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West Texas

# ANGELUS

Serving the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume XXVII, No. 12

DECEMBER 2006

## Holiday Needs

Catholic Charities agencies who need...

21%

more toys

25%

more volunteers

30%

food donations

99%

financial contributions

Source: Catholic Charities USA

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## Work, prayer to be done

It is the busy time of year at the Mt. Carmel Hermitage, a quiet peaceful place about 25 miles southwest of San Angelo, near Christoval. There are prayers to be said, work to be done, fudge to be made and a new bakery to be built. **Stories/Pgs. 8-9**

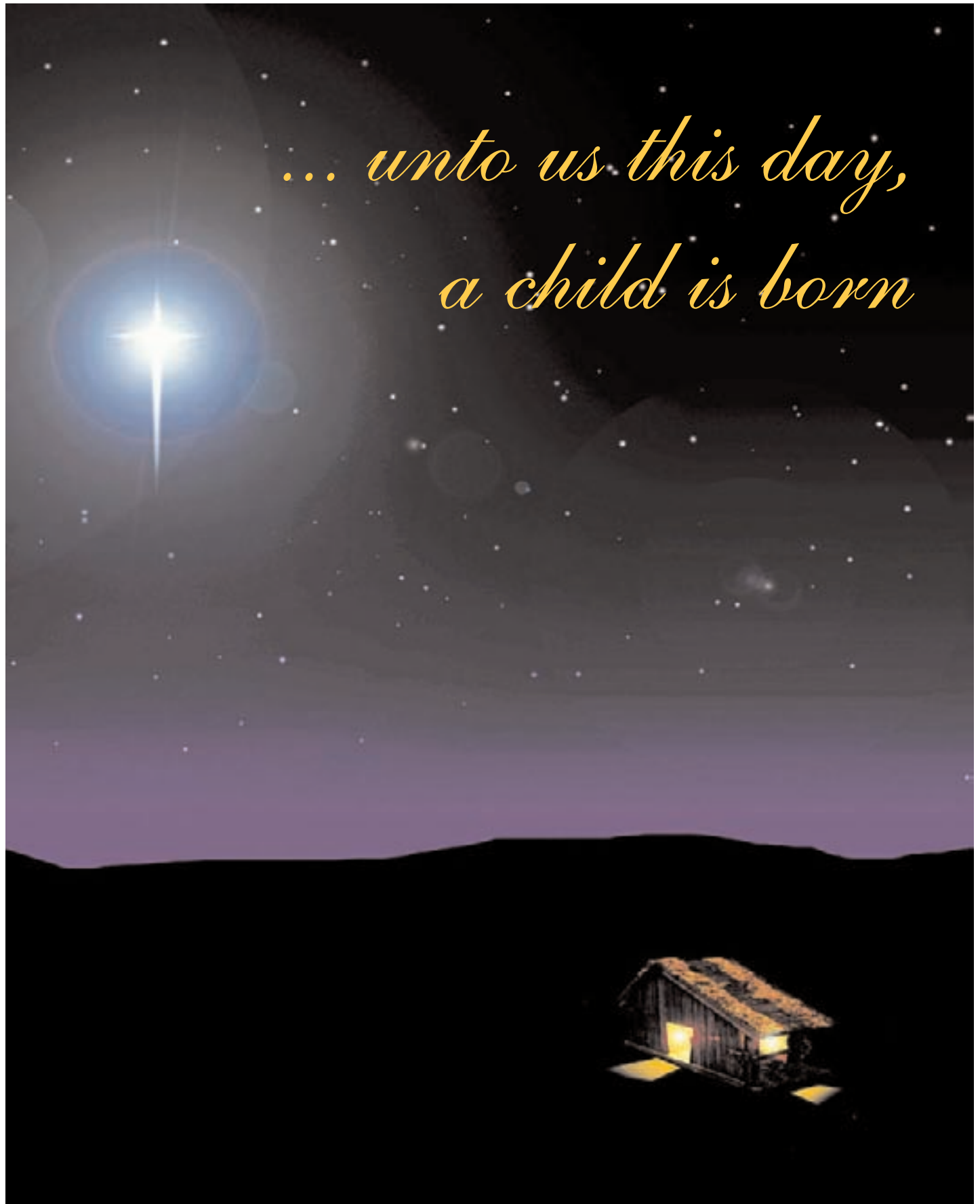
## Youth 2000 Retreat coming

The Youth 2000 Retreat will be **Jan. 26-28** at St. Stephen's in Midland. All youth and young adults, ages 13 to 30, are welcome. Enjoy a weekend of lively music, inspiring talks, Eucharistic adoration, group workshops, personal testimonies, and faith sharing. For details, contact [drobson@st.wtxcoxmail.com](mailto:drobson@st.wtxcoxmail.com) or call (432) 520-7394 or (432) 978-6570.

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*... unto us this day,  
a child is born*



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Story suggestions, calendar items,  
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**COPY, PHOTO DEADLINE:**  
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Letters to the editor are printed at the  
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the writer are subject to  
verification. Please include name,  
address and phone number when sub-  
mitting letters.



# Online Angelus – a tool for WT Catholics

The Diocese of San Angelo Department of Communications is proud to unveil its new online product: *The Online Angelus*.

Located at <http://theonlineangelus.wordpress.com/>, the Web site uses an online host commonly used by bloggers.

Although comments are welcome, *The Online Angelus* is not a blog, per say, but a way for the Church to communicate with West Texas Catholics on a daily, and not just monthly, basis.

“We have been working on this for a number of months now,” said Director of Communications Jimmy Patterson. “More specifically, we’ve given a lot of thought to the need for ongoing communications with the 80,000 plus Catholics in the diocese and we feel this is a great way to get that effort started.”

## The Online Angelus

<http://theonlineangelus.wordpress.com/>

Bishop Michael Pfeifer echoed Patterson’s sentiments, saying such a communications tool could prove a valuable way to get important information concerning the Church and individual parishes to the faithful.

The new online edition of the Angelus will include:

- ▶ daily calendar events of happenings around the diocese;
- ▶ daily readings;
- ▶ daily Catholic headlines provided by the Catholic News Service;
- ▶ feature stories from CNS.
- ▶ postings of stories originally published in

the West Texas Angelus.

- ▶ breaking news from the diocese;
- ▶ communication from the bishop as needed.

*The Online Angelus* will be updated week-days Monday-Friday. Weekends we’ll publish as needed.

“We welcome submissions from parishioners throughout the diocese and if we are able to post notices of events at individual parishes we will certainly do that,” Patterson said. “Such a communications tool is a huge tool, but one that can be beneficial for hundreds, maybe thousands of people, who may have heard an event is to occur but can’t locate the specifics. That’s the gap we hope to fill. We are a one-person office, but hope to be able to post all pertinent information in a timely fashion.”

## DIOCESAN BRIEFS

### Sanderson Centennial

St. James Catholic Church in Sanderson will be celebrating its centennial on **December 9, 2006**. The little adobe church, known as the Immaculate Conception Church, was blessed by Bishop Forest in 1906 and some 37 years later this little church became too small for a larger congregation. The present church building was then built. The theme of the celebration will be “100 Years of Existence, 100 Years of Blessings.”

Activities planned throughout the day include: an Open House and Exhibits at 10 am in the CCE Building, followed by a parade at 11 am. We are asking all former kings, queens, and princesses to prepare a float for this parade. The parade will end at the parish hall where a meal will be served at Noon. Mariachis will entertain during dinner.

The Most Reverend Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer and current pastor Father Floro Hinacay will celebrate the Centennial Mass at 3 p.m., along with any former priests able to attend. The music for the mass will be provided by the mariachis. For more information please e-mail parish council secretary Gina Garza at [g\\_m\\_garza@yahoo.com](mailto:g_m_garza@yahoo.com).

### Retirement Fund

On **December 9-10** you will have the opportunity to participate in the 2006 Retirement Fund for Religious annual appeal in this Diocese of San Angelo. Please support this collection as generously as you have in the past. Know that many of the retired religious spend hours each day in front of the Blessed Sacrament offering prayers of gratitude for those who “Share in Their Care.”

On behalf of all in vocations, I thank you for your contributions to the 2005 Retirement Fund for Religious. Your generosity is astounding and deeply appreciated by our retired women and men religious and by all of us who are also working untiringly to care for those who have gone before us. The monetary range of our Diocesan giving was from \$20,000 (1989) to \$61,000 (2001) until this past December when your gift to the frail, elderly religious was \$68,000.

Please be aware that more than 37,000 Catholic religious are now over 70. Of these, 11,000 require either skilled nursing care or assisted living which in 2005 alone cost almost \$500,000,000. These types of care in the U.S. typically cost \$169. per day but religious have kept the cost at \$133. per day. Additionally, the average Social Security benefit for religious is approximately one-third that paid to the average U.S. beneficiary.

Thank you again, and God Bless.

– *Sister Marie Malachy, San Angelo*

### Are you being called to a vowed religious life?

Come and spend a weekend with Dominican Sisters and other women, ages 18-40, who are listening to God’s call. The weekend of **January 26-28, 2007**, will provide time for praying, conversing, questioning, exploring, and listening to God’s personal invitation. Jesus invites you to “Come and See.” Registration information and other details may be obtained by e-mailing [newman@wcc.net](mailto:newman@wcc.net) or by calling Marie Malachy Griffin, O.P. at 325-949-8033.

### Muchas Gracias

A special collection was taken up in the parishes of the Diocese of San Angelo on the first weekend of November. It was for the Diocese of San Pedro Sula, our partner diocese in Honduras. Thank you—to all who so generously contributed to this collection. The funds will soon be sent to our partners there. The collection is a sign of our solidarity with the Catholics of Central America. The funds are used for religious purposes in the parishes and diocese of San Pedro Sula. Several parishes, schools and ministries of the Diocese of San Angelo have partners in Honduras as well. Mission trips and various forms of communication express this concern for one another. Everyone is invited to pray for our brothers and sisters in Honduras.

– *Msr. Larry Droll, St. Ann’s, Midland*

### Annual Christmas Dance

Holy Family Catholic Church Singles Ministry, will host a Catholic Divorced Ministry for Region 10 December 9, 8 p.m.–12 midnight. Cost is \$6.00, event is at the Holy Family Church Family Life Center, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth.

Please bring a dish to share! Call Monica Molina at 817-737-6768 to RSVP.

### Rowena Centennial

St. Joseph’s Church in Rowena is planning a Centennial Celebration on **September 1 & 2, 2007**. As a part of this celebration they are collecting wedding photographs of all couples that were married in St. Joseph’s Church. These will be used for a book. If you would like to submit a photo of your wedding picture, please send an 8x10 copy. This photo will not be returned. Photos should be labeled with the couple’s name (including maiden name) and wedding date. They can be mailed to: St. Joseph’s Church Attn: Centennial Comm. P.O. Box 96 Rowena, TX. 76875. Please send the photos by Dec. 31st to assure that they will be included in the book.

## Audit: Parishes work hard to maintain safety

By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer  
Diocese of San Angelo

In 2002 the U.S. Catholic Bishops created a Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in response to the reports of child sexual abuse by Catholic Clergy. At the same time they also created the Office for the Protection of Children and Young People (OCYP) to help them monitor compliance with the Charter by all dioceses in the United States. During the past three years the Diocese of San Angelo has been audited by the OCYP and has been shown to be in complete compliance with all requirements of the Bishop’s Charter each year. For 2006 the OCYP decided there would be no audits for each diocese as preparations are being made for a major audit of all Catholic parishes in 2007.

In the absence of a required audit this year, I have commissioned a self-audit of parishes within the San Angelo Diocese, which encompasses 29 West Texas counties. During October and November, 14 parishes were selected at random and audited for compliance with the Bishop’s Charter. Parishes were audited to insure that employees and volunteers who work with children and youth have completed Criminal Background Checks and attended the diocesan Ethics and Integrity in Ministry Workshop. Parishes were also audited to insure that they have been conducting workshops for parents and children on the prevention of child sexual abuse, as well as having displays of information on hand for those who may

(Please See **AUDIT/12**)

From the Bishop's Desk

# God turned the world upside down

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The inspired writer, Luke, gives us the essence and meaning of the mystery of Christmas that we are celebrating in his gospel (2:1-14), when he tells us "for today in the city of David, a Savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant-baby-wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

Christmas is about the birth of a baby, the most unique baby that was ever born in the history of human kind. The baby of Christmas has changed the world and continues to invite us to change the



Pfeifer

world of our lives, of our families, of our community, of our state, of our nation, and the world. In the name of this beautiful baby of Christmas-Jesus Christ-our Lord and Savior-I wish all of you, your families, and all those near and dear to you a blessed and joyful Christmas as we celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To fully understand the wonderful mystery of Christmas, we must come before the crib and spend time before the infant, the baby, who is "lying in a manger." This infant in the manger is the greatest person who was ever born. This infant brings us salvation. This infant is the way to peace that our world so much needs today. This infant is the greatest teacher who ever lived. I tell young parents who are waiting for their first child that babies are the greatest teachers. Parents read books and go to classes to prepare for the birth of a child -- as they should -- but when that child arrives, that little one does not

necessarily follow a book or a plan. That little one just lives and teaches the parents -- and all of us-many mysteries about what human life is all about.

The eternal Word of God, by coming to us in the flesh as a baby, turned the world upside down. Of all the ways God might have entered our world, the divine choice was to come as a newborn human -- as a baby. The baby of Christmas is full of promises. The baby of Christmas -- the infant lying in a manger -- is full of promise, of hope, and is our way to salvation.

On Christmas we come together to remember and relive all that Christ has done for us. Jesus, who began his life on earth as a baby, totally dependent on his parents, especially his dear mother, Mary, remains with us today, a

(Please See BISHOP/11)



Clergy and deacons from the Midland-Odesa deanery at the altar during Mass to mark the closing of the Year of Reconciliation, Nov. 22, at St. Stephen's in Midland.  
PHOTO BY MARK STERKEL

## Year of Reconciliation closes with Mass series

By Jimmy Patterson  
Editor, *West Texas Angelus*

MIDLAND -- Calling mercy "the perfection of love," Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer used the occasion of the Mass to close the Year of Reconciliation in the diocese, apologizing to almost 500 in attendance for any wrongdoing either he has committed or for any sins of the Church.

"I ask your forgiveness if I have offended you," Pfeifer said. "I need your forgiveness and your mercy. Luke says to be merciful, just as your heavenly Father has been merciful," Pfeifer said. "We all need God's mercy and forgiveness."

The end of the Year of Reconciliation came with the end of the Church year, Nov. 26, the Feast of Christ the King.

**'One word sums up what this year is all about, and that is mercy.'**

-- Most Rev. Michael Pfeifer, at Mass to celebrate the closing of the Year of Reconciliation, St. Stephens, Midland.

Pfeifer presided over Masses in all three deaneries marking the close of the special year, and urged all in attendance to continue with an emphasis on reconciliation, penance and mercy, and has asked priests throughout the diocese to study ways parishioners can incorporate the practice of spiritual and corporal works of mercy into their everyday lives as a way of the continuing the year of Reconciliation.

para escritorio del obispo

## Dios volteo el mundo al revés en venir como niño

por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer

El escritor inspirado, San Lucas, nos da la esencia y el significado del misterio de Navidad que estamos celebrando en su evangelio (Lc 2:1-14), cuando el nos dice "Hoy les ha nacido, en la ciudad de David un salvador que es el Mesías, el Señor. Esto les servirá de señal: encontrarán al niño



Pfeifer

envuelto en pañales y recostado en un pesebre". La Navidad es el nacimiento de un bebé, el bebé más único que ha nacido en la historia de la humanidad. El bebé de Navidad ha cambiado el mundo y continúa a invitarnos a cambiar el mundo de nuestras vidas, de nuestras familias, de nuestra comunidad, de nuestro estado, de nuestra nación, y del mundo. En el nombre de este bebé bello de Navidad-Jesucristo-nuestro Señor y Salvador-les deseo a todos ustedes, sus familias, y todas las personas queridas en sus vidas, una Navidad bendita y feliz mientras celebramos el

cumpleaños de nuestro Señor y Salvador, Jesucristo.

Para entender completamente el misterio maravilloso de Navidad, debemos acercarnos al pesebre y tomar tiempo antes el niño, el bebé, quien está "acostado en un pesebre". Él bebé en el pesebre es la persona más grande que ha nacido. Este niño nos trae salvación. Él es el camino a la paz que nuestro mundo tanto necesita. Este bebé es el más grande maestro que ha vivido. Yo les digo a parejas

(Mira OBISPO/7)

## Pope visits Muslim world of Turkey

ISTANBUL, Turkey (CNS) -- Closing out a four-day pilgrimage of dialogue in Turkey, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass with the tiny Christian community in Istanbul and encouraged it to live in harmony with the Muslim majority.

"Brothers and sisters, your communities walk the humble path of daily companionship with those who do not share our faith, yet profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us adore the one, merciful God," the pope said in a sermon.

"You know well that the church wishes to impose nothing on anyone, and that she merely asks to live in freedom, in order to reveal

the one whom she cannot hide, Christ Jesus," he said.

About 300 people packed into the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit for the Dec. 1 Mass. Several hundred more stood in the cathedral's inner plaza and in the courtyard of a nearby church, following the liturgy on a TV screen.

Turkey has only 32,000 Catholics in a population of 72 million. Most of them live in Istanbul, which has for centuries been a bridge to the West.

The pope, wearing red vestments to mark the work of the Holy Spirit, processed into the small church and listened as Armenian Catholics chanted the entrance song. A Chaldean choir of youths,

dressed in blue tunics, sang a hymn in Aramaic.

The seven languages used in the liturgy were meant to express the diversity of the Catholic community in Turkey.

The pope paid tribute to this rich variety, asking Turkish Catholics to continue to live the faith in a humble manner with a sense of service to others.

"To live by the Spirit is not to live for oneself alone, but to let oneself be conformed to Christ Jesus by becoming, like him, the servant of his brothers and sisters," he said.

As a minority in a Muslim country, he said, Catholics should be attentive to all those who seek justice, peace and dignity.

# Advent: A time to prepare for the way of the Lord



By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

"Prepare the way of the Lord" [Luke 3:4]. These words from John the Baptist echo throughout the season of Advent with which we begin a new liturgical year. John's words serve as a wake-up call, as they remind us to step up our efforts at making our lives and the world ready for Christmas so that Jesus can once again be born in each one of us, and so that we will be prepared to greet him when he comes in glory. As Advent prepares us for the celebration of the beautiful birthday of Christ on Christmas, and also reminds us to prepare for Christ's second coming at the end of time, it is thus a time of joyful and spiritual expectation.

The first observance of Advent can be traced to around the 5th century. The prophets of Advent spoke of the Messiah who is to come, and a people desperate for the justice that the Messiah will establish—a justice we must continue to establish in the name of Jesus.

Advent's larger-than-life character is John the Baptist, who took center stage in the unfolding drama of salvation history to prepare for the long-awaited Messiah. John's message was simple but direct, and went to the heart—"Prepare the way of the Lord and repent." His powerful message challenges us today to focus on the real meaning of the season, and to prepare in an individual, family, and community way for the One who is the Son of

justice, who is truly the Light of the World, and who enlightens our path to happiness in this life and to eternal happiness.

"Prepare the way of the Lord." We know that in the four weeks of Advent, we have much to do to prepare for in our hearts and in our homes for the celebration of the birthday of Christ. Jesus came to focus our attention on how to build up the Kingdom of God by our service, prayer, self-sacrifice, and striving for peace and justice. Advent brings out the best in us and helps us to look at the world with fresh eyes and search out ways to help those we see who are in need.

In Advent we prepare for the beautiful feast of Christmas and we prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ, who "came not to be served, but to serve." [Mt.20:28] Advent is a time for us individually and in our families to open our hearts to the light and love of the Holy Spirit so that we can truly be the kind of servants that Christ wants us to be for one another. Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, who proclaimed herself simply as the servant, the handmaid of the Lord, is a wonderful Advent model and teacher of service, and how to live with the Spirit.

May we all open our minds and hearts to let Mary and the great prophet of Advent, John the Baptist, show us how today in our contemporary world we can best prepare in a spirit of service, love, and generosity for the birthday of our Messiah, Lord and Savior—Jesus Christ.

## Collection for Church in Latin America set for January 27, '07 weekend

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Each year there is a national Collection for the Church in Latin America, and this year's collection will be held in parishes of our Diocese and across the country on the weekend of January 27-28, 2007. Proceeds from the collection are distributed to dioceses, parishes, religious congregations, seminaries, and other catholic institutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to assist in the formation of priests, religious, lay ministers, missionaries, pastoral workers, catechists, and youth ministers. Thus, fellow Catholics in Latin America and the Caribbean—who are rich in faith but lacking in material resources—are not only able to participate more fully in the life of the Church, but are enabled to share it with others as well.

When we contribute to this national Collection, we are actively living out our call to stewardship and participating in a work of solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the American hemisphere.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Church in Latin America uses the collection funds to support its pastoral grants program in 22 countries and to support the work of the Department of Social Development and World Peace on behalf of the Church in Latin America. Further information on the Committee's work can be found at [www.usccb.org/latinamerica](http://www.usccb.org/latinamerica).

I ask you to generously contribute to this Collection, and I am grateful for your past generosity. Together, let us ask the Lord to continue to bless the works of the Church in Latin America.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Bishop Michael Pfeifer, Diocese of San Angelo

## Welcoming Christ in the migrant

(Editor's Note: National Migration Week is January 7-13, 2007)

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

I invite all the people of our Diocese to join through prayer and study in the remembrance of the 26<sup>th</sup> annual observance of National Migration Week which is celebrated from January 7-13, 2007. The theme for 2007 is **Welcoming Christ in the Migrant**, which is at once an invitation and a challenge to provide welcome for the migrants, immigrants, refugees, human trafficking victims, and other people on the move who come to our land seeking justice and peace. Our theme reminds us of Jesus' scriptural admonition to us:

*'Lord, when did we see you a stranger...and not minister to your needs?' He [the Lord] will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'*

This reminder is particularly timely as our citizens and leaders grapple with the complexities and many dimensions of the migration experience. Our nation's legitimate security concerns have been distorted by some who would foment anxiety, fear, and a distrust of migrants. The



present immigration reform debate has lost much of its reason and is often being fueled by raw emotions. Scriptures and Catholic Social Teaching call upon all of us to examine the issues and respond to the strangers among us as we would to Jesus Himself. The Holy Family found safety and new lives in Egypt during their time of great need. Many migrants today follow similar paths as they embark on their journey of hope. We live in an age when strangers in our midst have become a source of suspicion and fear. Jesus' command for us to welcome these strangers as we would

welcome him is at odds with much of the prevailing sentiment expressed today. Debates over whether and how to address the migration phenomenon fills not only the halls of government but even community and parish halls. The historically generous American spirit it has been replaced in some quarters with calls for isolation and restriction.

During this week dedicated to migrants, I invite all of our parish communities to welcome Christ in the migrant through prayer, education, and parish outreach. To assist you in this expression of faith, a wide variety of resources for parishes and schools has been developed and are available on the USCCB/MRS National Migration Week web site at [www.usccb.org/mrs.nmw.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/mrs.nmw.shtml).

When we reach out to aid and comfort the newcomers to our land, we are indeed offering ourselves and our gifts in service to the Lord. This is not only our Christian duty but a privilege, knowing that we too have been adopted into God's family. Therefore may you be richly blessed by your faithful acts of hospitality in Christ's name.



Presenter Scott Lawson, of Arlington, entertained and informed diocesan youth Oct. 21

## Youths gather, learn more about their faith

Young people from throughout the diocese gathered on Oct. 21 to learn about Catholic faith traditions and living out our commitment in significant ways. Scott Lawson, youth ministry presenter from Arlington spoke on what is meant by faith and how one lives it out. His sense of humor and activities kept everyone's attention throughout the day.

The day opened with music and activities led by Margie Schillo and the Sacred Heart Cathedral youth choir. Lydia Martinez, a student at Angelo State University was the emcee for the day. She kept everyone on schedule and involved.

Rev. Rodney White, diocesan vocation director, had

a booth at the event and he addressed the group on being open to the call to the priesthood and religious life. A video presentation on Souper Bowl of Caring was also shown in the afternoon. This is a project for parishes to collect money for the hungry on Super Bowl Sunday and donate the proceeds to a charity of their choice.

Bishop Pfeifer welcomed the participants, recited the traditional roll call of all the parishes in attendance and later in the afternoon presided at the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The day ended with a dance.

## Acogiendo a Cristo en el migrante

por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer

Invito a todos los feligreses de nuestra Diócesis que se unan mediante la oración y el estudio para recordar la 26 observancia anual de la Semana Nacional de la Migración que se celebra durante los días 7-13, 2007 de enero. El tema para 2007 es Acogiendo a Cristo en el Migrante, que es, desde luego, una invitación y reto para proveer una bienvenida para los migrantes, inmigrantes, refugiados, víctimas del tráfico humano, y otras personas quienes vienen a nuestro país en búsqueda de justicia y paz. Nuestro tema nos hace recordar de la amonestación en las escrituras que Jesús nos dijo:

'Señor, ¿cuándo te vimos de forastero ... y no te asistimos?' Y él les replicará: 'Yo les aseguro

que, cuando no lo hicieron con uno de aquellos más insignificantes, tampoco lo hicieron conmigo.'

Este recordatorio es particularmente oportuno mientras que nuestros ciudadanos y líderes toman a mano las complejidades y las muchas dimensiones de la experiencia migratoria. Nuestro concernimiento legítimo de la seguridad de nuestra nación ha sido torcido por unos que provocan la ansiedad, temor, y una desconfianza de los migrantes. La discusión que existe hoy acerca de la reforma de la inmigración ha perdido mucha de su razón y ha sido encendido por emociones radicales. Las Escrituras y la Enseñanza Social Católica nos llaman a todos para examinar los asuntos y responder a los extran-

jeros entre nosotros, así como lo haríamos a Cristo mismo. La Sagrada Familia hallaron resguardo y vidas nuevas en Egipto durante el tiempo de gran necesidad. Muchos migrantes ahora siguen el paso similar al embarcarse en una jornada de esperanza. Vivimos en una época en que los forasteros entre nosotros se han convertido en fuente de sospecha y temor. El mandamiento de Jesús de acoger a estos forasteros como lo acogeríamos a él está reñido con gran parte del sentimiento prevaleciente expresado hoy. Los debates sobre si se debe abordar el fenómeno de la migración, y cómo, llenan no sólo los vestíbulos gubernamentales sino incluso los vestíbulos de comunidades y

(Mira **MIGRANTE**/14)

## Midland parishioner discovers power of the rosary after years

(Editor's Note: Ellen Hopkins is a Midland-based freelance writer and parishioner at St. Ann's in Midland.)

By Ellen Hopkins

The nuns who taught us in the 1950s and 60s deepened our Catholic faith immeasurably but their repeated point about the rosary being a "powerful prayer" always eluded me, until recently. Of course, my idea of "powerful" back then had more to do with cars and NASA's space program than church or prayers. But now that I'm in my 50s and my mother and mother-in-law have both died, the nuns' point shines as brilliantly as the Christmas star.

There are 53 Hail Mary prayers on each rosary and most people struggle to get through them without our minds wandering off on a tangent. We start thinking about God, the Blessed Mother and the five mysteries, and invariably revert to thinking about kids, office deadlines, where to eat lunch and whether the lawn mowing can wait until Saturday. All of this mind boggling thought occurs while we are still praying -- or at least repeating -- all those words in this powerful prayer. And powerful it is, as my mother could have told you.

Fifteen years ago, my stubborn Irish mother asked her priest, Father Patrick O'Byrne, to bring her five of the Irish rosaries he so often talked about at mass. When he returned from visiting his family in Ireland, she paid him for the five rosaries and told him she planned to give one to each of her two sisters, one to her favorite niece, one to her daughter, and to keep one for herself. Receiving the rosaries at various times over subsequent months, we recipients each felt special because we were the only five people we knew who owned a true Irish rosary. We christened ourselves an "Irish Rosary Family."

The rosaries are not beautiful by any standard, but the green, plastic beads each have an engraved shamrock that is most noticeable as the fingers slip from one bead to another during prayer. Years later, when Mom became ill, I rushed home to take her to a specialist. Of course, her Irish rosary was among the items she packed for the quick trip to the diagnostic hospital. In only a matter of days Mom's condition became critical. Despite the largeness of the circle of her family and friends, and the frantic phone calls among us, the only ones who were able to join Mom and me at the out-of-town hospital were her two sisters and favorite niece. On her last day - with a son flying from Philadelphia and a son-in-law flying from Midland - only Mom's Irish Rosary Family members were at her bedside.

Mom had always been an advocate of the daily rosary, although she never spoke of its "power." I wonder how many thousands of rosaries and hundreds of thousands of Hail Mary's she must have said in her 73 years, each prayer ending with the line, "...pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." How often she must have prayed to the Blessed Virgin for a graceful death, one that included the Sacrament of Last Rites. She received that. And perhaps, unbeknownst to us as her health had begun to decline, she prayed in some way that her Irish Rosary Family would be there when she needed us most. And she received that wish,

Please See **ROSARY**/6

## DIOCESAN DATES

## Bishop's Calendar

## DECEMBER

**7 -- SAN ANGELO** - Shannon Hospital - Advent and Christmas Mass at 11:00 a.m.

**8 -- SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass at 12:00 noon

**8 -- SAN ANGELO**, St. Margaret - Living Rosary at 7:00 p.m.

**9 -- SANDERSON**, St. James - 100th Anniversary Mass at 3:00 p.m.

**10 -- SAN ANGELO**, St. Joseph - Mass at 11:15 a.m.

**11 -- SAN ANGELO**, Bishop's Residence - Christmas Party for Staff at 6 p.m.

**12 -- SAN ANGELO**, St. Mary - Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at 7:00 p.m.

**13 -- SAN ANGELO**, First United Methodist Church, Advent Prayer Service, Noon;

**13 -- SAN ANGELO**, Diocesan Pastoral Center - Presbyteral Council Meeting, 2-5 p.m., Christ the King Retreat Center, Christmas Party for Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives at 5:30 p.m.

**14 -- SAN ANGELO**, Baptist Memorial - Advent and Christmas Mass at 11:00 a.m.

**15-16 -- DALLAS**, Mass for Holy Spirit Circle

**16 -- SAN ANGELO**, St. Joseph - Mass at 6 p.m., Posadas at 7 p.m.

**17 -- MERETA**, Holy Family - Mass, 10:45 a.m.

**17 -- SAN ANGELO**, West Texas Boys Ranch Christmas Program at 4:30 p.m.

**18 -- EDEN**, Detention Center - Mass at 1:30 p.m.

**18 -- SAN ANGELO**, St. Joseph - Advent Night of Prayer at 7:00 p.m. for Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives of the San Angelo Deanery

**19 -- ABILENE**, Sacred Heart - Advent Night of Prayer at 7:00 p.m. for Priests, Sisters, Deacons and Wives of the Abilene Deanery

**20 -- SAN ANGELO**, Angelo Catholic School - Christmas Mass at 8:30 a.m.

**24 -- SAN ANGELO**, Mass at Tom Green County Jail - 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

**24 -- SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Christmas Vigil Mass at Midnight

**25 -- SAN ANGELO**, Goodfellow Air Force Base - Christmas Day Mass at 9:00 a.m.

**26-28 --** Rest and Prayer

## JANUARY 2007

**1 -- SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Feast of the Mother of God Mass at 9:00 a.m.

**2-5 -- SAN ANTONIO**, Bishops' Retreat

**6 --** Day of Healing for Those who have experienced an abortion -10:00 am. to 3:00 p.m.

**7 -- SAN ANGELO**, Christ the King Retreat Center - Dialogue with Youth Representatives - 11:30 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

**8-9 -- DALLAS**, USCCB Youth Audit Seminar

**10 -- SAN ANGELO**, Diocesan Pastoral Center - 11 a.m. Meet with Deans

**11 -- ODESSA**, St. Joseph and St. Anthony- 6:30 p.m. Meet with Priests and all People of the Parishes for Dialogue on the Life of the Parish

**13-15 -- SAN JUAN**, Meeting of Texas and Mexican Border Bishops

**16 -- SAN ANGELO**, Holy Angels - Presentation to the RCIA at 6:30 p.m.

**17-19 -- OKLAHOMA CITY**, Southwest Liturgical Conference

**21 -- STERLING CITY**, St. Paschal - Mass and Dedication of New Building - 12:30 p.m.

**22 -- SAN ANGELO**, Sacred Heart Cathedral - Pro Life Mas at 12:00 noon

**23-25 -- SAN ANTONIO**, MACC Breakfast with Business Leaders and Meetings

**27 -- SAN ANGELO**, First Methodist Church - Prayer Service for the City of San Angelo, 11 a.m.

**27-28 -- MIDLAND**, St. Stephen - YOUTH 2000 -Mass at 10:30 a.m.

**30 -- AUSTIN**, Catholic Health Association Advocacy Day

Christ The King Center  
DECEMBER 2006

**8 --** Immaculate Conception Feast Day-Office Closed

**8-10 --** Diaconate Training Program

**10 --** Natural Family Planning Class CKRC Department Heads Meeting

**11 --** Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

**12 --** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

**13 --** Bishop's Christmas Party Priests, Sisters, Deacons & Wives

**13-14 --** International Clergy Orientation Program

**14 --** Catholic Daughters Christmas Party Advent Evening of Recollection

**15-17 --** Healing Retreat

**18 --** Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

**19 --** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

**18-Jan. 1 --** Christmas & New Year Holidays-Office Closed

## Necrology -- January 2007

**10 --** Rev. Francis Beazley, OMI ('92)

**13 --** Rev. Joseph Walter (1989)

**16 --** Rev. Cyril Lange (1971)

**16 --** Msgr. Timothy Murphy (2004)

**18 --** Rev. Patrick Ryan, OMI (1975)

**19 --** Fr. Robert Kelly (1999)

**26 --** Deacon D.J. Goetz (2003)

**26 --** Jack Peterson (1987)

## TRAVEL: St. Mark's known for its altar, which is covered with more than 3,000 precious stones

(From 11)

States. Long ago the Venetians adopted the apostle Mark as their patron saint, represented by a winged lion. This creature came to symbolize Venetian power and stood as a reminder of the ever-watchful eye and presence of Venice over its conquered territories.

The Basilica of St. Mark the Evangelist is the cathedral church of the city and seat of the Patriarch of Venice and has been since 1807, when it took the place of the former cathedral of San Pietro di Castello, and it is a living testimony of Christian faith. In particular the medieval mosaics, depicting stories and episodes from the Old and New Testaments are not only biblical meditation, but also - like the icons of the Eastern Church - a sign of God's presence in the world. The present Basilica is the third church to be built on the site, following the one commissioned by doge Giustiniano Partecipazio to celebrate the arrival of the body of St. Mark in

Venice in 828. Doge Pietro Orseolo I ordered the 10th century reconstruction after a fire in 976. In the second half of the 11th century, doge Domenico Contarini had the church entirely rebuilt on a much larger scale, though using much of the ancient foundations and masonry. The church was consecrated in 1904.

Known the world over for its mosaics, St. Mark's Basilica is also well known for the Pala d'Oro, one of the richest and most precious altar screens in the world. It is covered with more than 3000 precious stones and enamel icons inlaid in gold. You may then choose to see many of the other treasures pillaged from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. As you sit with a coffee, on the piazza, please keep in mind the piazza floods almost every winter with as much as three feet of water. This takes a terrible toll on the Basilica and other buildings, and the Venetians are constantly seeking ways of holding the sea back.

## ROSARY: Praying the Rosary gives the faithful amazing responsibility for others

(From 5)

too -- the four of us coming from different directions, but finding the means to arrive at her side for her last few hours. In those last few moments, Mom painlessly and peacefully slipped away from this life and into an everlasting life. Was her gentle, beautiful death a testament to the power of the rosary? The Irish Rosary Family members believe that with all our hearts.

If that weren't convincing enough, the rosary's power was evident again just a few months ago as my mother-in-law's 85 years on earth came to an end. She, too, was a devout Catholic who prayed the daily rosary. Her health failed so suddenly that those of us who live 1,000 miles away were challenged to reach her before she lost consciousness. My husband and I got tickets on the last connecting flight out of Midland, rented the last available car in Omaha, which was hosting the College World Series and had rented every car and room in town, and got to her bedside near midnight. Her eyes were closed, her breathing shallow, but her solid grip on the Holy Land olivewood rosary we had mailed her several weeks earlier was unmistakable. Surrounding her bedside were her other children and

their spouses. We joined them and prayed aloud one last rosary for her as she quietly slipped into heaven shortly after our arrival.

Were these women always convinced their powerful daily prayer would assist them at the hour of death, just the way they had requested 53 times a day for decades? Of course they were, and their example leaves no doubt for those of us who try and repeatedly fail at our commitment to a daily rosary. I intend to keep trying, and in an effort to help me focus I've designated each bead's prayer for someone special in my life.

In addition to the 53 Hail Mary's, there are Our Father's, Glory Be's, O My Jesus' and other prayers I say for a total of 70 friends, family members, priests and nuns I pray for on each rosary. My husband is always the first Our Father bead, my nephew Andy is the third bead on the fourth decade, and so on as I pray my 70 prayers each day. That's a lot of power in my hands and an amazing responsibility that I gladly accept. If only we could all keep trying to spend 20 minutes a day saying the daily rosary and affecting the lives of our 70 most-loved people. No doubt our grade school nuns would be proud of our efforts and our mothers in heaven would smile.

# Bodies in plastic on display throughout the country

By Rev. Thad Pacholczyk

An exhibit called "Body Worlds" is currently touring the United States and generating some animated discussion in its wake.

It puts the human body on public display in various poses after the body has been filled with a kind of plastic preservative. The bodies are posed, for example, as a rider on a horse, where the body of the horse is also plasticized. By removing skin and various layers of musculature to expose internal organs, it is possible to literally look inside the body and see its inner structure. In one exhibit, an expectant mother has been cross-sectioned to reveal her unborn child, while in another, a man has been peeled down to his musculature, and he carries his skin on his arm like an old raincoat. The exhibit is billed as an edu-



Pacholczyk

cational exhibit, teaching people about the internal structure and organization of their own bodies. As the director of the exhibit phrased it, "My aim is to illuminate and educate through the beautiful arrangement" of bodies. Yet some people find the exhibit "edgy", causing more than a tinge of discomfort, and they wonder whether there aren't ethical concerns associated with putting the human body on display in this way.

One potential problem associated with such a display involves consent. In general, consent is very important, and should be sought for organ or bodily donation. Informed consent seems to be a recurrent theme in regards to this exhibition, since some of the bodies which have been on display in the past may not have had convincing documentation of informed consent. Several of the bodies may have originated from natural disasters in which the victims could not be identified. Hence, one can inquire whether all of the subjects really approved of their new "show business careers", or as one commentator, half tongue-in-cheek, mused about the matter: "Dear World: Please

don't let them pump plastic into me and exhibit me naked, without half my skin, playing tennis. I hate tennis." Other issues regarding consent are worthy of consideration as well. Obtaining valid informed consent may not really be possible when children or infants in utero are put on display, even though it is true that medical schools and museums have a rather long history of preserving human fetuses and embryos in formaldehyde for teaching and educational purposes.

Obtaining consent from adults, on the other hand, is not necessarily a difficult proposition. The organizer of the Body Worlds exhibit claims that more than 6000 people have already signed the dotted line for their own future "plastination." Many individuals are happy to donate their bodies to science. I recall doing dissections as an undergraduate student in an anatomy and physiology class, using a cadaver from an elderly lady who had donated her body to science. Such donations are not morally problematic, and in fact are similar to organ donation. Such organ donation is not only permissible, but can be seen as a

very generous act. As Pope John Paul II once put it: "A particularly praiseworthy example... is the donation of organs, performed in an ethically acceptable manner, with a view to offering a chance of health and even of life itself to the sick who sometimes have no other hope."

But what about the display of bodies where consent cannot be obtained? When dealing with situations like museums displaying ancient Egyptian mummies, or tourists observing the remains of believers in the catacombs under Rome, or archaeologist examining skeletal remains exhumed from digs, such consent can probably be presumed, assuming that certain conditions are met:

1. Their remains are not being used in a disrespectful manner;
2. There is an educational, spiritual or inspirational end being realized by the use of the remains;
3. There was no indication left by the individuals or their relatives explicitly stating that they did not want the remains to be used in this public service;
4. The death of the individual was not (Please See **BIOETHICS/14**)

## OBISPO

(Para 3)

jóvenes que esperan su primer hijo que los bebés son los mejores maestros. Padres de familia leen libros y van a clases para prepararse para el nacimiento de su bebé-como deben-pero cuando llegue ese bebé, el pequeño no necesariamente sigue un libro o un plan. Ese pequeño solamente vive y les enseña a los padres-y todos de nosotros-los muchos misterios de la vida humana.

La Palabra eterna de Dios, al venir a nosotros en carne como bebé, volteó el mundo al revés. De todas las maneras que Dios pudiera venir a nuestro mundo, la selección divina fue venir como recién nacido-como un bebé. El bebé de Navidad está lleno de promesas. El bebé de Navidad-el niño acostado en el pesebre-está lleno de gozo, de esperanza, y es nuestro camino a la salvación.

En Navidad nos reunimos para recordar y revivir todo lo que Jesús ha hecho por nosotros. Jesús, que comenzó su vida aquí en el mundo como bebé, totalmente dependiente de sus padres cuando nació, especialmente de su querida madre, María, él sigue todavía con nosotros, ya no un bebé. Así como él fue totalmente dependiente de sus padres cuando él nació él todavía depende de nosotros para cuidar el mundo en el que él habitó y por el cual dio su vida.

Todos nosotros queremos a los bebés. Los bebés nos hacen ser lo mejor posible-

en amar, en cuidar y tener compasión. El nacimiento de un bebé es una razón para alegría, celebración y festividad. Es por eso que nos encanta la temporada Navideña con sus fiestas y posadas, sus decoraciones, sus canciones y música, galletas y deliciosa comida-el resplandor y los regalos-todo en honor al bebé más estupendo que ha nacido-Jesús.

Pero nuestro compromiso y atención en el bebé no debe de terminar con el bebé de Navidad, con el Niño Cristo, el niño acostado en el pesebre. Muchos tienen la tendencia de a veces acostarlo en la cama el 26 de Diciembre, o poco después, y olvidarse de la vida, el misterio, y las enseñanzas y obras de este bebé durante el resto de su vida en la Tierra.

Hay mucho más que el nacimiento de un bebé en la historia de la vida de Cristo. Hay más en la historia de Cristo que el final de su drama terrenal que conmemoramos en la Pascua-su gran resurrección. Este bebé crecerá y será el hombre quien es Nuestro Señor y Salvador, Jesucristo, y el desafío es vivir en amor y fidelidad su Evangelio. A todos nosotros nos gusta la "N" y "P" parte de la vida de Cristo. Es decir, que nos gusta la Navidad, y nos gusta la Pascua, pero entre la Navidad y la Pascua hay un Jesús crecido que vivió un amor radical que volteó las vidas de las personas al revés y de arriba abajo.

El desafío para nosotros hoy en día es no solamente vivir la "N" y la "P"-la alegría de la Navidad y la Pascua-la resurrección

de Cristo-pero también vivir todas las letras del alfabeto de Cristo. Quizás a veces, las otras letras de su vida no sean tan atractivas. Por ejemplo, quizás no nos guste o no relacionemos muy bien con la letra "F" de su vida-fe-viviendo cada día con confianza y confidencia, incluso cuando no podemos ver o completamente entender. Y, frecuentemente nos repele la letra "S" de su vida alfabética-su sufrimiento-y su invitación a entregar nuestras vidas totalmente a él. Y, la "M" de su vida también no es muy atractiva-la madera de la cruz y la "L"-lavada de los pies. Y quizás a veces batallamos ser fieles a la "O" de su vida-ser fieles a la oración-y la "P"-penitencia y pacificador. Todos decimos que queremos ser pacificadores, pero ¿estamos listos ser pacificadores según a la manera que Él nos invita a vivir la paz, trabajando por la justicia? ¿Qué diría él de nuestros esfuerzos ahora para la paz? ¿Qué diría sobre como debemos traer la paz a los conflictos de nuestro mundo-comenzando donde vivimos?

Hay otra "S" de la vida del Dios-hombre, Jesús, que constantemente suena en nuestros oídos-quizás en momentos, nos atormenta y nos desafía. ¿Qué es esa "S"?-"Sigue me". Esta fue la invitación constante de Cristo cuando el camino por esta Tierra. "Sigue me"-es lo que el Jesús crecido les dijo a otras personas que él encontró en su camino, y luego les enseñó que es vivir una vida radical autentica y de integridad. Desde el principio al final, el

Jesús crecido modeló lo esencial de hablar y caminar.

"Sigue me."-El hombre Jesús invitó a gente a seguirlo, y luego les enseñó como satisfacer las necesidades más profundas de seres humanos, sanando sus heridas y transformando la oscuridad a la luz. Cuanto nuestro mundo, nuestro país, nuestras familias, y nuestras vidas, necesitan esa luz hoy en día. El Jesús crecido enfrentó los casos más difíciles, y valientemente tocó a los marginados, los heridos con su poder curativo.

"Sigue me" es lo Jesús les dijo a sus amigos, mientras les enseñó otra letra importante "P"-perdonar en lugar de vengarse. Cuando sus seguidores querían limitar el perdonar a solamente unas veces, él les dijo debemos de perdonar setenta veces siete. El les enseñó a sus seguidores-y nos continua demostrando-como dar en lugar de acumular. Y el nos desafía y a nosotros a vivir y tomar pasos valientes para promover la paz que verdaderamente durará. En un mundo donde se dice-"Cuidar a Numero 1," el modeló servicio, misericordia, compasión, dar de si mismo y sacrificarse, hasta el fin de su vida. El nos dice que somos más como el cuando imitamos su espíritu de servicio, cuando vivimos la "M" de su vida, uniendo nuestras vidas a la de Él en la madera de la cruz, y la "L", en lavar los pies de otros.

--"Sigue me"-el Jesús crecido dijo, y nos

(Mira **OBISPO/14**)

# The serenity of the brotherhood

## Thanksgiving, Christmas are feast days for holy monks at Mt. Carmel Hermitage

November, December also the time of year hermits sell their Christmas fudge and bread to raise the major portion of their operating expenses for the next year.

By Jimmy Patterson  
Online Editor

TOM GREEN COUNTY — There is a certain calm at 4 in the morning; a crispness in the air; a quiet in which you can hear butterflies land on leaves and a clarity present at every turn.

The five Carmelite hermits who live at the Mount Carmel Hermitage, about four miles southwest of Christoval, rise and start their days in these peaceful hours. One turns on a single light at the chapel, signifying that prayer time is approaching. A bell is sounded. Candles on the altar are lit.

At 4, the monks gather, sit, kneel, stand and bow together in the choir room, chanting quietly from the Office of The Hours, a book of Catholic readings and prayers.

At 5, the brothers move from the choir room to the chapel, where they sit in absolute quiet and stillness for an hour in silent meditation. An hour later, the hermits celebrate the Mass, and at 7, they eat their breakfast. On a recent Monday, the morning meal consisted of a thermos of coffee and a peanut butter sandwich.

By 7 a.m., these five men have devoted more hours of their day to worshiping God than most people do in a week.

At the Mount Carmelite Hermitage, brothers John David, Martin, Elias and Paul join the Rev. Fabian Maria Rosette, the hermitage prior, in total commitment to worshiping God. Even their work — making and selling bread and chocolate — is done to raise the necessary funds to keep the hermitage open so they can continue to pray.

It is a fascinating, grueling, busy and holy life. Led by Father Fabian but guided entirely by the Holy Spirit, these men sacrificed most every aspect of secular life in favor of their devotion. They eat meat only on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter — but only if someone donates a turkey or ham to the hermitage. They give up contact with their families, save for one letter from their mother each month. They celebrate Thanksgiving, giving praise and thanks to God for all they have. And by the measure of most men, all that they have would amount to little or nothing.

The men forsake material possessions in favor of praising God. When they finished their Thanksgiving meal, they did not sit down and turn on the Dallas

### Upcoming Hermitage Fudge Sales:

Dec. 2-3: Sacred Heart Cathedral, S. Angelo

Dec. 9-10: St. Joseph's, San Angelo

Dec. 16-17: St. Mary's, San Angelo.

Cowboys game or toss a football around.

As much as they attempt to be distraction free in their worshipful lives, the outside world invariably creeps in.

"To some extent, the phones ring non-stop," said Brother Martin, who gave up a chance to attend medical school before choosing life as a hermit. "You can't get away without it. We live in an American culture, and to some extent we cannot have a religious life without having a culture. Religion exists within the basis of culture. We're Americans. We have a telephone, we keep up with current events through Father. He will mediate the information to us. He'll check the news and go to the Web and newspaper and let us know things, especially in the evening when we have the chapter meeting, before we go to night prayers. He will also tell us who called and asked for prayers."

### Thanksgiving and Christmas

Fr. Fabian especially gives thanks, as he does every year, and every day, for his life in America. A Cuban refugee, Fr. Fabian, the only one at the hermitage who is an ordained priest, appreciates his American citizenship.

"Thanksgiving is our No. 1 feast of the whole year," Fr. Fabian said. "It speaks to me about God's blessing, being thankful and grateful to God for all his blessings. Stop and think how a person without anything can come here to this place and have all of this. All these little huts here ... 15 years ago, we got them all for \$4,300 because of people's goodness."

"Thanksgiving will be like any other day in that we will have Mass, but on that day, the brothers instead of getting our food and going back to our hermitages, we eat together," Fr. Fabian said. "We do special prayers for our life, for our country, and we try to spend time with each other, go for walks and talk."

"If somebody brings us a turkey, we have a turkey. If they don't, we are OK. Same at Christmas. This summer, someone brought us ice cream. If not, we don't have ice cream. Those things are luxury to us, we cannot afford them. We cannot afford ice cream or beer or pies or sweets. We just afford potatoes and rice and beans and whatever. Sometimes what you take for granted, for us is a big deal."

### The busy time

November and December are full months for the hermits. Their annual operating budget is derived



Above, Brother Paul, Fr. Fabian, Bro. Martin, Bro. John David and Bro. Elias. At left, a hermit prays in his cell. At top, Fr. Fabian meditates and reads as a cat follows along behind, and at right, Bro. Elias makes fudge, the hermitage's main annual fundraiser.

Top right, Fr. Fabian answers the hermitage's phone. Later in the day, Bro. John David rides a tractor overseeing construction of the hermitage's new bakery while Fr. Fabian talks to laborers.



From the Editor

## Wanna be a hermit? It's not for the weak of heart

By Jimmy Patterson  
Editor

TOM GREEN COUNTY — So you've been thinking about a career change. You've given some thought to maybe becoming a hermit, forsaking all things earthly and devoting your entire life to God above.

OK, it may not be at the top of your list. But if it ever is, you may want to know a few things that may ultimately affect your decision.

You can eat meat. On Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. If someone donates, say, a turkey to the hermitage.

Like chocolate and bread? When you're not praying, that's what you'll be making in the hermitage bakery all day (the fudge, by the way, is irresistible).

If you like to pray, you're in luck. Hermits at the Mount Carmel Hermitage are out of bed every morning by 3 or 3:30 a.m. They're in the choir room, where they chant and pray for the first hour of the day, from 4-5 a.m.



Patterson

Savor quiet? You get a whole hour of it each morning, from 5-6, where you sit in silent meditation. And if you still like silence, there's even more. There's another hour of silent meditation in the evening, and after the final prayers of the day, just before 8 p.m., the hermits at Mount Carmel take a "vow of grand silence" and do not speak to anyone until after the monastic Mass concludes at 7 the next morning.

Like to keep in touch with your family? No problem: You can receive a letter from your mother once a month. And you can write her back. But that is all.

If you're a news hound, you're set: Father Fabian, the prior of the hermitage, will recap what he considers to be the important day's events every night at evening announcements.

For many, the life of a hermit sounds blissful. No doubt some of you are asking, "Where do I sign up?"

I thought living life as a hermit for 24 hours would be a nice thing to try, so I did just that on a recent Sunday and Monday.

(Please See EDITOR/10)

Please See HERMITS/10



# Deconstructing voter choices: Catholics differ little from others

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Much ado has been made of the supposed shift of “religious” voters to Democrats in the midterm election.

Exit polls showed that more Catholics and more frequent churchgoers in general voted for Democrats in the 2006 election than voted for Democrats in the 2004 election. News stories and press releases in the first few days after the election touted “Catholic voters abandon Republicans” and “God gap narrows.”

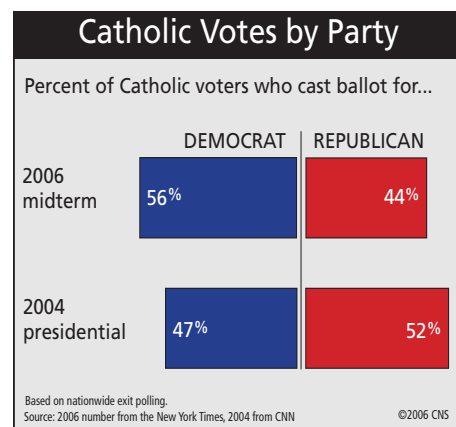
But when compared to how voters as a whole cast their ballots this year, the much-vaunted statistics that supposedly show dramatic shifts by Catholics and regular worshippers of any faith lose their distinctiveness.

Catholics and regular churchgoers pretty much voted like the overall majority of the country in supporting more Democratic candidates, said John Green, senior fellow in religion and American politics at the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Enough voters shifted their support to Democrats this year to swing majority power to the party in both the House and the Senate for the first time in 12 years.

Comparing exit-poll results of how people voted in House races, the only races common to all states, Green told Catholic News Service that the country as a whole was 4 percent to 5 percent more likely to vote for Democrats this November.

Fifty percent of white Catholics, the common breakout used by pollsters, voted



for Democrats, compared to 48 percent who voted for Republicans. In 2004 congressional races, 45 percent of white Catholics and of voters overall voted for Democrats in House races, Green said.

Tom Perriello, a co-founder of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, told CNS that efforts by the Democratic Party to reach out to Catholics, especially in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Virginia, states with close, key Senate races, seem to have succeeded.

The “life does not end at birth” campaign of 2004, organized by a coalition of Catholic groups led by Pax Christi USA, was the start of efforts aimed at persuading voters to choose candidates on a broader basis than abortion alone, Perriello said. Catholics in Alliance this year had a series of ads headlined “As simple as right and wrong,” which picked up that theme and which have resonated with evangelicals and Catholics alike, he said.

Perriello is optimistic about that success meaning the end of the sense that Democratic candidates must support abortion “rights” to get anywhere within the party.

In Pennsylvania, the Democratic Party supported Bob Casey Jr. from the start of his campaign, even to the point of discouraging other Democrats from running in the primary. Like the Republican incumbent he defeated, Sen. Rick Santorum, Casey is a Catholic who opposes abortion, which didn’t sit well with some segments of the Democratic Party’s base.

The Rev. Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourners and author of “God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It,” said at a Nov. 15 teleconference hosted by the Catholic Alliance and the organization Faith In Public Life that the Pennsylvania election helps neutralize abortion as a litmus test issue for Democrats.

“With two Catholic, pro-life candidates it took both abortion and religion off the table and let economic justice and poverty get back on the table,” Wallis said.

Green said Casey’s success shows what was considered an experiment by the Democratic Party can work, but it remains to be seen whether the approach is viable for the long term.

Among Hispanic voters, support for Democratic candidates is the norm, but even that was stronger this election. Seventy-three percent of Hispanics voted for Democrats for House seats, according to the National Election Pool, an exit poll for a consortium of news outlets. In the

2004 presidential race, 53 percent of Hispanics voted for the Democratic candidate and 29 percent voted for the Republican candidate, The Wall Street Journal reported. In the last midterm election in 2002, 38 percent of Hispanic voters chose the Republican candidate.

At a Nov. 14 discussion about the election hosted by the New Democratic Network, Cecilia Munoz of the National Council of La Raza said the November races brought out a record percentage of Latino voters, 8 percent. Hispanics account for 8.6 percent of registered voters and 14.5 percent of the U.S. population, according to the Pew Hispanic Center.

Munoz said that as in every election the issues of greatest concern to Latino voters were education, the economy and, this time, the war in Iraq. But immigration was a driving force for many Hispanic voters.

Munoz said 30 percent of Hispanic voters said they either participated in the immigration rallies and marches of the spring or are close to someone else who did so. Almost half of the youngest voters said they had joined the rallies or marches, she said.

“We exploded the myth that only illegal immigrants care about immigration,” Munoz said.

That notion “insulted people,” she said, and led to what she said was the backfiring of attempts by some Republicans to draw out their core voters by emphasizing a tough approach on illegal immigration. In many states incumbent Republicans who emphasized their opposition to comprehensive immigration reform lost to Democrats who advocated a broader approach.

## HERMITS: Man leaves USMC, enters hermitage

(From 8)

through sales of the fudge and breads they bake and sell to San Angelo area parishes. Last year, the treats brought in \$12,000, which they split between themselves and to pay utilities at the hermitage. They are again making the tour of San Angelo churches this month with hopes of selling their fudge.

On a recent Monday, there was even more work to do. The hermits are finally expanding, building a larger bakery as well as a larger room for their spice growing, and a room to work on their garments. On this day, the quiet and serenity is broken by the sound of a backhoe clearing land for the improvements. When talking with the contractors, Fr. Fabian jokes with the men, who all laugh at his stories and one-liners.

“When people come here, they think they are going to have to talk to long-faced, glum men with long gray beards,” he said. “We have to talk to them and joke with them. It is not what they expect,

and it makes them look at us differently.”

The beards are all the contractors will find when dealing with Fr. Fabian and his brothers. Glum, long faces are not in their nature either when alone or when mixing with others. They are holy men, but they are friendly, helpful and filled with a spirit most people long for. At one point during a verbal exchange, Brother John David, who formerly lived and worked in Midland-Odessa, jumped on the side of a tractor and issued a few orders. The working men loved it.

### The Marine-Hermit link

Brother Elias is busy stirring the fudge in the hermitage’s original bakery, a tiny room that was outgrown years ago. Elias has been at Mount Carmel for just over a year. He left the Marines and immediately joined the monastic life, first as a Marist where he said there was too much contact with the outside world, and finally with the Carmelites in Christoval. He seems

(Please See HERMITS/14)

## EDITOR: Hermits at Mt. Carmel seem to already have foot in heaven’s door

(From 9)

The five men who live at the hermitage — Father Fabian, and brothers John David, Martin, Elias and Paul — are remarkable men with a commitment to God that is truly inspiring. They all say they are in it for all their days on earth and consider their steps into the monastic life akin to marriage vows. Their lives are consecrated to Jesus Christ and they will serve him until the end of their days.

For 365 days a year, these men wake and pray for three hours before most of us are even out of bed. They retire at 8 in the evening and get up and do the same thing the next day. And the next. And the next.

They seem disinterested in worldly goings on. Father Fabian passes along important news events such as the recent midterm elections and, of course, the events of Sept. 11. Other items he withholds, such as when there is a Catholic priest involved in a sex scandal.

“There’s no need to disrupt the peace of the brothers,” Father Fabian said.

In a way, what a beautiful life, to be sequestered from the troubles of the world, isolated from all that is bad. Some say it is a naive way of existence; others say it would not be possible to live in such a manner.

But it is possible. Life without the complications, a life spent giving total, uninterrupted devotion to God is more the way God hoped it would turn out anyway.

I tip my hat to these five men and how they are able to set aside everything in life that is unimportant in exchange for a sort of lifelong introductory meeting or preparatory session with their Maker.

Their life’s work has given them a foot in heaven’s door, and that’s one foot more than I have.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to these holy men paving their pathway home. Offering a “God Bless” is not necessary from a simple soul of the world such as I. After a visit to Mount Carmel, it is quite obvious God is hard at work, bestowing his blessings on them already.

# BISHOP: Grown-up Jesus turned world around

(From 3)

baby no longer. As he was totally dependent on his parents when he was born, he is still dependent on us to care for the world in which he dwelt and for which he gave his life.

We all love babies. Babies bring out the best in us – love, care, and compassion. The birth of a baby is a reason for joy, celebration and festivity. That is why we love the season of Christmas with its pageants and plays, its decorations, its songs and music and carols, cookies and good food – the glitter and the gifts—all to honor the greatest baby ever born—Jesus.

But our commitment and attention on the baby must not end with the baby of Christmas, with the Christ Child, the infant lying in the manger. Many have a tendency to sometimes put him to bed on December 26, or shortly thereafter, and forget about the life, the mystery, the teachings and works of this baby during the rest of his life on earth.

There is so much more to the story in the history of the life of Christ than the birth of a baby. There is more to the story than the end of his earthly drama that we commemorate at Easter—his great resurrection. This baby would grow into the man who is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the challenge is to live in love and fidelity his Gospel. We all like the "C" and "E" part of the life of Christ. That is, we like Christmas, and we like Easter; however, between Christmas and Easter, there is a grown up Jesus who lived a radical love that turned people's lives

upside down and inside out.

The challenge for us today is to not only live the "C" and the "E" – the joy of Christmas and Easter – the resurrection of Christ—but also to live all the letters of the alphabet of Christ. Perhaps at times, the other letters of his life are not as appealing. For example, perhaps we don't like or relate too well to the letter "F" of his life—faith—living each day with trust and confidence, even when we can't see or fully understand. And, often we are repelled by the "S" of his alphabetical life—his suffering—and his invitation to surrender our lives totally to him. And, the "W" of his life is also not very attractive at times—the wood of the cross and the washing of the feet. And, perhaps at times we struggle to be faithful to the "P" of his life—being faithful to prayer and penance, and to be peacemakers. We all say we want to be peacemakers, but are we ready to be peacemakers according to the way he invites us to live peace by working for justice? What would he say about our peace efforts today? What would he say about how we are to bring peace to the troubled spots of our world?

There is another "F" of the life of the God-man, Jesus, that constantly rings in our ears—perhaps at times, haunts us and challenges us. What is that "F"? – **"Follow me"** and **"Forgive."** That was a constant invitation of Christ when he walked this earth. **"Follow me"** is what the grown up Jesus said to other people he met along the way, and then he showed them what it meant to live a life of radical authenticity and integrity. From the beginning to the end, the grown up Jesus

modeled the ultimate match-up of the talk and the walk.

**"Follow me."** the man Jesus invited folks to follow him, and then he showed them how to meet the deepest needs of human beings, by healing their hurts and transforming darkness into light. How our world, our country, our families, and our lives, needs that light today. The grown up Jesus walked right into the middle of the hardest and most difficult cases, and boldly touched the outcast, the broken and the lame with his healing power.

**"Follow me"** is what Jesus told his friends, as he taught them about another very important "F" – about how to forgive instead of how to get even. When his followers wanted to limit his forgiveness to a few times, he said we must forgive seventy times seven. He showed his followers—and he continues to show us—how to give instead of hoard. And he challenged them and us to live and take courageous steps to promote peace that will truly last. In a world that said – "Take care of No.1," he modeled service and mercy, compassion, self-giving and self-sacrifice, all the way to the end of his life. He tells us that we are most like him when we imitate his spirit of service, when we live out the "W" of his life, by uniting our lives to his on the wood of the cross, and by washing the feet of others.

**"Follow me"** – the grown up Jesus said, and continues to say to us, and for those who followed him, he taught them about a new way of living and loving – "Love one another as I have loved you." And how did Jesus love us? He loved us to the point of giving his life on the wood of the cross. This exam-

ple of the revolutionary love of Jesus Christ is the way that people could be set free from whatever chains of fear and darkness had entrapped their hearts and minds.

Let us go and find that baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, and let us look at the "L" of his life. His great commandment was "Love one another as I have loved you." He would tell us that the true and surest sign that we are his followers is: "by the way you love each other." He gave this message to his friends, and we today are his friends. We are truly identified as his followers when we reach out in love and service and care and compassion for one another and when we stoop down, as he did, and wash the feet of our sisters and brothers. The child in the manger would become the radical, grown up Jesus who tells us that others will recognize us by the way we love one another and work for peace.

"The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." [John 1:1-18] On Christmas the world received the greatest gift that God the Father could ever give. How can we ever thank the lord? We can thank the lord by humbling ourselves before the baby in the manger, and by recommitting ourselves to follow Jesus every day of our lives and by submitting ourselves totally to God as Mary did. Then we can say that we are truly celebrating not just the birth of Christ, but his entire life. The baby Jesus of Christmas is one thing. But that grown up Jesus who turned our world upside down is really something else.

## Journey of a pilgrim: St. Ann's parishioner takes pilgrimage to Italy

Editor's Note: The first part of Alexandra Morris's travel article, concerning the village of Ravenna, Italy, appeared in the August 2006 Angelus

By Alexandra Morris

After an early breakfast one might walk to the other sites in Ravenna, previously missed, or to re-visit favorites. Then you may begin the journey to Padua, where you will spend the next two nights. Depending on the time of arrival, you may first stop at the Botanical Gardens, (UNESCO 1997 World Heritage Site), created in 1545 and said to be the oldest continuously growing garden in Europe.

Padua is a pilgrimage city. Millions of pilgrims come here every year to visit the "Basilica di Sant'Antonio", where the grave of "Sant'Antonio" is located. In the United States he is known as "Saint Anthony", protector of children, and saint of "lost items". The other reason to visit this city is Giotto.

Begun in Padua in 1075 and dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the Baptistery is a square shaped Romanesque building located at the Northeast corner of the Cathedral of Padua. This Basilica, also known as the Santo's Basilica, is a 1232 work. It has eight Byzantine domes – similar to the domes of San Marco, in Venice. It is one of the more richly decorated basilicas in Italy. It contains an extensive series of frescoes painted by Giusto de'

Menabuoi in 1375-78, covering biblical highlights from the Creation of the World to the Resurrection of Jesus. Above the four pillars supporting the main cupola are large frescoes depicting the Four Evangelists, seated and writing the Gospels, along with smaller medallions containing their traditional symbols.

Around the smaller altar in the apse are 43 frescoes depicting various scenes from the Book of Revelation. The highlight of your visit maybe the Scrovegni Chapel/Arena Chapel with its 14th century fresco cycle by Giotto and his assistants. (They were restored in 2002). Some art historians consider these the greatest of his work: even greater than those in the St. Francis Basilica. These frescoes date from 1305, as that was the year the chapel was finished.

Giotto was 40 years old at the time. There are three cycles of the frescoes: scenes from the life of St. Joachim, scenes from the life of the Virgin, and scenes from the life of Jesus. A significant innovation in this "Arena Chapel" is the dado painted to look like marble. Between the faux marble panels are small, circular monochrome frescos with the Seven Virtues and the Seven Vices. "The feigned monochrome relief gives rise to a different kind of fresco decoration that was to flourish in the 15th and 16th centuries". All of these scenes make wonderful subjects for contemplation and great scenes to re-visit.

Then you may continue on your journey to Venice.

Depending on when you leave Padua, you may go directly to the Isola di Murano. Venetian glassware has been world famous since the 13th century. Most of the glass is made at the Murano glass factory, which you can visit on the Isola di Murano. Watch the ancient tradition of glass blowing, and see the artisans using practically the same methods and tools their ancestors used hundreds of years ago.

The Museum Vetrario displays the finest examples of Murano glasswork. Murano glass is found all over Venice and makes a perfect piece of memorabilia. After lunch you will take the "water bus" over to Venice for the afternoon.

The Grand Canal with its bobbing gondolas winds itself around the city making a triumphant appearance at the unforgettable sight of Piazza/Plaza San Marco, which boasts its campanile, the Gothic Doges Palace, Byzantine St. Marks Basilica, and the ever elegant, pigeon-filled piazza. It's described as one of the most picturesque places to sit in all of Europe. Piazza San Marco is the result of a multitude of creative, artistic and engineering feats. In this spot is an equal amount of history.

A great winged lion on a clock tower guards St. Mark's Square with a stern and fierce countenance. Winged lions make more than cameo appearances all over the city of Venice in various reliefs, sculptures and paintings. The lion is to Venice what the bald eagle is to the United

(Please See TRAVEL/6)

Antoinette Bosco

# What we can all learn from the Amish people

By Antoinette Bosco  
Catholic News Service



Bosco

It will be hard to forget the horror that happened the first week of October to the peaceful, God-loving Amish community of Nickel Mines, Pa. That a disturbed man could invade the school where Amish children respectfully and peacefully were learning their lessons, intending to sexually molest and kill young girls, will forever sear our memories.

But beyond the headlines about this horrific crime was another one, as expressed in my daily paper: "Amish Urge Forgiveness for Shooter." Reporters kept asking about "revenge and hatred," but the Amish parents, relatives and friends spoke of forgiveness.

For so many onlookers, this willingness to seek forgiveness rather than vengeance was so out of the norm that they sought an explanation. One researcher, Gertrude Huntington, identified also as an "expert on children in

Amish society," explained: "They know their children are going to heaven. They know their children are innocent and they know they will join them in death." Then she said something everyone should latch on to: "The hurt is very great, but they don't balance the hurt with hate."

Yet, when you are seared by such horrible loss and pain, how can you fight the hate that overtakes you? I know that place. I was thrown into that hell when I lost a son and a daughter-in-law at the hands of a murderer. Then, in the space of a phone call, I had to struggle with whether forgiveness was possible, whether it ever made sense and even whether it was the right thing.

I would break out in a sweat thinking of the violence, the sin that happened that night when an 18-year old slid through a basement window into their home, stealthily went up the stairs to the bedroom where they were sleeping and shot them to death with his 9 mm semiautomatic gun. The word "forgiveness" never crossed my mind, and if it had at that moment I would have written it off as



nonsensical.

But I soon realized there was only one path that could help me survive -- to put my life solidly in the hands of my God. My children helped me, as we struggled together to find our souls, so damaged by this horror.

We always had been opposed to the death penalty, and healing first began when we wrote to the judge, asking that the young man not be executed. Then it was another mother, who had moved beyond hatred and revenge

after the murder of her daughter, who unknowingly helped me.

She began writing to the murderer, saying honestly, "This does not mean that I think you are innocent or that you are blameless for what happened." It was what she then said that made an imprint in my heart: "What I learned is this: You are a divine child of God. You carry the Christ-consciousness within you. You are surrounded by God's love even as you sit in your cell. The Christ in me sends blessings to the Christ in you."

I cried my eyes out. She made me understand in a new way what Jesus meant by forgiveness and

why it must be a way of life, a way to live continuously. Now I could see that the minute we say "no" to forgiveness, we are gouging Christ out of our life, and from that resulting emptiness of soul we have nothing to give another.

This is what the Amish community knows. From their tragedy, they're sharing this knowledge with all of us!

## AUDIT: Parishes working hard to maintain bishops' charter

(From 2)

have been victims of sexual abuse by Church Personnel.

I would like to take this opportunity to report that 13 of the 14 audited parishes are in compliance with Background Check and Ethics Workshop requirements, and that we are working to bring the one parish that was not in compliance up to stan-

dards. I am also able to report that 13 of 14 parishes have conducted parent and children's workshops during the past year, and that all have workshops scheduled during the present school year. Lastly, all parishes have information brochures readily available for those who may be victims of sexual abuse by Church personnel.

We will continue to conduct parish audits through May of next year. From

these audits, I can already see that our parishes are working hard to fulfill the spirit and requirements of the Bishops' Charter. I find this very encouraging. There is still much to do, but I believe we have made, and will continue to make great progress in striving to protect our children and youth from sexual abuse, as well as reach out to those who may be past victims.

## AGE: Taking the road less traveled often best

(From 13)

something you take for granted, for instance, your height. No matter how closely you watch, you never see yourself grow taller. The change happens in such small increments that it can't be noticed on a daily basis. But if you measure yourself once a month, the cumulative changes that occurred over time will become immediately apparent.

Relationship change occurs in the same way, only instead of measuring height, you're measuring time. This is why it often is recommended that we occasionally distance ourselves from those we are close to, even family and best friends,

especially those with whom we have disagreements.

If you spend every day with someone who drives you crazy, you never will notice the steps both of you take to improve the relationship. If those changes are made when you're apart, they will be far more noticeable when you reunite, precisely because you didn't witness the modifications as they were occurring.

Change, like distance, is measured from here to there, from inch to inch, from cow pasture to shopping center. It's a reality I face every time I return to Bel Air. I can't comprehend what currently is without remembering what used to be.

Gone is the unique, character-filled

community where, growing up, I spent many hours with my friends. In its place is a suburb interchangeable with many others -- a place where I no longer feel a personal connection.

People who lived in Bel Air during this transformation probably don't understand my perspective. They didn't notice the shift because they were there when it happened. I noticed because I wasn't.

Sometimes, you just have to disagree with conventional wisdom. Robert Frost claimed that taking the road less traveled made a difference. Maybe a difference can be found on the road we've traveled thousands of times before. We just have to know where to look.



### Answers

1. Herod
2. priest
3. Mary
4. Joseph
5. John
6. Bethlehem
7. shepherds

## JUST 4 KIDS

# Angels tell shepherds of Christ child's birth



### READ MORE ABOUT IT: Luke 2 Q&A

1. What did the shepherds see in the bright light?
2. What did the shepherds do as they returned home?

### BIBLE ACCENT

There were no factories when Jesus lived on the earth. Farming provided most of the food for people to eat. Instead of a tractor, oxen and bulls pulled the plows through the fields. Farmwork was performed by hand.

Shepherds had to care for and feed their sheep. They had to watch out for wild animals that might try to eat some of their flocks. Sheep and goats provided wool and hair for clothing, plus milk and meat. Fishing had become an important part of the culture, especially in the Sea of Galilee.

Many trades developed, including tanning and leatherwork, pottery-making to store liquids and to keep grains dry, stone cutting, tent-making and baking. A drought or a severe storm could ruin a year's worth of work and cause a shortage of food.

### SPOTLIGHT ON SAINTS

#### Sts. Theodore and Theophanes

Theodore (d. 841) and Theophanes (d. 845) were both who lived on the shores of the Dead Sea, ancient home of the Moabites. Both of them felt a strong calling to the faith, and they became monks at the monastery of

St. Sabas while they were still young men. Their kindness and knowledge earned them a reputation as outstanding monks.

When Emperor Leo the Armenian outlawed religious images, Theodore pleaded with him not to ruin the possessions of the church. Leo banished Theodore and his brother to a cold, remote island in the Black Sea where there was little food.

The brothers returned home after the death of Leo, but Emperor Theophilus banished them again. Theodore died during this second exile. After Theophilus died around the same time, the war against holy images ended. Theodore and his brother were honored for their faithfulness in spite of torment. We remember them both on Dec. 27.

### BIBLE TRIVIA

Who was the man who baptized Jesus?

**Answer:** John the Baptist.

### PUZZLE

Circle the name or word that will make the following statements true, based on Luke 1 & 2.

1. (Herod, Homer) was king of Judea.
2. Zechariah was a (carpenter, priest).
3. The angel Gabriel appeared before (Mary, Sarah).
4. Mary was engaged to (Jeremiah, Joseph).
5. (John, Jeremiah) was Elizabeth's son.
6. Jesus was born in (Bethlehem, Jerusalem).
7. (Fishermen, shepherds) visited baby Jesus.

On a night that seemed as normal as any other, shepherds were keeping watch over their sheep. The wind was calm; the only noises came from the sheep.

There did not appear to be any danger from wolves who may have wanted to attack the sheep. Suddenly a light as bright as the glory of the Lord shined on the men, and an angel appeared in front of them. The shepherds knelt down, shivering in fright.

"Do not be afraid," said the angel, "for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

Immediately the sky was filled with angels who sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." Then they returned to heaven.

The shepherds tried to recover from the fright they had experienced. They now felt peaceful. They knew they had seen and heard something wonderful, something miraculous. They said to one another, "Let us go, then, to

Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

They left their fields and headed for Bethlehem, the birthplace of David, the second king of Israel. They searched everywhere in the village until they found Mary and Joseph. The child, who was Jesus, was just as the angel had said he would be. He was in a manger, a feeding trough for animals, which was being used as a crib.

Since Caesar Augustus had ordered a census, all men had to return to the places where they had been born to be counted. Joseph was a descendent of David, and he had been born in Bethlehem. By the time he got there with Mary, all of the rooms had been rented out. They had to stay with the animals. It was there that Jesus was born.

The shepherds told Mary and Joseph about the message the angel had given to them. Their story amazed everyone present. Mary promised herself silently that she would never forget this marvelous event. Then the shepherds returned to their homes. They praised God, because everything the angel said had come true.

## Coming of Age

# Making changes along a 'road less traveled'

By Erick Rommel  
Catholic News Service

Taking direction from conventional wisdom inspired by Robert Frost, I recently drove down a road I hadn't traveled for several months. The changes were subtle, but jarring.

Buildings that had been boarded closed were now open; intersections once bottlenecked were no longer so; areas I always

felt were dark and foreboding were bright and vibrant.

These aren't one-time observations. We frequently discover similar changes when revisiting a "less-traveled" road, but never think about why they're noticeable.

I remember attending John Carroll High School in what was the small community of Bel Air, Md. The town was, and still is, known for its mall, the only one in the county. What I remember more is the field

across the street. Four lanes removed from the mall's anchor stores was a large field. On it lived one cow.

One day, unexpectedly, the cow disappeared. A few days later, the fence marking the property also was removed. Soon after, the field was replaced by a shopping plaza. You could buy milk there, but you could no longer see the cow for free.

This transformation shocked those who did not witness it firsthand. While they

were gone, the town remained unchanged in their minds; when they returned, reality did not meet that expectation.

That is the same shock I felt driving along that road. Changes I never would have noticed if I'd witnessed them gradually appear took on greater importance because I only discovered them after completion.

The same is true in our lives. Think about

(Please See AGE/12)

## HERMITS: Elias googles 'hermitage,' finds new life

(From 10)

uncomfortable speaking, painfully shy even.

"When I was in the service, I had a conversion back to my faith and that came about because of the Marines," Elias said. "They pursue virtues such as honor, integrity and justice, and in seeking those, I got a taste for God. And along with that were the events in the world that were unsettling and disturbing, and those things combined to lead me back to the faith. From there, Mother Teresa's writings inspired me toward the religious life as well."

And so Brother Elias found his way to Christoval where he says he has no plans to leave.

"You consecrate your life to God. It's like a marriage to Christ," he said, slowly wiping chocolate fudge from his hands.

As isolated and away from the everyday culture that these men are from the rest of the world, it is interesting to note how Elias found his way to Mount Carmel.

"I entered 'hermitage' into an Internet search engine," he said.

One day in early November, Brother Paul took his vows and received his tunic, become an apostolate, advancing from the ranks of aspirant. There was no grand ceremony. No special guests. Just four brothers welcoming a fifth. Another voice to raise to the heavens every day. Another gift for God.

When the brothers aren't praying they are working. But prayer is what these men do best. Giving God their all. When they are not praying as a group, they are praying afternoon and evening prayers in their hermitages, or individual cells. And were it not for the work that is necessary to keep the hermitage afloat, the men would likely not object to praying without cease.

"People are hungry for God," Fr. Fabian said. "Our Mass, our liturgy is a monastic Mass. It is more contemplative. People feel touched by God, by the silence."

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To learn more about Mt. Carmel Hermitage baked goods, visit [www.carmelitehermits.org](http://www.carmelitehermits.org).

## OBISPO

(From 7)

continua en decimos, y para ellos quienes lo siguieron, el les enseñó una nueva manera de vivir y amar- "Amarás a tu prójimo como yo los he amado". ¿Y cómo nos amó? El no amó al punto de dar su vida en la madera de la cruz. Este ejemplo del amor revolucionario de Jesucristo es la manera en que la gente puede ser liberada de las cadenas de temor y oscuridad que atrapan sus corazones y mentes.

Vamos a buscar a ese niño envuelto en pañales, acostado en el pesebre, y buscaremos la letra "A" de su vida. Su gran mandamiento es "Amarás a tu prójimo como yo los he amado." El nos diría que la seña más verdadera y segura que si somos sus seguidores es: "como nos amamos unos a otros." El dio su mensaje a sus amigos, y ahora nosotros somos sus amigos. Nosotros somos identificados verdaderamente como sus seguidores cuando extendamos la mano en amor, servicio, cuidado, y compasión a unos a otros y cuando nos arrodillamos, como Él, y lavar los pies de nuestros hermanos y hermanas. El niño en el pesebre sería el Jesús radical como adulto y dice que otros nos reconocerán por la manera en que nos amamos y trabajamos por la paz.

"Y el Verbo se hizo carne, y habitó entre nosotros." (Juan 1:1-18) En Navidad el mundo recibió el regalo más grande que Dios Padre nos hubiera podido dar. ¿Cómo podemos darle las gracias al Señor? Le podemos dar las gracias al Señor humillándonos antes el niño en el pesebre, y por comprometernos de nuevo a seguir a Jesús cada día de nuestras vidas y por someternos totalmente a seguir a Dios como lo hizo María. Luego podemos decir que verdaderamente estamos celebrando no solamente el nacimiento de Cristo, pero su vida entera. El niño Jesús de Navidad es una cosa. Pero el Jesús crecido quien volteo nuestro mundo a revés es verdaderamente otra cosa.

## MIGRANTE

(para 5)

parroquias. El espíritu esta dounidense históricamente generoso ha sido reemplazado en algunos sectores con llamados al aislamiento y la restricción.

Durante esta semana dedicada a los migrantes, invito a todas las comunidades de nuestras parroquias a acoger a Cristo en el migrante mediante la oracion, la educación, y

en programas de servicio directo en nuestras parroquias. Para asistirlos en esta expresión de fe, una gran variedad de recursos han sido creadas para las parroquias y las escuelas, y son disponibles en el sitio de la red de la USCCB/MRS Semana Nacional de Migracion en: [www.usccb.org/mrs.nmw.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/mrs.nmw.shtml).

Cuando extendemos ayuda y consuelo a los recién venidos a nuestra tierra, definitivamente estamos

ofreciéndonos nosotros mismos y nuestros dones en el servicio al Señor. No es solamente nuestro deber Cristiano, pero es un privilegio, sabiendo que nosotros, tambien, hemos sido adoptados entre la familia de Dios. Que sean ricamente bendecidos todos por sus hechos fieles de hospitalidad en el nombre de Cristo.

## BIOETHICS: Traveling cadaver exhibit draws 18 million

(From 7)

intentionally caused in order to procure the body or the tissues.

Whether the use of human bodies in Body Worlds will be acceptable will largely depend on intense discussion surrounding the first and second conditions. Are the bodies being posed provocatively or being made to engage in immoral activities while on display, or are they set up in respectable, fundamentally decent poses? Since it is a public display, are the actions represented appropriate for public viewing, including children? These are

some of the further questions we may need to consider when trying to decide about the moral acceptability of such an exhibition. There may also need to be assurance that the bodies on display, or parts from those bodies that were removed during their preparation, will ultimately be properly disposed of either through burial or through cremation, as a sign of our respect for the remains of the dead.

The fact that the traveling cadaver exhibit has already drawn more than 18 million visitors worldwide indicates a deep-seated fascination with understanding our own bodies. One might even

argue that such an exhibit could prompt some soul searching and further discussion of human frailty and the meaning of our own mortality. Along the same lines, an exhibit which reveals the human child in utero by a simple cutaway can serve to powerfully remind visitors about the reality of the pro-life message, namely that children in the womb are not "blobs of protoplasm" but are rather our brothers and sisters at an earlier developmental stage. In the words of one astute observer: "If young women had windows on their stomachs, so they could see into their

own wombs, the number of abortions would decline drastically." The Body Worlds exhibit does seem to afford a unique opportunity to open a window onto the inner workings of the human body in a way that straddles the line between enlightening and edgy.

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

### Pilgrim Journeys

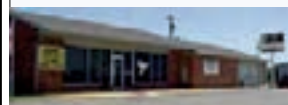
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# Financial Report for the Diocese of San Angelo

## Year Ending June 30, 2006

November 8, 2006

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

I am happy to present to you in an abbreviated form the Diocese of San Angelo's financial report for the most recent year ending June 30, 2006 as prepared by our outside auditors, Carneiro, Chumney & Co., LC. This audit has been carefully studied by the Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Finance Council, the Diocesan Finance Officer and myself.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for the generous support upon which our church ministries depend. Your material generosity continues to keep a spirit of hope alive in the diocese.

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

Your servant in Christ and Mary,

Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI  
Bishop of San Angelo

THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM OFFICES OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO				
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES				
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2006				
	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Permanently restricted	Total
<b>Revenues, Gains and Other Support:</b>				
Contributions	216,429	84,538	25,591	326,558
Parish assessments	1,891,567	--	--	1,891,567
Interest and dividends	339,990	34,970	--	374,960
Grants	97,000	150,000	--	247,000
Gain on the sale of assets	25,301	--	--	25,301
Other income and fees	568,443	--	--	568,443
Net health insurance premiums	612,773	--	--	612,773
Amounts released from restriction	528,864	(528,864)	--	--
<b>Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support</b>	<b>4,280,367</b>	<b>(259,356)</b>	<b>25,591</b>	<b>4,046,602</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>				
<b>Program:</b>				
Seminarians' education	207,302	--	--	207,302
Vocations	14,608	--	--	14,608
Clergy medical and assistance	362,560	--	--	362,560
Continuing education of clergy	91,676	--	--	91,676
Permanent diaconate	68,820	--	--	68,820
Women religious	1,462	--	--	1,462
Christ the King Retreat Center	430,033	--	--	430,033
Religious education and formation	306,073	--	--	306,073
Communications and newspaper	135,275	--	--	135,275
Contributions and assessments	166,623	--	--	166,623
Tribunal	154,962	--	--	154,962
University Apostolate (Newman Center)	77,682	--	--	77,682
Liturgy office	18,546	--	--	18,546
Superintendent of schools	15,952	--	--	15,952
Prison ministry	35,969	--	--	35,969
Victims assistance	94,092	--	--	94,092
Cemetery subsidy	10,000	--	--	10,000
Parish insurance	72,577	--	--	72,577
Rebate of premiums	587,833	--	--	587,833
<b>General and Administrative:</b>				
Administrative office	512,325	--	--	512,325
Business services	374,812	--	--	374,812
Bishop's residence	30,344	--	--	30,344
Capital renewal and replacement	1,800	--	--	1,800
Interest	302,349	--	--	302,349
Other	459	--	--	459
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,074,134</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>4,074,134</b>
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>206,233</b>	<b>(259,356)</b>	<b>25,591</b>	<b>(27,532)</b>
<b>Net assets, beginning of year</b>	<b>3,449,177</b>	<b>649,923</b>	<b>1,287,870</b>	<b>5,386,970</b>
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>3,655,410</b>	<b>390,567</b>	<b>1,313,461</b>	<b>5,359,438</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM OFFICES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO			
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
JUNE 30, 2006 AND 2005			
ASSETS			
	2006	2005	
<b>Assets:</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	4,275,417	2,516,284	
Cash investments restricted for future fund	5,213,461	1,287,870	
Accounts receivable	533,606	386,378	
Grants receivable	138,888	175,886	
Prepaid sales receivable	1,832,838	2,879,678	
Prepaid benefits cost	124,281	219,991	
Other prepaid assets	18,982	27,594	
Property and equipment, net	1,146,181	3,086,215	
Intangible asset	393,929	313,294	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>12,822,483</b>	<b>11,205,116</b>	
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>			
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	378,656	318,286	
Accrued pension plan liabilities	129,073	143,239	
Due to cemetery	349,213	291,192	
Period collections for designated purposes	18,818	13,784	
Period savings deposits	5,765,470	5,886,819	
Total Liabilities	6,639,230	6,663,310	
<b>Contingencies - Note 12</b>			
<b>Net Assets:</b>			
Unrestricted	3,655,410	3,449,177	
Temporarily restricted	390,567	649,923	
Permanently restricted	1,313,461	1,287,870	
Total Net Assets	5,359,438	5,386,970	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>12,822,483</b>	<b>11,205,116</b>	

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

The Back Page

# Finally ... Hollywood gets it right

From the opening moments of “The Nativity Story,” you know you’re in for a good thing

By David DiCerto  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — In an effort to reach as wide a market as possible, most Christmas-themed movies come gift-wrapped in a secular brand of sentimentality that completely misses the true meaning of the holiday. But Hollywood finally gets it right with “The Nativity Story” (New Line).

From the opening strains of the soundtrack — hints of the Advent hymn “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” — you know you’re in good hands.

A composite of the birth narrative accounts in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, embroidered with apocryphal traditions as well as the imaginative inspiration of the filmmaker, the Bible story gets prestigious treatment in director Catherine Hardwicke’s artful, reverent and deeply affecting retelling. The film has an excellent international cast and impressive production design similar to that of “The Passion of the Christ,” the financial success of which no doubt paved the way for this movie. (Without the blood and controversy, however, “The Nativity Story” should appeal to an even wider audience.)

Filmed in Matera — the ancient Italian town where Mel Gibson shot “The Passion” — and Morocco, it opens with prophecy-paranoid King Herod (Ciaran Hinds) plotting to kill all the male babies in Bethlehem.

Flashing back a year, Zechariah (Stanley Townsend) is told by an angelic voice that his wife Elizabeth (Shohreh Aghdashloo), though advanced in age, will bear a son.

In Nazareth, her young cousin, Mary (Keisha Castle-Hughes), a peasant girl — still practically a child and living under the daily uncertainties of Roman occupation — is informed by her parents, Anna and Joaquim (Hiam Abbass and Shaun Toub), that she is to marry Joseph (Oscar Isaac), an upright carpenter a few years her senior. Troubled over her betrothal to “a man I hardly know, a man I do not love,” Mary withdraws to a nearby grove where the Annunciation, nicely handled, takes place, with Alexander Siddig personifying the angel Gabriel who reveals she will give birth to Jesus.

Meanwhile in Persia, the three Magi set out to follow the star westward (explained here as a rare convergence of Venus, Jupiter and an astral body).

What is described with only a few lines in Luke’s Gospel becomes the meat of the film, as Joseph and Mary



Oscar Isaac, as Joseph in “The Nativity Story”

undertake the arduous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, battling sandstorms, treacherous terrain, hunger and, while passing through Jerusalem, thieves.

Along the way, Hardwicke, raised Presbyterian, weaves in references that foreshadow events in Christ’s life: Mary washing Joseph’s feet; Joseph expressing anger over merchants in the Temple courtyard; a roadside crucifixion. In a more symbolic allusion, during a river crossing, Mary is imperiled by a snake, echoing the serpent of Eden.

Though the New Testament is sparse on details about Mary and Joseph, the thoughtful screenplay of Mike Rich, a practicing Christian, manages to flesh them out while

remaining faithful to Scripture, beautifully suggesting the humanity beneath the halos.

Castle-Hughes conveys maturity well, playing Mary with all the anxieties that anyone would have in her extraordinary situation while having to deal with the disparaging looks of neighbors, the threat of stoning and the incredulity of her own parents. Her mother even hints at rape. Particularly touching is a scene in which Mary sits alone at night pondering why God has chosen her (“I am nothing,” she sighs). Likewise, Isaac soulfully essays Joseph with an empathetic decency, as he quietly shoulders his appointed responsibility, while troubled by an abiding sense of inadequacy.

As to the birth of Jesus, it’s all there: the shepherds, the Wise Men, etc. Despite some greeting-card gloss, cloying sentimentality is avoided. Throughout the film, Hardwicke never waters down the religious elements to make the story more palatable for nonbelievers, most clearly demonstrated when she has one of the Magi proclaim the radical truth of the Incarnation by declaring that the infant is “God made into flesh.”

In a poignant moment that inextricably links the manger to the cross, his fellow traveler — after his companions have presented their gifts of gold and frankincense — tearfully offers the Christ Child myrrh “for his sacrifice,” portending Jesus’ atoning death.

Astute eyes will catch the shot of one of Herod’s minions scouring the abandoned cavelike stable after the holy family has fled to Egypt and finding a swaddling cloth draped over the vacant manger, presaging the empty tomb.

Though placed differently from Luke’s Gospel, Mary’s “Magnificat” is incorporated by Hardwicke in a way that’s most effective.

Amid the Christmas pageant elements, there are a few brief images (the slaughter of the innocents, for example) that may upset very young children. Both Mary’s and Elizabeth’s painful labor are vividly depicted.

The film’s hopeful message should resonate beyond Christian audiences to a world still groaning for peace and good will.

The film contains some violent images. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-I — general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

## ‘Bobby’ is not run-of-mill biopic, but a touching tribute to RFK

By Harry Forbes  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — A conventional biography of presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, whose life ended abruptly with an assassin’s bullet in 1968, “Bobby” (MGM/Weinstein) is not.

But director-writer Emilio Estevez has instead fashioned a deft intertwining of fact and fiction that pays touching homage to a

fallen hero. Using multiple stories and disparate characters whose lives will eventually intertwine and find redemption, Estevez focuses on the fictitious guests and workers at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, leading up to Kennedy’s brutal shooting in the hotel’s kitchen after he delivered a rousing campaign speech following the California primary.

Kennedy is only seen sporadically in newsreel footage (well-restored for the big

screen) but Estevez’s characters — despite conflicts — ultimately come to reflect the noble ideals of brotherhood and forgiveness expressed in some of Kennedy’s stirring campaign speeches.

Miriam, for instance, discovers her husband’s affair with switchboard operator Angela (Heather Graham), but the ultimate confrontation is not the expected screaming match, but a speech of profound regret tinged with caring. At another point, the scene is set

for a no-holds-barred confrontation between Miriam and Virginia, but the conversation is instead suffused with empathy.

Though this approach sometimes results in oversentimentality as when Jose selflessly hands over his Dodgers tickets to Edward without asking for payment, prompting the latter to praise him effusively for his kingly nature (with reference to John F. Kennedy’s favorite book, “The Once and Future King”), such missteps are few.