Country. Brownwood and its lake. But most of this place we live in and worship is the desert and in all honesty there are other places where it is more visually appealing. Fortunately for a lot of us, those places constitute a weekend drive.

Just beyond this place we call home lies a majestic spread where the Good Lord spent a lot of time decorating. If God could pick a vacation spot, anywhere in the world, I'm thinking he'd come to Big Bend and kick back for a few days and admire his handiwork.

A visit to Big Bend is stunning. Breathtaking and simply

hard to take in during a brief weekend. If you want to feel small, feel your mortality and if you want to see God's mastery as an artist, visit Big Bend.

The national park receives about 800,000 visitors a year, many of whom come for the flowers in the spring. Many, though, come for birding; the species of birds are more diverse here than any other place in the country.

Many come to hike which is often to become one with the landscape and the awesome glory that makes up this place.

It can get hot in the summer, mighty hot, and for that reason, most trips are scheduled in the spring and fall.

The Chisos Mountain range, which contains a lodge and a campground, is likely the hub of the park. It is cooler in the Chisos than it is on the desert floor or down by the river.

Oddly enough, two of the most awe-inspiring natural formations are either largely or wholly not only outside of the park, but in another country. Santa Elena Canyon (upper right) is one of the most photographed vistas with canyon walls stretching 1,500 feet, and half of the canyon, the wall to the left if you stand and face Santa Elena, is in Mexico.

On the east side of the park is the Sierra del Carmen mountain range with sheer walls jutting skyward much higher than Santa Elena or the Chisos.

To the west of the national park about 40 miles is the quaint little man-made villa of Lajitas. The beauty of the mountain range extends here and beyond, westward down the river road, a 40-mile scenic drive to Mission-Ojinaga, Mexico, closest entry point into America for immigrants and documented workers.

To the north of Big Bend some 240 miles -- yet still lying just adjacent to our diocese, is Guadalupe

Mountains National Park, beauty of another kind. Rising from the salt floor of desert, the mountain range contain both the highest peak in the state -- Guadalupe, at over 8,600 feet, and McKittrick Canyon, which during the turning of the fall foliage (late October usually) provides some of the most stunning views of God's natural handiwork that you will see.

We are fortunate here to be so close to such natural attractions.

For information on these parks visit, www.nps.gov/bibe/ (Big Bend) or www.nps.gov/gumo/ (Guadalupe Mountains).



ABOVE: Santa Elena Canyon.



Lajitas



LEFT: McKittrick Canyon, in the Guadalupe National Park.

Story by Jimmy Patterson. Photos by Jimmy Patterson, except upper right, of Santa Elena Canyon, and upper left, Sierra del Carmens, by Jeff Blaylock. View additional Big Bend photos at JeffBlaylock.com.

Even those behind bars can see God's goodness

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: At my recommendation, Jedeian, a beautiful young mother in prison, shares her story with us. Jedeian is working hard every day to improve her life through prayer, education and discipline so that she can make a new beginning with her release. I have walked with her for many years. I am very proud of her as she works hard to remake her life. Perhaps you might want to send her a note of encouragement through me. Please pray for her this fine young woman and so many like her who are trying to make a new beginning behind bars.

'I was in prison and you visited me.' (Mt. 25).

By Jedeian

Let me tell you how good "God" is and how he saved my life. I was raised in a very dysfunctional family. I was abused sexually, physically and mentally. So with

all of the anger and bitterness inside of me that had built up, I finally rebelled. I began breaking the law at age 12. I would do anything to be accepted. Peer pressure was one of my downfalls. I aimed to please everybody except God and self. I know now that was stupid. Because while I broke all those laws and got locked up, I did my time by myself, no friends, no family, nobody but God was there for me.

He sent Bishop Mike into my life, then I didn't recognize it as a blessing but now, 12 years later I do. It's sad it took this long for me to realize that. My hopes are that it doesn't take you that long to realize it. By 16 years old I gave birth to my son, I was homeless with no education and still unappreciative of God's mercy. I began selling drugs and wound up in prison 6 months later. I served 3½ years with the help and support of nobody but God.

Once released, I still didn't learn at 20, and I began living the fast life once again. I became my best customer of my own product (track cocaine). Within a blink of an eye, I lost my house, car, job, self respect, self worth, self esteem, my child and most important I lost God. He didn't lose me though. I ended up prostituting for approximately 7 months, allowing men to use and abuse my body for a little or nothing just to keep my habit supported.

I was alone -- all of my so-called friends and family were no more. But God refused to leave my side. He fended for me as if I never turned my back on him, as if I were his most loyal servant. I was the devil's servant until God intervened. Had it not been for God's intervention I'd be both physically and spiritually dead. I've been robbed, beat, pimped out, had a 12 gauge shot gun put to my head, homeless and

starved. On one occasion I was so hungry I ate a leftover piece of chicken which the day before had roaches crawling all over it.

All because I didn't keep God first and chose to serve the devil instead. Throughout all the pain I've endured, God was always there, he was my sanity, my everything and I didn't ever know it. I'm currently in prison again, have been here for 3 years and still counting. Today I have God and I'm so much more at peace. I pray that this letter will at least reach one of you if not all. God is the only way. Don't allow your past to hinder you to the point where you feel hopeless. You're all beautiful creatures of God. He loves ya'll.

Sincerely,

Jedeian

SISTER: Mollaghan was named Chaplain of the Year in 1996

(From 11)

as she recalled praying with a dying woman who was afraid to meet her aborted daughter. What beautiful images of being fully human and fully spiritual.

S. Brigid doesn't speak of awards she has received easily, but two are special to her. In 1996, she has named Chaplain of the Year for Texas/New Mexico. Then in 1996, she was recipient of the pro-ecclesial Medal, a Papal recognition in the Roman Catholic Tradition for extraordinary service to God's people.

Shortly before S. Brigid moved to San Antonio, she had a quiet evening supper with the other women religious living in the San Angelo area. A part of that night was this prayer for her, prayer which all who know her can echo.

"Incarnating the Word requires surrender wrapped in trust and tied with commitment. As one woman, you have embraced the invitation to make Christ present in the ministry of care. You are a source of prayer and inspiration to all of us as well, too, continue to say yes to God's invitation to encarnar Jesu Cristo y Cristificar el mundo.

As you begin anew may a song be ever on your lips and a constant melody in your heart. May you always marvel at the divine wisdom that chose you to be an instrument for the building up of the Reign of God. Be assured of our love and prayers.

-- Submitted by S. Mary Kay Bailey

Peace Talkin' with Tore

On Wednesday, March 29, 2006, a group that I formed in the Year of Reconciliation called Ambassadors for Peace and Love, composed of members of the three major religions of the world, had a Peace Dialogue with the youth of the city of San Angelo. Present at this unique event with some 400 youth was a young 7th grader, Victoria Tore Anderson, who is a member of Holy Angels Church in San Angelo. I asked this talented young person to write a story about the wonderful Dialogue we had on peace, and what follows are Tore's reflections on that special evening of Dialogue on Peace.-Bishop Michael Pfeifer.

By Victoria (Tore) Anderson

"Oh boy," I thought, "Just another Wednesday night," as I was getting ready to go to church class at Holy Angels. Little did I know, that a Peace Dialogue was going on in the church, and I could have an opportunity to do something outstanding.

When I arrived at the church, all of our youth groups, and five other groups from five other churches were in the pews and handed Peace Dialogue questions. The first thing that popped into my mind was how bored I was going to be. Then the church quieted down and Bishop Michael Pfeifer introduced the Peace Panel; two Christians, Deborah Michalewicz and Rev. Hank Hankins; two Muslims, Dr. Fazlur Rahman and Rashda Khan; and two Jews, Ami Mizell-Flint and Karen John. First Rev. Hank stood up and started talking about how cool it was that all of us gathered there just to talk about one thing; how we can spread peace in the community. A couple of my friends started talking, but I didn't notice it because I was truly interested in what the Panel had to say. What was really cool was the Panel was made up of

not only Christians, but Muslim, and Jewish religions. They talked about ways we could come together and promote peace not only in our community, but in America and all over the world. Rashda also read us a poem that a ninth grader wrote about peace. It's amazing how much we can make a difference in a small community like San Angelo. After everyone had presented the information, they let the students in the audience come up and ask them questions. Most of the questions asked were to the Muslim and Jewish people. Everyone wanted to know if it was harder growing up different from everyone else, in a mostly Christian town. The people on the panel said it was a little hard at first, but our town has become more diversified and we are more knowledgeable than we used to be. What touched me the most though was people from different ethnicities, different churches, and different religions came together at Holy Angels to talk about one common thing: PEACE!!! The Panel also told us afterwards if we wanted to, we could sign up to be Jr. Peace Ambassadors and help them do things to spread peace and awareness in San Angelo. I found the Dialogue very interesting, and I think a number of kids went home to

their parents, and told them they feel like they can make a difference. I think everyone at school on Thursday spread the message of peace to their friends, and caused awareness in the whole school. I think it's really cool so many people wanted to sign up to be Jr. Ambassadors!

Even though this dialogue was on Wednesday class night, March 29, many people will take the message the Panel said to heart for many days into the future. I think in the future you will be seeing a better San Angelo, and even a better world. I signed up to be a Jr. Peace Ambassador, so look out for me helping out in town. Just imagine what would happen if everyone in San Angelo did one little thing to help spread peace. Soon it would catch on throughout Texas, in America and the world would know what one small town in Texas did to change the course of our future.

I hope this dialogue will make our world a better place to live for your children and mine.

*Victoria (Tore) Anderson
7th Grade; John Glenn Middle School
Holy Angels Catholic Church*

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DIOCE-SCENES



Stations at Brady

On April 14, Good Friday, the Jr. High and High School Youth Group from St. Patrick's Catholic Church presented a Live Stations of the Cross for the community of Brady. The event took place at Richards Park. The youth began the event with a brief narrative description of each station, followed by acting the scene out, and then ended each station with a reflection prayer. This was the first-ever Live Stations coordinated for the community and it was a huge success as many of the local parishioners and other community members attended and were very appreciative of the youth for this special devotion and giving back to the community with such faith and dedication.



Christmas in April in Carlsbad



Clockwise from bottom left photo: Leroy Lange and Travis Glass replace a screen door for a Christmas in April participant; Students from the Angelo State University Catholic Newman Center and the Association of Mexican American Students (AMAS), along with Robert Pustka, help spruce up a house by painting the decorative trim; Members of St. Therese Catholic Church; Students from the ASU Catholic Newman Center, Association of Mexican American Students (AMAS) and Tommy Tomerlin stand in front of the newly remodeled home of the resident homeowner (sitting), and Joan Baldillez and the daughter of a CIA recipient rake, clean and landscape to help improve the look of the home.

Sister Mollaghan retires after 24 years of service

A chapter of generosity and loving kindness in San Angelo came to a close when Sister Brigid Mollaghan, CCVI, has returned to her congregational home in San Antonio after almost 24 years of ministry among us. To say that her impish smile and sparkling eyes will be missed is to put it mildly.

S. Brigid came to serve as chaplain at St. John's Hospital in 1982, living with her sisters in community at the convent of the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart and then at the St. John's Guest House. Upon the closing of St. John's, S. Brigid became a chaplain at Shannon Hospital in January of 1999. At the end of that year she joined Hospice of San Angelo and traveled throughout the Concho Valley and beyond to bring God's comfort and presence, and her own, to the terminally ill.

In 2005, S. Brigid officially retired from hospice. David McBride, executive director of Hospice of San Angelo, commented that hundreds of people from all walks of life came to her retirement party. There were CEOs in suits, laborers in dungarees, medical personnel in crisp uniforms and everyday people in everyday clothes. And in the middle of it all was S. Brigid, the sociable, charming hostess. Her gift of being a deeply spiritual person immersed in this world enables her to relate at many levels to all who meet her.

Bernice Canada, parishioner at Holy Angels in San Angelo, came to know S. Brigid at St. John's Hospital during the fatal illness of Mrs. Canada's husband. She still treasures S. Brigid's faithful support and prayer during that difficult time in her life -- and throughout the years. They became close friends, sharing a love of music, playing cards and Super Bowl parties. When asked for her image, Bernice sees S. Brigid as both spiritual and fully human "with a pretty smile."

How did S. Brigid get this way? What steps brought her to us in San Angelo? Born in Ireland, she came to join the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in October 1943, having been recruited at her high school. Her formation years -- postulancy, 2-year novitiate, 5-years in temporary vows -- were spent primarily in San Antonio, some of it in bed with tuberculosis.

S. Brigid's formal education includes a BA, an MA and some PhD work in science and education. Her early ministry was in medical records at Santa Rosa Hospital and teaching medical science at Incarnate Word College, both in San Antonio. In this time period she served as the Motherhouse Superior of her community for three years.

She was involved with students at St. Louis University and in Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Mary's Hospital in Galveston. In 1973 she became a chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital in Fort Worth before coming to San Angelo in 1982.

S. Brigid loves San Angelo and its people. She believes that coming from rural roots in Ireland prepared her to enter into the same conversational level as the people in the area. The simplicity of a couple of her favorite memories illustrates all that others imagine of her.

She remembers a man accept an X-ray of which he was afraid because he believed all his insides were to be seen including his thoughts! A tear came to her eye

(See **SISTER/10**)

FAMILY

From the Easy Chair

A few tips on how to properly take my daughter to the prom

I'm proud to be able to sit here and share with you an awfully good piece of news: our 17-year-old daughter's junior prom is over. And we all survived, thank you very much.

It's nice to see that a lot of the old traditions from when we were kids remain, but a lot of things have changed. And some things have changed but should never change. So, here's a little guidebook all you teenage boys can use every time you go on a date with a teenage girl. Specifically my teenager daughter, but they work for pretty much any teenage daughter:

▶ When you come to my house, don't call my daughter on her cell and tell her you are out front. COME TO THE FRONT DOOR. It's why I had it put



Patterson

there. Coming to the door AND SHOWING YOURSELF is the price you have to pay to date any teenage daughter.

▶ Yes, you pay for dinner. To even discuss it any further is really unnecessary.

▶ When you walk a girl to your car, hold the door open for her. When she gets in the car that is your cue to, ummm, *shut the door when she is seated*. It's not rocket science big guy.

▶ You are the male guy in this relationship. YOU DRIVE. Not just on prom night. Every time. It's not only the proper thing to do, it's the *fiscally responsible thing for me*. There really should be no discussing this topic either. *Guys drive. Girls are driven*. It's not terribly complicated. Plus, it saves dads money on gas because everyone knows dads fill their teenage daughters' tanks with gas.

Especially nowadays when a gallon of gas cost more than a gallon of milk. Please take on this financial burden. I

have more than I can handle.

▶ When you come into my house, talk to me. Not too much. But say hi, say something dumb about the weather, or sports (I like baseball, if that helps. Talk baseball and you'll impress me).

▶ Do not ever choose playing a video game over an evening with my daughter. If you do, your fictional video character in that video game is sure to die a hideous virtual death, I will see to it.

▶ Do a little advance research on your date's parents. That way, you'll have stuff to talk about during that awkward time while daughters are doing their hair. If you don't do the research, we'll sit awkwardly and watch the Travel Channel for an eternity. Trust me, it won't be fun for either one of us.

▶ What is your ringtone? If it is Usher or Eminem or Nelly or pretty much whoever has just one name, you may now leave and never return to my house.

▶ Who is on your speed dial? If there are any probation officers or attorneys, I'm sorry, no, I have no daughter, you must be mistaken.

▶ What do you have bookmarked on your browser? Religion, sports, country music, news is fine. Anything else and I'll have to search the rest of your hard drive and your bedroom.

I guarantee you that dating my daughter could be a fun time for you or anyone else who dares try. But, if you want to have that opportunity, you're going to have to be prepared to answer a few questions in the screening process.

And trust me on this one ... you ever want to marry my daughter somewhere far, far down the road ... you better come see me and don't think you can get away by text messaging me.

Jimmy Patterson is Director of Communications for the Diocese of San Angelo and a father to two daughters and one son.

Your Family

Moving beyond cheesy family photosBy Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

In journalism circles they're known as "grip-and-grins." Two people stand next to each other, pretend to be shaking hands, stare into the camera and give "say 'cheese'" smiles. While periodicals have shied away from that format, it's still standard for a lot of publications.



Bill & Monica Dodds

The variation in family circles is all participants bunch together, look at the photographer and give the same strained expression.

The grip-and-grin still has its place. It guarantees everyone is in the photo, every face can be seen and every mouth is smiling. When the immediate family travels this summer or the extended family gathers, it's good to have some traditional shots like that but ...

They go back to a time when, generally, only one or two photographs were taken at family celebrations.

(Everybody in? Good. Click. Now, switch photographers. Click. All done.)

It made sense to be frugal because film, developing and printing weren't cheap. But today, just how many images can a one-gigabyte memory card hold, anyway?

With that in mind -- and since May is National Photo Month -- we thought we'd offer eight simple suggestions:

1. Don't limit yourself to candid shots or the grip-and-grin. Each has its purpose. Posterity wants to see both casual images of family members (the photos that tell a story) and the testaments to the family gatherings.

2. Never force a family member to be in a photograph, and if someone doesn't want his or her picture taken, respect that choice.

3. Move in before taking the picture. Ever notice how many snapshots show family members in the center surrounded by a large border of nothing worth taking a picture of? Step in to do some cropping with the camera.

4. Check to make sure nothing is "growing" out of someone's head. A lamp, light switch or plant in the photo's background can appear to be a serious medical condition.

5. Back up those images on a hard

drive and on a disk, but make prints of the ones you really want. You know how wonderful it is to come across a family photograph taken many decades ago. You can imagine how useless and inaccessible a hard drive or disk will be decades from now as technology continues to race forward.

6. Write the who, what, when, where on the back of those prints.

7. Put them in an album.

8. If you're displeased with how you look in a photo, use some editing software -- and, why, you're gorgeous! (If the supermodels get to rely on that for the magazine covers, it only seems fair.)

A summer project

With summer ("I'm bored") fast approaching ("There's nothing to do"), consider signing up your child for a photography course at the local rec center, Y or community college.

If he or she already has some computer and Internet savvy, check out some online sites that offer instructions. (Some "free" online sites.) Needless to say, preview those sites before suggesting a son or daughter visit them!

By the time September rolls around, your child could create a wonderful portfolio, a book or even a movie.

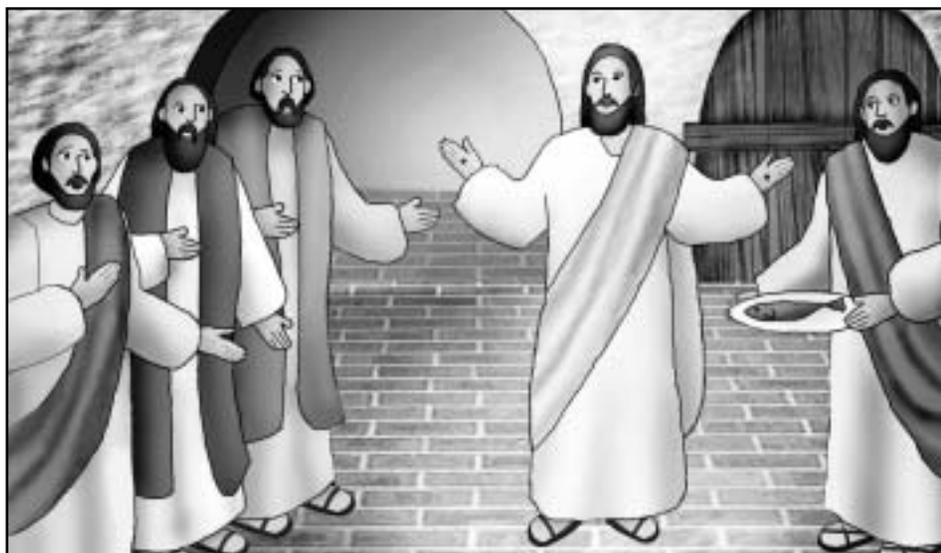


"We sell gifts for people to give to graduates."

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Answers

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Gen(e)sis, | 6. Jonah, |
| 2. Ps(a)lms, | 7. Micah, |
| 3. Ezekie(l), | 8. R(u)th. |
| 4. A(m)os, | Bonus: |
| 5. King(s), | Samuel. |



Jesus endures persecution, death

The 11 disciples who had remained faithful to Jesus were in a room together with other people who loved the Lord. They were wondering if the rumors that Jesus had come back to life were true.

Suddenly a man appeared in the middle of the room. It was Jesus. "Peace be with you," he said.

The disciples' first reaction was fear, not joy. They thought they were looking at a ghost.

"Why are you troubled?" Jesus asked. "And why do questions arise in your hearts?"

As his friends continued to stare at him, Jesus smiled, stretching his arms forward with his palms up. "Look at my hands and my feet, that is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

No one reached out to touch Jesus, but they began to believe. And they were happy to see him.

"Have you anything to eat?" Jesus asked.

Someone brought him a piece of baked fish, which he ate immediately. When he was sure that his friends were ready to listen to him, Jesus began to teach them about the Scriptures.

"Everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms must be fulfilled. Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

Jesus paused and looked in the faces of the people in the room. Then he said directly: "You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Jesus let the people in the room think about his words for a short time, then he opened the door and motioned for them to follow him out. He walked through the streets of the city and on to Bethany. He stopped there, turned around and raised his hands while he blessed everyone.

As he finished his blessing, Jesus was taken up into heaven.

The disciples and the others who had seen Jesus go to be with his Father were filled with a spirit of rejoicing. They returned to Jerusalem singing and praising God.

JUST 4 KIDS

READ MORE ABOUT IT: Luke 24 Q&A

1. How did the disciples react when they saw Jesus?
2. What happened after Jesus blessed his friends?

BIBLE ACCENT

The story of how Solomon built the very first temple can be found the First Book of Kings. Before Jesus was born, King Herod built a new temple based on the designs of Solomon.

Synagogues were places of worship where the Jewish people would come together to pray, read Scriptures and listen to sermons, similar to the purpose to our churches of today.

A council of elders was responsible for the services, the education of the people and the maintenance of the building. Prayers were said daily, and a more formal service was held on the Sabbath.

A lector would read from and teach about the law at the services. Over a three-year period, the lector would have read most of the text of the law.

In the Catholic Church today, lectors read from the Bible at each Mass. These readings are completed over a three-year period, called years A, B and C.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAINTS: St. Zita

Zita (1218-1268) came from a very religious family. Her parents raised their children to love and serve the Lord as much as they did. Zita's sister became a Cistercian nun, and her uncle

was a religious hermit who was treated as a saint by the people of the community.

When she was 12 years old, Zita became a house servant for a family who owned a fabric-making shop. She would get up early every morning to pray before she started her chores. She was given good food for her meals, but she often shared it with the poor people of the town. She also would sleep on the floor when she offered her warm bed to a homeless person.

Zita felt a special concern for prisoners, and she prayed regularly for them. Her life was full of works of mercy and compassion.

We honor her on April 27.

BIBLE TRIVIA

Which New Testament book tells us about the ministries of the first Christians?

Answer: Acts of the Apostles.

PUZZLE:

Unscramble the names of these Old Testament books. The letters surrounded by parentheses can then be unscrambled in the correct answers to make an extra mystery name:

1. sgi(e)sne
2. sl(a)mpps
3. (l)eekize
4. soa(m)
5. gnik(s)
6. jhoan
7. chiam
8. h(u)rt

Coming of Age

Forever Friends ... they'll always stick up for you

By M. Regina Cram
Catholic News Service

Someone asked me about people who have made an impact on my life. It got me thinking. I'm still thinking. The thing is, I keep coming back to someone I hadn't expected to be on my list: my big sister.

Ginny was two years, four and one-half months older than me. (She still is.)

Growing up as the middle of three girls, I didn't like either of my sisters, and it didn't help that my mother named us alike and dressed us alike. I especially couldn't stand my pesky younger sister who mimicked me, and followed me around, and messed up my stuff. We fought constantly. It drove my parents crazy.

It was different with Ginny. Sometimes we bickered, but she didn't really like arguments so it wasn't any fun to pick

fights with her. Mostly I just ignored her, which was fine with her.

But once in sixth grade she stuck up for me. A boy I liked had given me his chain ID wristband, which I hid in my dresser drawer so my parents wouldn't know we were going out. My pesky kid sister found it and showed it to Ginny. Ginny was in eighth grade and very wise, so she immediately figured out what was going on. Instead of spilling the beans, Ginny

just changed the subject, then told me to find a better hiding place.

I still didn't like her after that, but I did admit she was pretty cool, especially considering how much heat she took from my strict parents. They wouldn't let Ginny wear makeup. They wouldn't let her wear stockings. No high heels. No jeans. No dating.

One night Ginny put on clear lip gloss,

(Please See AGE/15)

IMMIGRATION: Bishops support many aspects of compromise bill expected to reach Senate floor

(From 1)

The U.S. bishops have expressed support for many aspects of a compromise bill expected to reach the Senate floor in early May, but they are also concerned about harsh enforcement provisions in the legislation, including expedited removal of illegal aliens along the border and denial of protections to asylum seekers.

Cardinal McCarrick and Cardinals Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles and William H. Keeler of Baltimore started the day with a breakfast meeting on immigration reform with White House deputy chief of staff Karl Rove and other White House aides.

Also attending that session was Vincentian Father David M. O'Connell, president of The Catholic University of America.

From the White House Cardinals Mahony and McCarrick went to C Capitol Hill to meet with several senators on immigration reform legislation. Following a meeting with Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston joined them and the three prelates met with Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., and Richard J. Durbin, D-Ill.

A meeting with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., capped off the cardinals' Hill visit.

AGE: Once the big sister, always the big sister

(From 13)

then came to dinner. When no one noticed, she broached the subject of wearing make-up, demonstrating that she was not talking about gobs of it.

"Absolutely not," my father insisted. "I don't want my daughter looking like a painted lady," which evidently was the worst thing anyone could say about a girl back in the Stone Age when my parents were growing up.

Gradually my sister made headway with my parents, taking the heat for all three of us girls. By the time I wanted the same freedoms, the battles were just minor skirmishes because Ginny had paved the way. She really was pretty cool.

A few years later I visited her at college. She introduced me to all of her friends and let me hang out with them. She actually seemed proud to have me there.

When I was getting ready to get married, she and her new husband helped us out far more than they could afford. They gave us money to buy our first bed, plus she gave me a brand new sewing machine so I could make curtains for our ugly honeymoon apartment. It was only years later, looking back, that I realized how much she did for me. Mostly she quietly looked out for me.

She still does.

When I'm having trouble with family or friends or work, Ginny always has good advice -- but she only gives it if I ask. When I have a big decision to make, she's the one I turn to for wisdom. I guess once you're the big sister, you're always the big sister.

I wonder if she'll still look out for me when she's 94 and I'm 92. We can share a room in the nursing home with an imaginary line down the middle.

Actually, that sounds pretty good.

YOUNG: Showing more care, concern to all youth should be a priority

(From 3)

their parents and serve as a "barometer" of the larger faith community.

Recommendation: Parish faith communities need an intentional outreach to families, emphasizing a ministry of welcome, connecting families with the life of the faith community, and renewing our efforts at adult catechesis.

4. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, a religious "Whatever-ism," serves as a "default position" for adolescent religiosity when religious communities' engagement and education of youth is weak.

Recommendation: Catholic faith communities and pastoral ministers must renew our commitment to a "new evangelization" that proclaims the challenging and life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ, and that emphasizes worship, service and justice, and participation in a faith community.

5. The Catholic Church seems to lack an institutional commitment to youth evangelization and formation at the parish and diocesan level.

Recommendation: Because congregations in which youth ministry is a priority produce young people who are engaged in their faith, parishes need to provide the resources, trained personnel, and financial support to implement the Catholic Church's Vision of Youth Ministry. ." (SYR overview pg.9-10)

I also provide here from the report additional information related to the sexual activity of youth within the Catholic population.

► "41% of all Catholic youth report having been physically involved with someone, which means 59% report that they have not been physically involved with

someone.

► Within the group that has been physically involved, 76% report having been touched or touched someone else in a private area and, within this group, 58% report having engaged in oral sex and 58% report having sexual intercourse.

► Of the youth who reported having oral sex:

► 40% of junior high and 63% of high school youth have engaged in oral sex.

► The average age at which these youth first had oral sex is 15.

► Of the youth who reported having sexual intercourse:

► 14% of junior high and 61% of high school youth report having had sexual intercourse at least once.

► The average age at which these youth first had intercourse is 15 and on average, they have had intercourse three times." (pg.4 Supplement to SYR)

In light of this data, ministers are challenged to present the respect of the total person in a more holistic manner. This would embrace the dignity of the human person and a positive understanding of sexuality as a beautiful gift from God stressing how the physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological must be integrated into the whole person.

"A Challenge for the Church"

The findings of this study highlight three significant gaps and two underlying challenges concerning young people and their relationship with and involvement in the Catholic Church.

The first gap is the broad difference between the number of young people connected to the Catholic Church through our schools and parish youth ministry and religious education programs and those

who are not connected in any formal way. The Catholic Church is simply not reaching the majority of young people or their families in any meaningful way, as evidenced by the statistics on Mass attendance and participation in church sponsored programs. This gap has serious implications for fostering both the spirituality of our young people and their Catholic identity...." (pg.62 SYR)

"The second gap is between the church's ministry with young people and youth's involvement in the larger faith community. Many of those young people who report a connection to Catholic schools and/or to parish youth ministry and religious education programs do not report an involvement with the larger faith community. The lack of appropriate and responsible participation by young people in the pastoral, communal, and liturgical life of the faith community is especially troubling..." (pg.62 SYR)

"The third gap concerns young people themselves. Even among those young people who report a connection to the Catholic community through their school or parish programs, there is a gap between their self-professed belief and their actual behavior. The data concerning the rates of various risk behaviors, e.g., alcohol use and sexual experimentation in young people is disconcerting...." (pg.62 SYR)

"Given these gaps reflected in the study data, the first challenge for the Catholic Church is to make a renewed commitment to her pastoral ministry with young people, both connected and non-connected, through school and parish programs, and especially allocate the necessary financial and personnel resources to this ministry. Additionally, this ministry must

be intentional about reaching out to and supporting the families of these young people... (pg.63 SYR)

"The second challenge concerns the overall pastoral life of the faith community. Though effective pastoral ministry with young people certainly responds to youth during a critical developmental stage of their lives and deeply fosters their relationship with Jesus Christ, this is no guarantee that young people remain Catholic in their later years. The data demonstrate the relativism that young people apply to different religious traditions and the impact that parental involvement has on the religious practice of youth. ..." (pg.63 SYR)

The authors of the National Study state: "Rarely has a generation of young people been so interested in spirituality and religion and so open to experiences of the holy and the transcendent. This is a kairos moment-the right moment-for the Catholic Church and her pastoral ministry to, with, and for young people." (pg.63 SYR) As we reflect on the data and conclusions given in this report, more than ever we all need to commit ourselves to showing more care and concern for all of our youth, and to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we can truly be the kind of people that God is calling us to be in the new millennium. We have the guidance and direction of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and we have the protection of our Blessed Mother.

Quotations contained in this article are cited from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR): Analysis of the Population of Catholic Teenagers and their Parents - A Research Report Produce for the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, December 2004, the Supplement, the Summary overview and letter from Robert McCarty, Exe.Dir. with permission from NFCYM.

DA VINCI: Brown's theories can draw laughter

(From 6)

do give a good sense of what early Christianity was all about. Why not check them out, indeed?

They say...oh, but the material on Leonardo da Vinci is very interesting.

You say...Perhaps, but it's all wrong. The Da Vinci Code is wrong on every single point it makes about Leonardo: from his name, to his religious and philosophical beliefs, to every statement about every art work mentioned: the Mona Lisa, the Last Supper, the Madonna of the Rocks, and The Adoration of the Magi.

I once gave a talk at a university. At the end of my talk, an art historian stood up and addressed the group. She said, "So many people come up to me and gush about how much art history they've learned from The Da Vinci Code...I tell them they've learned nothing about art from the Da Vinci Code!"

Indeed, if you asserted to any art historian that what is really going on in the Last Supper is that Leonardo is revealing that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and she is the real Holy Grail...they would laugh. They would.

Besides, just keep repeating...There was no Priory of Sion. There was no Priory of Sion. How could Leonardo be working on behalf of a group that didn't exist?

There are, of course, many more questions that you'll be asked. But if you can stick to the basics and keep questioning the evidence, you'll go a long way in undercutting the assumptions that are brought to the dialogue.

But what about that third group? I've met them – they write to me all the time – and perhaps you have too. They're all over Internet discussions of The Da Vinci Code as well.

These are the folks that aren't as much interested in defending the particulars of The Da Vinci Code, but are committed to this premise: that the Catholic Church is the enemy of truth and has been largely engaged in a 2000-year political power play.

To be honest, there is not much that an intellectual discussion is going to do to change these people's minds. They are truly True Believers, largely immune to reason. But there are a few things you can say.

They say...forget the details. The fact is, there were alternate visions of Christianity, and they were bru-

tally suppressed by the Church so that Mary Magdalene's presence would be erased and women's voices would be silenced and the males in charge would retain power.

You say...let's try some logic, before we get to the facts.

If early Christian leaders were determined to suppress Mary Magdalene's role in their history, they did a lousy job of it. They forgot to take out the part in every Gospel in which Mary Magdalene is the first witness to the Empty Tomb, the witness on which the whole story rests.

If the Church through history were determined to silence and demonize Mary Magdalene, again, they failed, considering that by the 8th century her feast day had been established, she was, after the Blessed Virgin, the most widely-revered saint of the Middle Ages, and she's called, in Eastern Christianity, "Apostle to the Apostles," among other honorifics.

If those early Christian male powers wanted to suppress the "real story" of Jesus' ministry and purpose, you would frankly wonder about their sanity.

Given the fact that a female disciple carrying on a movement based on the wisdom purveyed by one of many wandering teachers of the time would have not caused one Roman eye to blink in surprise during the first century, much less prompted anyone to arrest and execute followers of such a movement...you'd have to wonder why these power-hungry men decided to make up a story that would get them arrested and executed, and then stick to it during those same arrests, tortures and martyrdoms.

This, in my experience, is not what power-mad people do.

They say...it's the bigger truth that matters. It doesn't matter what particular version of the Jesus story you pick. You need to pick the one that's right for you, that fits your spiritual needs. That's why The Da Vinci Code is important. It encourages people to do that.

You say...the crucial issue in The Da Vinci Code isn't "spiritual truth." It's history. And the fact is the story of early Christianity is not a total mash of conflicting, yet perhaps all equally true, accounts.

More over, most people are interested in basing their views and opinions, as much as possible, on reality. When we're in a relationship or friendship, just "believing in the truth" of the relationship

doesn't work. It's based on the reality of the lives we live together – what we really say, what we really do – our real histories.

It's the same with religion. Faith is, indeed, a step forward in trust. But it's not blind, and Christians have never described it this way. Our faith is built on what the apostles said about Jesus. We believe what they said was true, we move forward in faith, and, we believe, we encounter the real Jesus along the way, just as they did, through the Scriptures, through prayer and through sacrament.

No, not everything can be true all at the same time. Either Jesus was Lord or he wasn't. We know what the early Christians believed – there's no question about that. It's not up to us, if we have any intellectual integrity at all, to just make up another story that pleases us. If we don't like what the early apostolic witnesses said, we don't have to listen. But if we do have that intellectual integrity at work, and if we are interested in Jesus and his movement...we do. The decision we make at the end is ours to make. But at the beginning, we do have to listen to the witnesses who were there and what they passed on about what they saw.

What do you say to a Da Vinci Code Believer?

They say...The Jesus of The Da Vinci Code is so much more human. I can relate to him so much more easily than I can the Jesus of the Gospels and the Church.

You say... The Jesus of the Gnostic writings more human than the Jesus of the Gospels and the Church?

Really?

If you believe that, you've never read a Gospel.

If you believe that, you've never set foot in a Catholic Church.

Because, when you read the Gnostic writings, you meet the most unearthly, abstract, and frankly, boring and yes, barely human figure you can imagine. He walks around talking, talking and talking. He doesn't suffer, and for sure he doesn't die.

But when you actually sit down and read a Gospel, what do you see? Or rather...who?

You meet a man who was born of a woman, who, it is said in the Gospel of Luke "grew in wisdom." He eats with his friends, goes visiting, gets into arguments, has to get away from people at times, weeps, and is even afraid. He dies. On a cross, in agony, he dies.

FUSS: Movie's facts -- or lack of them -- are wrong and should be checked

(From 1)

Jesus as divine and also criticized the Church for keeping secret thousands of texts that details Christ's humanity.

A major premise of the book is that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and they had at least one child, whose descendants formed a French royal dynasty in the middle ages that continues through the present day. The secret has been kept throughout the ages by a shadowy cult called the Priory of Sion.

Brown's book is a mess of contradictions. Brown blames "the Vatican" for his plots and conspiracies that are alleged to have taken place centuries before there was any Vatican to plot them. He claims that Leonardo da Vinci doesn't give Jesus a chalice in his famous painting of The Last Supper, because Mary Magdalene is that "chalice." Brown better check again to see how many cups are there. Brown calls Mary Magdalene the victim of a Catholic smear campaign without pausing to wonder why she has been proclaimed a Catholic Saint based on her real, courageous, true life story as given to us in the approved Gospels.

The book teems with historical misinformation. The claim that the Emperor Constantine shifted the Christian day of worship to Sunday is simply false. We know from St. Paul and other New Testament writers that soon after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians replaced Saturday with Sunday as their day of worship. What Constantine did in March 321 was to decree Sunday to be a day of rest from work. He did not make Sunday the day of worship for Christians; it already was that from the first century.

Brown also tells us that under pressure from Constantine, the bishops of the Council of Nicea in 325 were forced to declare Christ to be divine. However, at that Council, the bishops confirmed in theological language what had already been held for centuries about the divinity of Christ as given in the Gospels. Would Brown please read St. John's Gospel, which has St. Thomas calling Jesus "My Lord and My God"? Decades before John's Gospel was finished, St. Paul's letters repeatedly reaffirmed faith in Christ as divine. The Council of Nicea did not invent Christ's divinity, but reaffirmed it once again in the famous Creed, which is still professed by most Christians every Sunday.

When putting his case for goddess worship, Brown belittles the Jewish roots of Christianity. He assures us that virtually all the elements of Catholic ritual -- the altar, communion, and so on -- were taken directly from earlier pagan mystery religions. However, Brown should go back and read the Old Testament about the most important feast for the Jewish people, which was the Passover. Jesus was a Jew and it was in the context of the Passover the night before he died that Christ gave us the new Paschal Mystery that we call today the Mass, or the Eucharist.

As regards the Priory of Sion, this is a modern fabrication based on a series of forgeries committed by a French con man. There is no historical evidence for a Priory until the 1950s.

The facts -- or lack of them -- are important and should be addressed, but the greatest danger of "The Da Vinci Code" is that it reinforces relativistic, irrational attitudes by pretending to satisfy the mind while manipulating emotions. Christians enamored with this book, or think it is harmless entertainment, should reconsider the impact of the novel and re-examine its claim that Christianity has been a long, bloody lie, that Jesus is a mere mortal, a fraud who lived an immoral life.

The Back Page

Much ado about 'Da Vinci Code'

TV to devote much side coverage to controversy

NEW YORK (CNS) — Here are some television program notes for the week of May 14. They have not been reviewed and therefore are not necessarily recommended by the Office for Film & Broadcasting. TV Parental Guidelines are included where known. "The Da Vinci Code" movie tie-in programming listed below is included strictly for informational purposes, although the premise of Dan Brown's best-selling novel, on which the film is based, is contrary to the tenets of the Catholic Church. (All times CDT):

Sunday, May 14, 8 p.m. (Discovery) -- "The Secret Life of Christ." The "Conspiracy Files" series explores the theory that a bloodline from the Son of God survives to this day.

Sunday, May 14, 9 p.m. (Discovery) -- "Unlocking the Da Vinci Code." Documentary exploring whether a painting bought some 30 years ago for a relatively small sum was actually painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

Tuesday, May 16, 7 p.m. (History) -- "Opus Dei: Secrets Revealed." A look at Opus Dei, the Catholic organization that was thrust into the

spotlight because of the way it was portrayed in Dan Brown's book "The Da Vinci Code." For the first time in its 80-year history, Opus Dei's leaders, including Cardinal Julian Herranz Casado, Father Thomas Brohlin and Father Hilary Mahaney, have granted unprecedented access to tell their side of the story to demystify the myths surrounding the organization.

Thursday, May 18, 8 p.m. (A&E) -- "The Da Vinci Code." The "MovieReal" series looks at the making of Ron Howard's new film with exclusive clips and interviews with the stars.

Thursday, May 18, 9 p.m. (A&E) -- "Illuminating Angels & Demons." Based on Simon Cox's book of the same name, the program explores the truth behind the fiction of Dan Brown's novel "Angels & Demons."

Friday, May 19, 8 p.m. (History) -- "Before the Da Vinci Code." A look at Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln's book "Holy Blood, Holy Grail," the nonfiction precursor to Dan Brown's best-selling "The Da Vinci Code."



Lewis Alsamari, left, and Jamie Harding star in a scene from "United 93."

'United 93' a tense, well-acted documentary-style movie

By Harry Forbes
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Is it too soon for a big-screen drama about Sept. 11, 2001? Does anyone really want to relive the events of that awful day? Can any film that makes the attempt avoid the specter of exploitation?

Those questions will surely percolate in the minds of prospective ticket buyers.

Whatever one's apprehensions, "United 93" (Universal) scores as a tense, well-acted documentary-style drama about the hijacking of United Airlines flight 93 (one of four planes seized that day) when passengers fought back the terrorists. The ensuing melee brought down the plane, preventing the destruction of what was assumed would be a Washington landmark.

The film lays out the very ordinariness of that fateful morning in careful detail. As we watch the passengers going through all the standard airport procedures, working on their laptops, greeting the cheerful stewardesses, getting settled, ordering their special-diet meals, we know precisely what's going to happen, which only serves to build a mounting sense of dread.

So, too, we see the four terrorists coolly going through all the same motions as the regular passengers. Though they aren't demonized, apart from showing their heinous actions of course, you can't help but feel anger at such cold-blooded callousness.

Meanwhile, there are cutaways to various air traffic controllers (in New York; Newark, N.J.; Boston; Cleveland; and Herndon, Va.), disbelieving the early reports of a hijacking of an American Airlines flight out of Boston, and then struggling to make sense of the rapid series of multiple flights gone amuck, until they see the first plane hit the World Trade Center, and the pieces begin to fit.

Director Paul Greengrass takes a dispassionate approach and shoots in real time with a no-name cast. As noted, it's the normalcy in light of events to come that makes the film so hard to stomach, though the actual acts of violence — once the hijackers make themselves known and take control — are sensitively handled. The frantic camerawork and the kinetic editing mask much of the violence and bloodshed. Your imagination does most of the work.

2 Catholic leaders look at Christianity's purpose

"What Is the Point of Being a Christian?" by Father Timothy Radcliffe, OP. Continuum/ Burns & Oates (New York and London, 2005). 218 pp., \$16.95. "God's Mercy Revealed: Healing for a Broken World," by Msgr. Peter Magee. Servant Books (Cincinnati, 2005). 164 pp., \$10.99.

Reviewed by Sister Mona Castelazo, CSJ
Catholic News Service

In "What Is the Point of Being a Christian?" Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe, master general of the worldwide Dominican order from 1992 to 2001, presents an overview of Catholicism.

"God's Mercy Revealed: Healing for a Broken World," by Msgr. Peter McGee, a former member of the diplomatic service of the Vatican, deals with repentance and forgiveness within the Catholic Church in 20 reflections.

After leading his order for nearly a decade, Father Radcliffe now writes from the Blackfriars Dominican community at Oxford, England. In this book he employs literary, scientific, economic and theological sources to address challenging, controversial issues in today's Catholic Church. In particular, he offers insights into polarities within the church. He suggests that divisiveness is basically "uncatholic" and he calls for open, collaborative dialogue.

Rather than using the terms liberal or conservative, Father Radcliffe refers to "kingdom Catholics," whose intent is to resist the destruc-

tiveness of fundamentalism and conformity, and "communion Catholics," whose idea is to resist the dangers of liberalism and moral relativity.

Kingdom Catholics see themselves as being on pilgrimage, reaching out toward universality and the unity of all humanity. Communion Catholics see themselves as primarily members of a believing institution, preserving a particular rite and identity.

The book encourages leadership in the church to develop ongoing opportunities for dialogue, since both kingdom and communion views are vital for Catholicism. However, Father Radcliffe sees church leadership as being the task of all baptized Christians: "That it might be in some exclusive sense the task of bishops seems to be a strange and very modern idea." The author points to the examples of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Catherine of Siena, Dorothy Day and St. Benedict, whose courage in speaking out and acting brought about great church reform.

Christians in the world are called to work toward whatever promotes human unity; to confront the "unholy trinity" of unlimited desire, absolute property rights and the deification of money; and to find ways to speak to each other without fear. He sees a need to create "a common world of meaning," free of domination or contempt. In Father Radcliffe's words, "The Good Shepherd leads his sheep out of the tight and tiny boxes in which we lock ourselves into his spacious pasture — his voice liberates us from narrow ideologies and small vocabularies."