



## At lively Q&A with priests, Benedict feels 'like a bishop'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - During a 90-minute question-and-answer session with pastors from the Diocese of Rome, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged the priests to face challenges with trust that God's love will have the last word.

The pope's remarks were punctuated by applause and laughter, including his own, as he responded Feb. 22 to questions

about youth ministry, prayer, eucharistic adoration, religious art, Scripture, theology and the activities of new Church movements.

The laughter and applause came not only when the pope pointed out that several of the questions were really minispeeches, but also when he confessed that he, too, found it difficult to fulfill the biblical call to

work during the day and pray at night.

Knowing that the priests were aware of his packed daily schedule, the pope said, "I must confess here that I cannot pray at night; I want to sleep."

However, he said, the only way to give a spiritual component to every activity that makes up a modern pastor's day is to set aside time for

prayer.

"It is easier to say than to do," he said, "but we must try."

"The sign that we truly have prayed, that we have had an encounter with Christ, is that we are there for others," the pope said.

At the beginning of the gathering, an annual papal tradition, Pope Benedict told the priests, "I am particularly pleased

to hear from my clergy, to feel like a bishop."

He also told them he took comfort in the fact that the Rome pastors come from several nations and include both young and old priests.

Responding to a question about incidents in which the Eucharist

*See BENEDICT, page 8*



### Madalene religious-ed students burn palms

From left, Joseph Barbour, Jaden O'Brien, Rita and Loysha Canfield and Benjamin Roper stare in awe as palm leaves go up in smoke after the 10 a.m. Mass Feb. 18 at Church of the Madalene. Sister Marie Pierre Fleming, O.S.B., organized the palm burning to teach the children about how ashes are made for Ash Wednesday. Or, as Father Jack Gleason jovially announced after Mass, "Sister Pierre is going to teach the kids how to play with fire."

## It's not spelled '\$tewardship'

The mere mention of the word "stewardship" tends to touch off changes in body language among members of Catholic congregations, says Father Daniel Mahan.

"Arms start to cross, and eyes start to roll," the executive director of the Marian College Center for Catholic Stewardship in Indianapolis said in his homily Feb. 25 at Christ the King.

But stewardship does not mean a fad or a gimmick

or a ruse by the Church intended to get people to fork over more money, Father Mahan said.

Authentic stewardship, the priest said, is "a way of life that would have us imitate Jesus in His self-giving." It is a reminder that Christ came not to be served but to serve, and His followers are called upon to do the same.

"On the cross He gave everything He had to give.

*See STEWARDSHIP, page 12*

## Pope denounces trend toward designer embryos

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Pope Benedict XVI denounced the high-tech trend that encourages parents to seek the "perfect child" through genetic selection in a speech Feb. 24 to more than 350 Catholic medical professionals.

The pope said so-called "designer embryos" represent one of many contemporary attacks on human life. The attacks have increased to the point that the Christian conscience has been lulled, and even good people sometimes seem paralyzed in the face of collective social pressure against the right to life, he said.

The pope listed a number of ways in which human life is threatened in poorer nations today, including pressure to legalize abortion, new forms of chemical abortion introduced under the pretext of "reproductive health" and the continuing politics of demographic control.

In richer countries, he said, biotechnological engineering aims to establish "subtle and extensive methods of eugenics in the obsessive search for the 'perfect child' through artificial procreation and various forms of diagnosis that allow selection."

He said this kind of genetic selection is part of "a new wave of discrimination" aimed at the

unborn.

The pope did not name specific countries, but on the same day it was reported that the British government would allow scientists to genetically modify embryos for research purposes - which many see as a step closer to the genetic breeding of babies.

The pope also warned against increasing pressure to legalize euthanasia.

# Calendar

## Through Holy Week

**Neo-Catechumenal Way** – Missionaries from the Neo-Catechumenal Way is offering catechesis throughout Lent at 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Friday until Holy Week. Catechesis will be offered in English at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, 1436 N. 67th E. Ave., and in Spanish at St. Thomas More Church, 2720 S. 129th E. Ave.

## Monday, March 5

**Business Professional Women** – The Catholic business and professional women's club will meet at 6 p.m. March 5 at the Green Onion Restaurant, 4532 E. 51st St. Our speaker will be Jan Slater presenting "Catholic Ethics in the Workplace". The cost is \$20. For reservations contact Beverly Atteberry at 605-1913.

## Tuesday, March 6

**Deacon night in Miami** – First in a series of information nights on men who want to explore the possibility they might be called to serve the Church as deacons will be at 7 p.m. March 6 at Sacred Heart Church in Miami. For information call 294-1904 or email msgr.patrick.branks@dioceseoftulsa.org.

## Friday, March 9

**Retrouvaille** – A Retrouvaille weekend, designed to help couples in unhappy marriages who want to regain the intimacy they once had, will be held March 9-11. The weekend can also help separated couples reunite. For more information or to register visit [www.helpourmarriage.com](http://www.helpourmarriage.com) or call 695-7010.

## Saturday, March 10

**Clear Creek work day** – Clear Creek Monastery near Hulbert invites men of all ages to participate in the fifth annual work day March 10. The work will mostly consist of clearing brush and small trees and fence building and repair. Volunteers are invited for any part of the work-weekend, the afternoon of March 8 through noon on Sunday, March 11. A cabin has been reserved but all should bring a sleeping bag. Outdoor camping also available. Bring your own tools and leather gloves. Chainsaws, hand pliers, fence pliers, limb saws, pruners, trucks and trailers are all

needed. Walkie-talkies and all-terrain vehicles would be useful. Contact Dan Doyle at 669-3286, 906-8600, or email [dan.doyle@dtag.com](mailto:dan.doyle@dtag.com).

## Sunday, March 11

**Deacon night** – An information night for men who want to explore the permanent diaconate will be held at 5 p.m. March 11 at the Chancery Office, 12300 E. 91st St., Broken Arrow. For information, call 294-1904 or email [msgr.patrick.branks@dioceseoftulsa.org](mailto:msgr.patrick.branks@dioceseoftulsa.org).

## Tuesday, March 13

**Parenting workshop** – Two local counseling experts will lead a Catholic Parenting Workshop from 7-9 p.m. March 13 at Church of St. Mary. They plan what is billed as a "fun and engaging workshop" that addresses difficult issues parents face as their children enter middle and high school: questionable friendships, exposure to alcohol and drugs, dating, less interest in religious formation. Dr. Mark Sadler, a licensed counseling psychologist with the Tulsa Developmental Pediatrics and Center for Family Psychology, will be joined by Matthew Shelton Crum, a family therapist with Family and Children Services. No charge; child care provided. Questions can be submitted through March 6 via [erick.bell@dioceseoftulsa.org](mailto:erick.bell@dioceseoftulsa.org), by FAX at 918-294-0920, by phone, 918-294-1904. Co-sponsored by the Family Life Office and the Pastoral Studies Institute.

## Thursday, March 15

**Women of Achievement** – The Council of Catholic Women is extending an invitation to women of the Diocese to attend the Women of Achievement Day to be held at St. Benedict, Broken Arrow on March 15. Registration and coffee begins at 10 a.m. with Mass, speaker and program follow. Cost is \$16. Call Karen Painter at 918-542-3747 by March 9 for reservations.

## Friday, March 16-18

**Busy person's retreat** – Men and women college age and older are invited to participate in a busy person's retreat beginning at 7 p.m. March 16 through noon March 18 at

St. Joseph Monastery, 2200 S Lewis Ave. Participants will schedule time for their conferences and have opportunities to share in the life and prayer of the Benedictine community. Retreat is limited to 15 participants. For reservations and information, call 742-4989 or email [srchristine@montecassino.org](mailto:srchristine@montecassino.org) by March 13. Donations will be accepted.

## Saturday, March 19

**Deacon night in McAlester** – The final in a series of information nights for men discerning a possible vocation to the permanent diaconate will be held at 7 p.m. March 19 at St. John the Evangelist Church in McAlester.

## Friday, March 23-25

**Discovery weekend** – Subiaco Academy, a Catholic high school for young men located in Arkansas, is hosting a discovery weekend and open house for prospective students and their parents March 23-25. The weekend is open to 7th-10th graders and their families and all accommodations including overnight stays are free of charge. Students visiting will have an opportunity to experience dorm life and class sessions, mingle with current students, and take the placement exam. Subiaco Academy is located on Highway 22 in northwest Arkansas approximately 45 miles east of Fort Smith. For more information or reservations, contact the admission office at 1-800-364-7824 or email [admissions@subi.org](mailto:admissions@subi.org).

## Saturday, March 24

**Oblate retreat** – Father Godfrey Mullen, O.S.B., a Benedictine monk from St. Meinrad Archabbey, will conduct a retreat for oblates from 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. March 24 at St. Joseph Monastery, 2200 S. Lewis Ave. Cost is \$15 including lunch. Registration is due by March 16. All are welcome - being an oblate is not required. Please make checks payable to Benedictine Sisters and mail to Vicky O'Neil, St. Joseph Monastery, 2200 S. Lewis Ave., Tulsa, OK 74114-3117.

## Saturday, March 31

**ERiS youth rally** – An ERiS youth rally (Exalt and Rejoice in the Spirit) will be held from 12:30-9

p.m. March 31 at St. Pius X Church, 1727 S. 75th E. Ave. Cost is \$15 per person, \$20 per person after March 21. The youth rally provides an opportunity for Catholic college students to minister to diocesan middle school youth and raise funds for charity. This year's proceeds will benefit the St. Francis Xavier medical clinic.

## Wednesday, April 18

**Newman Center dinner** – In celebration of its 60th anniversary at the University of Tulsa, the annual St. Philip Neri Society Dinner will be held from 7-9 p.m. April 18 at the Allen Chapman Activity Center on the TU campus. Tickets are \$100 per person, and table sponsorship is available beginning at the \$1,000 level. This is the largest fundraiser for the Newman Center, whose mission is to prepare university students for a life of faith, leadership and service to the world. Speaker will be Father Robert Sirico, a national commentator on religion, politics and economics. For more information, call Lisa Holden at 599-0204 or 625-3201.

## Saturday, April 21

**Trivia night** – St. Catherine School's annual trivia night will begin at 6:15 p.m. April 21 at the school, 2515 W. 46th St. For details call 446-9756.

**Azalea festival** – St. Therese Church in Collinsville will host its annual St. Therese azalea garden festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 21. Vendor tables are \$10 each. Call Dee at 371-2704 for reservations and more information or email Kim at [kimkenthornhill@cox.net](mailto:kimkenthornhill@cox.net).

## Tuesday, April 24

**Golf tournament** – St. Catherine School is holding its inaugural St. Catherine classic golf tournament April 24 at Page Belcher Stone Creek Course. Registration and warm-up begins at 11:30 a.m., shotgun scramble begins at 1 p.m. A post-tournament celebration is to begin at 6 p.m. Cost is \$100 per golfer or \$400 per foursome, registration ends April 13. For more information contact Matt McCoin at 430-8451 or visit [www.stcatherineclassic.golfreg.com](http://www.stcatherineclassic.golfreg.com).

## Bishop Slattery's public schedule

**Saturday, March 3 - 9 a.m., - Mohawk Park**

Mass, Lenten talk, Q&A  
Knights of Columbus Hall

**Sunday, March 4 - 10 a.m., Holy Family Cathedral**

Second Sunday in Lent Mass

**Sunday, March 4 - 2:30 p.m., Holy Family Cathedral**

Rite of Election

**Friday-Saturday March 9-10 - Conception, Mo.**

Conception Seminary Board meeting

**Sunday, March 11 - 10 a.m., Holy Family Cathedral**

Third Sunday in Lent Mass

**Tuesday, March 13 - 6:30 p.m., Church of the Madalene**

Dinner, keynote speaker at Men's and Women's Club

**Thursday, March 15 - Noon, St. Benedict Church, Broken Arrow**

Mass, lunch blessing and presents Women of Achievement Awards

**Sunday, March 18 - 10 a.m. Holy Family Cathedral**

Fourth Sunday in Lent Mass

**March 19-20 - Washington D.C.**

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops committee meeting on Protection of Children and Youth

**Sunday, March 25 - 10 a.m., Holy Family Cathedral**

Fifth Sunday in Lent Mass

**Sunday, April 1 - 10 a.m., Holy Family Cathedral**

Palm Sunday Mass

## Volunteers

**Emergency assistance** – Volunteers are needed in St. Anthony Assistance Unit of Catholic Charities in Tulsa. Help is needed on a regular basis in the emergency assistance food pantry to stock and sack groceries, as a receptionist, to interview recipients of services and for weekly pick-up of Panera Breads. These opportunities to serve are available during the week in the food assistance program and evenings for the bread pick-up. If interested please call Matt DeWeese, at 585-8167 ext. 120.

**Edward J. Slattery** Bishop of Tulsa

## Everyone has role to play in restoring families

**Editor's note:** In continuation of his Synod response on evangelization of the family, Bishop Slattery has asked us to reprint this series of articles entitled "Self-giving Love - the Paradoxical Wisdom of *Humanae Vitae*." Written by Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix, Arizona, this last in a series of four articles in the Eastern Oklahoma Catholic has been reprinted with adaptations from a booklet of the same name published in 2006 by *One More Soul*, 1846 North Main Street, Dayton, Ohio, 45405-3832. [www.OMSoul.com](http://www.OMSoul.com)



When a wedge is driven between marital love and the procreation of children (which contraception does), countless other evils inevitably follow, evils such as sex being portrayed as a commodity for recreation with no relation to marriage and children, attempts to justify homosexual acts, and the proliferation of pornography.

Already in 1968, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (#17), Paul VI predicted, with accuracy, four dire consequences of rejecting the moral norms for birth regulation:

1. Contraceptive practices would lead to marital infidelity and a general lowering of morality.
2. Respect for women would decrease as they were seen increasingly as objects of pleasure rather than persons to be loved and to be treated as equals.
3. Governments would coerce persons to act against their consciences and moral convictions.
4. Couples would begin to think they had unlimited dominion over their own bodies, thereby losing a sense of cooperating with God in bringing forth new life.

All four of these tragedies have occurred in the past 40 years, just as Paul VI had foretold. Divorce and pornography have increased in manifold proportions across America and Europe and wreaked havoc especially for children and women.

Increasingly the human body is seen as an object to be manipulated, perforated, and even eliminated if it is getting in "my" way, rather than being considered a sacred vessel where God wishes to dwell.

The gifts of masculinity and femininity, motherhood and fatherhood, have been twisted and distorted by detaching them from their relationship with God our Creator and His providential plan for man and woman from the beginning.

While all these evils harm society and tarnish the dignity of human persons, I should like to focus especially on the third prediction of Paul VI, the coercion by public authorities of persons to violate their consciences.

### Coercion by the government and courts

Paul VI, in *Humanae Vitae* (#17), asked the question: "Who will prevent public authorities from favoring what they believe to be the most effective contraceptive methods and from mandating that everyone must use them, whenever they consider it necessary?"

Here in America in the last few years, legislation is being proposed in many states, and has already passed in some, which coerces pharmacists and other healthcare workers to act contrary to their consciences in dispensing materials which are contraceptive and abortifacient.

Action has to be taken in response to these threats. New

legislation, intended to protect the "rights of conscience" must be introduced in Oklahoma City as the pressure to deny these rights to health care providers and pharmacists continues to mount.

Health care providers are not the only ones being coerced to violate their consciences on matters of contraceptives and abortifacients. While Oklahoma is not one of them, some states have enacted "mandatory contraception" laws, requiring all employers providing prescription coverage to their employees to include the cost of contraceptives. In these states, neither Catholic hospitals and health care networks, nor Catholic Charities are exempt.

### Rights of conscience are the basis of all rights

It is indeed ironic that many supporters of "mandatory contraception" legislation advocate for a "separation of church and state" when persons of faith legitimately speak out on matters of public concern, but they have no problem with the government forcing church organizations and their members to violate the tenets of their faith.

The First Amendment, of course, does not advocate a separation of church and state at all, but rather the protection of religious freedom from the state. Our founding fathers intended all persons to have the equal right to voice their opinions, including those with religious convictions.

Even more, they knew that it was imperative that the state not infringe upon the religious beliefs of its citizens.

While the examples cited above provide proof of Paul VI's prophetic claims, it is important for Catholics to continue engaging our culture, defending the dignity and rights of all persons, and working on legislation that will protect the "rights of conscience" in these matters.

We do well to remember the words of our late Holy Father John Paul II: "Respect for conscience on its journey towards the truth is increasingly perceived as the foundation of the cumulative rights of the person." (*Veritatis Splendor*, #31) Whether or not the state respects the consciences of its citizens serves as a barometer of its respect for their dignity and basic human rights.

### Conclusion

When *Humanae Vitae* was issued almost 40 years ago, it met with such fierce opposition, even from Catholic theologians, that many bishops and priests fell silent on this topic, and many lay people were confused and fell in with the contraceptive culture. Since that time,

1. The ugly consequences of a contraceptive lifestyle have become more and more obvious.
2. Natural Family Planning methods (totally morally acceptable in marriage for serious reasons) have been so perfected that they are in many ways superior to contraceptives.
3. Pope John Paul II has greatly increased our understanding of marriage and sexuality, particularly by his *Theology of the Body*.

Pope Paul VI taught in 1968 that the unitive and procreative purposes of marriage could never be separated, even in individual sexual acts. John Paul II explained that excluding the possibility of procreation from a sexual act caused the partners to be using one another instead of loving one another.

He made it clear that sexual "love" that rejects the reproductive powers of one's spouse is not love at all. Love must be total, or it isn't love.

A qualification is necessary. Couples who are contracepting are not often aware that this act is contrary to love. They can even, due to the devil's great success in our time at twisting the popular meaning of love and deluding our postmodern consciences, strongly feel that they are in fact doing a very loving thing by removing the procreative potential of an act of intercourse. They can intend love.

But this action cannot in the end bring about real love, because real love is given its logic by the Creator. The Church has enormous compassion for couples caught up in this struggle for the truth of married love, and encourages them to constantly "fight the good fight" to fully live their love. John Paul II and Paul VI speak with great eloquence about this:

As Mother, the Church is close to the many married couples who find themselves in difficulty over this important point of the moral life: She knows well their situation, which is often very arduous and at times truly tormented by difficulties of every kind, not only individual difficulties but social ones as well; She knows that many couples encounter difficulties not only in the concrete fulfillment of the moral norm but even in understanding its inherent values. (Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, #33)

Yet this discipline which is proper to the purity of married couples, far from harming conjugal love, rather confers on it a higher human value. It demands continual effort, yet, thanks to its beneficent influence, husband and wife fully develop their personalities, being enriched with spiritual values.

Such discipline bestows upon family life fruits of serenity and peace and facilitates the solution of other problems; it favors attention for one's partner, helps both parties to drive out selfishness, the enemy of true love, and deepens their sense of responsibility.

By its means, parents acquire the capacity of having a deeper and more efficacious influence in the education of their offspring. (Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, #21)

Over time, as our social problems have become worse (adultery, divorce, cohabitation, fatherless family structure and many others), God has given us better and better tools for repairing the damage, along with hope that we will see the Church and society stronger than ever.

### In this great effort of recovery we all have a role.

Our priests and deacons play a key part because they are so important in helping couples understand and accept the truth about sexuality.

Couples have a wonderful opportunity to study and enter into the great richness of family life which the Church's teaching makes available.

All the faithful have God-given roles in building up the families of the Diocese through prayer and action.

I challenge every one I serve to take up his or her part in this project of restoring the families in our Diocese. As the leader of this local Church, I commit myself to sustained work for all the families in our territory so that all can share in the marvelous blessings of family life as God intended.

May God bless all of you and all who join in this work.

**Marilyn Duck** EOC Editor

## Lent offers endless opportunities to deepen the faith

When the R.C.I.A. class at Church of the Resurrection prepared for the Easter Vigil in 2005, parishioner Coby Denton, who had been one of the sponsors throughout the months-long process, said this to the newcomers: "Just remember, once you come into the Church, you'll be as Catholic as the pope."



It was a typically sweet and thoughtful thing for Coby to say, but two years later, a convert still wonders how true it is.

Technically, he's right. But can a midlife convert ever feel as thoroughly Catholic as a cradle one?

Lent offers multiple opportunities to try.

R.C.I.A. teaches the basics of the faith, which is a tall order given the magnitude of what is to be learned. It's especially tough in a year like 2005, in which Easter came incredibly early, or in 2007, when nasty weather has forced course cancellations at parishes throughout the Diocese.

(Writing in the Christ the King newsletter last month, Sister Constance Lennartz, O.P., said she has cancelled three Wednesday evening and two Sunday morning sessions this winter. "This is the first time in my 16 years here that I've had to cancel so many classes," she said.)

Nonetheless, on the weekends of Feb. 25 and March 4, R.C.I.A. catechumens throughout the Diocese came to Holy Family Cathedral, where they were presented to Bishop Edward J. Slattery. Earlier, each had signed the Book of the Elect in their home parishes, along with their sponsors.

It's a powerful moment. Feb. 25 at Christ the King, Sister Connie told the congregation a bit about the history of the Book of Elect, explaining that in the early Church signing one's name carried with it the threat of death if the Roman oppressors were to discover the document.

Two centuries later, in the United States, the stakes are not so high, but the commitment is the same, and it's profound. Watching the Christ the King sponsors standing behind the catechumens and placing their hands on their charges' shoulders as they signed the book brought unexpected tears.

The Church always will be indebted to those dedicated R.C.I.A. sponsors, and the personal debt of the former catechumens can be repaid only by living out the faith our sponsors guided us to profess.

That Sunday at Christ the King, Father Daniel Mahan was leading a Lenten retreat, and in his homily he said something striking: that Lent is a "remedy" to help Catholics pursue lives of holiness in a world that is anything but.

Lent offers so many tools to do this! At Christ the King, there was the stewardship mission, and there's an armchair travel group that will learn from experts in our Diocese about the history of Catholic cultures all over the world. Many other parishes are staging missions of their own.

All over the place are Friday parish soup dinners; people express a renewed commitment to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. There are Stations of the Cross, novenas, food drives for the needy, expanded confession times and many, many more ways to enrich the Lenten experience.

For converts – as well as for some cradle Catholics – the gaps in formation always will be there because, again, there is so much to know. But faith involves more than knowledge. Among other things, it requires practice, and Lenten rites offer ample opportunity to do just that.

### Another fond farewell

In less than 18 months, three fine Catholic men have departed from my workplace. Jim Sellars and Henry Harder retired; Aaron Inlow returned to a Catholic school, a setting he loves, serving as assistant principal and teaching at the School of St. Mary.

Seeing them each day was a treasure that can be taken for granted until they're not around. But when it happens enough times, you get the hang of it and cherish the presence of a good friend while you can.

Those thoughts have struck home the past couple of weeks at the sight of Charles Michie dashing down the hall, wrestling with a briefcase brimming with documents. He flings the back door open with such vigor as to risk sending smokers on the back step hurtling into the flower bed. Arranging a photo or news contact through Mick is always an adventure, typically involving at least two or three conversations, plus a follow-up or two or three emails.

Charles Michie is a man of good will, deep faith and a model of a person aspiring to holiness. He has helped hundreds if not thousands of young Catholics build their faith, and he has helped some not-so-young-ones, too. All good thoughts and prayers go with him.

### George Weigel

## The new atheists: angrier, dumber, better selling

About nine months ago, a reporter from the Italian Catholic newspaper *Avvenire* called and asked whether the rash of "atheist books" being published in the U.S. suggested a new trend in American culture. I replied that I didn't think so.

Publishing was a bit like hemlines and tie widths, I suggested: There are fashions, and the fashions are often defined (and slavishly followed) by bears of little brain, of which the publishing industry is, alas, replete. (An observation, I note, that was made long before the latest O.J. fiasco!)

In any event, I wish I'd given a more thoughtful answer. For, on further reflection, Richard Dawkins' "The God Delusion," Daniel Dennett's "Breaking the Spell" and Sam Harris' "Letter to a Christian Nation" do embody an interesting trend: not about American culture as a whole, but about its atheist minority.

Reading these books, one gets the distinct impression that contemporary atheism is getting angrier and dumber, even as it becomes more profitable for publishers and authors alike.

One root of the new atheist campaign is, of course, political: Bush Derangement Syndrome has persuaded at least some atheists that the cowboy-evangelical apocalypse is just around the corner.

The usual snobberies are also involved: The new atheism reflects the disdain of the academic guilds and chattering classes for those they imagine to be their social inferiors. In



the 19th century, it was thought that an atheist couldn't be a gentleman; today, the atheists argue that religious conviction is for slobs and morons.

But as Sam Schulman recently pointed out in a perceptive *Wall Street Journal* essay, what's really striking about the new atheism is its tone. In a word, it's angry; or, as Schulman writes, "Belief, in their eyes, is not just misguided but contemptible ... Today's atheists are particularly disgusted by the religious training of young people - which Dr. Dawkins calls 'a form of child abuse.'"

This is, in part, the aforementioned snobbery; as Schulman nicely puts it, the new atheists imagine that "believing in God is a form of stupidity, which sets off their own intelligence."

But the anger is such that it warps whatever cleverness might be at work in the likes of Dawkins, Dennett and Harris. The agnostic H.L. Mencken (a vociferous critic of what he regarded as the absurdities of popular religiosity during the Roaring Twenties) was one of the few commentators who could do brilliant social satire while writing "at the top of his voice," as one biographer put it.

The angers of Dawkins, Dennett, and Harris render their writing merely shrill.

And dumb. Read the atheist trinity, and you'll be amazed at their self-regard - which is based, in part, on a Captain Reynaud-like wonder ("I'm shocked, shocked ...") at discovering the obvious: that the Bible is neither geology text nor critical biography; that, over the centuries, Christian hagiographers have embellished the stories they tell about

saintly people; that some uncritically examined beliefs are, in fact, superstitious. Oh, really?

Moreover, as Schulman writes, "The faith that the new atheists describe is a simple-minded parody. It is impossible to see within it what might have preoccupied great artists and thinkers like Homer, Milton, Michelangelo, Newton, and Spinoza - let alone Aquinas, Dr. Johnson, Kierkegaard, Goya, Cardinal Newman, Reinhold Niebuhr or, for that matter, Albert Einstein."

But to pass over this deeper faith - the kind that engaged the great minds of Western history - is to diminish the loss of faith, too. The new atheists are separated from the old by their shallowness."

Which is to say, again, they're dumber as well as angrier. Indeed, were I back teaching and a graduate student handed me an ill-informed screed like Harris' "Letter to a Christian Nation," I'd gently inform the aspiring scholar that there were two options available: an "F," or a return to the drawing board for some serious thought - the kind of thought that begins with empathetic curiosity and an open mind, not with contempt and intellectual rigidity.

Contemporary believers deserve a better class of critics than this. As Sam Schulman laments, where are Matthew Arnold and George Eliot when you need them?

*George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.*

# Forum

## What should a 'Christian nation' do in light of Gospel?

**Editor, EOC:** The Gospel reading for the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Feb. 18) was Luke 6:27-38. In the light of the teachings of this Gospel, what should the United States do?

If we, if our leaders, were to truly apply the words of Jesus in this Gospel to our relations with other nations, how would we relate to them, especially to those nations with whom we seem to have some conflict (the Irans, the Syrias, the Russias, the North Koreas)?

Jesus says: "Love your enemies." "Be good to those who hate you." "Bless those who curse you." "Pray for those who mistreat you." "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." "Stop judging." "Stop condemning." "The measure with which you measure will be measured back to you."

Do these words have any impact on us? Should they have some impact on us? Or can we just simply choose to ignore them in our relations with other nations? And if we just dismiss these words of Jesus, do we have a right to call ourselves a Christian nation?

### CORRECTION

A Feb. 4 story about Our Lady of Guadalupe Camp in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City wrongly reported that Larry and Dodie Wells are year-long caretakers. The couple stays at the camp when summer camp is in season, but the parents of Msgr. Peter Wells live in Guthrie the rest of the year.

### EOC publication dates and deadlines

Eastern Oklahoma Catholic publication dates and deadlines for the new year:

Publication .....	Deadline
March 18 .....	March 9
April 1 .....	March 23
April 15 .....	April 6
April 29 .....	April 20
May 13 .....	May 4
May 27 .....	May 18
June 10 .....	June 1
June 24 .....	June 15
July 22 .....	July 13
Aug. 5 .....	July 27
Aug. 19 .....	Aug. 10
Sept. 2 .....	Aug. 24
Sept. 16 .....	Sept. 7
Sept. 30 .....	Sept. 21
Oct. 14 .....	Oct. 5
Oct. 28 .....	Oct. 19
Nov. 11 .....	Nov. 2
Nov. 25 .....	Nov. 16
Dec. 9 .....	Nov. 30

Should they not inform our policies and our actions? Certainly, we should be careful to not mix politics and religion, but does that mean that politics should not be informed by the values of the Gospel?

Sure, it would be nice if other nations would change some of their attitudes and behaviors. We wish they would. But the Gospel of Christ is not intended to be read and heard as a Word addressed to "those others." It is a Word addressed to me, to us. While we hope they will change their ways, the Gospel calls us to mend our flaws.

So what should we as a nation do in response to this Gospel? What would Jesus have us do? How should we apply the teaching of this Gospel to ourselves, to other nations, to our crazy world?

Are violence and retaliation the only possibilities?

Are escalation and confrontation the best courses of action?

Or is peacemaking possible? Has reconciliation been tried? Can we somehow be good to those who hate us? Can we bless those who curse us? Or was Jesus being just a little bit too naive when he spoke these words?

What should we do? What are some specific ways that we could apply these Gospel teachings? How might they inform and inspire our policies and our actions?

"Love your enemies." "Be good to those who hate you." "Bless those who curse you." "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Should we strive to employ these teachings in our relations to other countries? Or do we just ignore them, and carry on a charade of pretending to be a Christian nation?

What should we do?

**Father J. Richard Bradley**  
Pax Christi of Eastern Oklahoma

### 'Amazed' by Weigel

**Editor, EOC:** I was amazed by George Weigel's column in the Feb. 18 EOC, "Turning toward Christ, together." I am sure at some deep theological level, Mr. Weigel probably makes some sense.

But I just have this vision of our Lord at the Last Supper turning his back on the disciples, raising the bread and then muttering something under His breath.

But maybe we should return to the good old days, when priests talked in languages not in common use for more than a millenium with their backs to the faithful. I guess I could fall asleep like I used to when no one expected the faithful to make any kind of meaningful response.

**David Calvin**  
Broken Arrow

### On birth control dangers

**Editor, EOC:** Many commentaries have appeared recently with emotionally packed

arguments for or against birth control. As a physician and OB/GYN, I would like to present a series of documented facts on the subject that may have been overlooked to date.

The Physician's Desk Reference (PDR) is a reference manual recognized and respected by virtually all doctors. In it you will find:

"Oral contraceptives are associated with increased risk of myocardial infarction (heart attack), thromboembolism, stroke, hepatic neoplasia (tumor)."

These risks increase with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes. Some studies have reported an increased risk of developing breast cancer at a younger age. Adverse side effects may include PMS, cataracts, headache, nervousness, dizziness, hirsutism (growth of facial hair), and loss of hair from scalp.

On Nov. 18, 2004, Pfizer, the manufacturer of DepoProvera (the birth control shot), sent letters to health care professionals with the following warning:

"Women who use DepoProvera Contraceptive Injection may lose significant bone mineral density. Bone loss is greater with increasing duration of use and may not be completely reversible."

It is unknown if use of DepoProvera Contraceptive Injection during adolescence or early adulthood, a critical period of bone accretion, will reduce peak bone mass and increase the risk of osteoporotic fracture later in life. Nonetheless, many young women are given DepoProvera prior to leaving the hospital after they give birth without awareness of their future risks for osteoporosis (and many of the bleeding side effects that it also causes).

It is well documented that performance-enhancing steroids taken by athletes are male steroid hormonal drugs that, among other harmful side effects, can cause liver cancer. Similarly, female steroid hormonal drugs not only increase the risk of liver cancer, but breast and cervical cancer as well. These powerful steroid drugs are taken by millions of teen-age girls and women in the form of birth control pills.

In a recent continuing education series to physicians supported by a grant from a leading pharmaceutical firm, it was reported:

"Studies suggest that there is an increased risk of cervical cancer in women who are current or past users of oral contraceptives - that is, hormones. Additionally, it is widely known that the exposure of cervical cancer to estrogen can result in the proliferation of cancer."

In OB/GYN News, dated May 15, 2004, an article stated, "Oral contraceptive use by women before the age of 20 was a significant risk factor for the development of breast cancer by age 40."

These are only some of the researched, documented and known facts surrounding the use of pharmaceutical contraceptives.

**Rita Sanders, OB/GYN**  
Tulsa

## EASTERN OKLAHOMA CATHOLIC

(USPS 066-770) Official Publication of the Diocese of Tulsa, Okla. Published bi-weekly except during the months of January and July. (24 issues per year)

Owned and operated by  
The Eastern Oklahoma Catholic Inc.  
A non-profit organization

**Bishop Edward J. Slattery** Publisher

**Marilyn Duck** Editor

**Hillman Design Group, Inc.**

Production/Design

Address all communication for publication to:

**Eastern Oklahoma Catholic**

**P.O. Box 690240**

**Tulsa, OK 74169**

POSTMASTER: Please mail change of address to:

**Eastern Oklahoma Catholic**

**P.O. Box 690240, Tulsa, OK 74169**

**(918) 294-1904**

**Subscriptions:** \$24.00 per year

Periodical postage paid at Tulsa, OK

Diocesan offices can be reached by computer at the following keystrokes:

**Catholic Schools**

catholic.schools.office@dioceseoftulsa.org

**Religious Formation Office**

religious.formation.psi@dioceseoftulsa.org

**Chancery**

chancery.tulsa@dioceseoftulsa.org

**Eastern Oklahoma Catholic**

easternokcatholic@dioceseoftulsa.org

**Catholic Charities**

info@catholiccharitiestulsa.org

**Vocations Office**

vocations.office@dioceseoftulsa.org

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**EOC**

**Letters to the Editor**

**P.O. Box 690240**

**Tulsa, OK 74169**

email:

**easternokcatholic@dioceseoftulsa.org**

or you may fax it to:

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# Church-state showdown: Italian bill proposes rights for unwed couples

By JOHN THAVIS  
Catholic News Service

## AN ANALYSIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - An Italian legislative proposal that would grant some legal rights to unwed couples - including same-sex partners - has set the stage for a major Church-state showdown.

On one side is a wide spectrum of Italian social and political forces, including many lay Catholics, who say the bill would end discrimination against unwed couples in areas of health care, pensions, housing and employment.

On the other side is the Italian bishops' conference, which has argued that the law would undermine marriage and the traditional family. Some bishops have warned Catholic legislators that they are duty-bound to vote against the proposal.

Supporters point out that the bill is a compromise proposal that recognizes the rights of cohabiting couples, but without legally recognizing the unions themselves. In other words, they say, this is not a "gay marriage" bill.

Opponents agree, but say the effect would be the same: creating a second-class form of marriage and deconstructing a society built on the traditional family.

The conflict was front-page news in early February and continued to escalate.

"We're facing a clash that is unprecedented in the history of Church-state relations in Italy," said Italian Church historian Alberto Melloni.

Pope Benedict XVI was drawn into the fray Feb. 12 when he addressed a conference on natural law. The pope said the institution of

marriage was divinely ordered and not subject to political compromise.

"No human law can subvert the norm written by the Creator without dramatically wounding society in that which constitutes its basic foundation. To forget this would mean weakening the family, penalizing children and making the future of society precarious," the pope said.

Although the pope did not specifically mention the Italian legislation, his comments were interpreted as marching orders to the country's Catholic politicians. "The pope excommunicates cohabiting couples" and "Pope: No new laws on marriage" were typical Italian headlines the next day.

Whenever a pope weighs in - even indirectly - in Italian political affairs, a political backlash is sure to follow. In this case, some lawmakers said the Church had so blatantly interfered in political affairs that it constituted a violation of the concordat that regulates Church-state relations.

Caught in the middle of the dispute was Rosy Bindi, a leading Catholic politician who co-sponsored the compromise legislation. Ms. Bindi, who is unmarried and lives in a residence run by nuns, said the strong reaction by the Church hierarchy surprised her and caused her "great suffering."

Ms. Bindi said she had helped write "a just law that protects the weakest, recognizes the rights of people facing discrimination, and does not create any legal entity that



A woman holding a sign that reads "Stop the Clerical Harassment" was among tens of thousands of people demanding the right to abortion and legal recognition of same-sex unions at a rally in Milan Jan. 14. (CNS/Reuters file photo)

could undermine the family?"

Ms. Bindi, who is family minister in the leftist coalition government of Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, said she was disappointed with the bishops' reaction. The Church she loved, she said, was one which "concerns itself with the things of God."

That comment provoked a new wave of criticism from members of the hierarchy, who said it was an attempt to silence the Church on political issues.

"The Church that is concerned with the things of God cannot help but be concerned with the things of man," said the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. "One cannot understand why the Church, the pope and the bishops cannot speak about a topic as

central as the family?"

The debate has exposed some serious fault lines within Italy's Catholic community. On Feb. 15, several leading Catholic intellectuals urged the bishops to back off their opposition, saying it had crossed the line into the legitimate lay sphere of politics.

A poll showed that Italians overwhelmingly supported the provisions of the bill, although practicing Catholics were divided over whether the legal rights should be limited to heterosexuals or extended to gay couples, too.

At the same time, new sociological data showed that the number of cohabiting couples in Italy had reached 560,000, doubling in the last 10 years. The bishops see that as a sign that marriage is

already eroding and believe the new law would accelerate the process.

Some bishops and theologians have taken a more flexible position on the issue. Archbishop Ignazio Sanna, a member of the International Theological Commission, said he could accept the new law if the final language recognizes only the rights of those involved in nonmarriage unions, and not the unions themselves.

Dehonian Father Luigi Lorenzetti, director of the magazine "Moral Theology Review," made a similar argument, saying the legislation as proposed could be considered an "acceptable compromise" by Catholic politicians.

Vatican sources say the pope is unlikely to intervene explicitly on the matter. In a sense, the sources said, he has already given Italian bishops the tools they need: In 2003, guidelines for Catholic politicians were issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed at the time by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future pope.

The document said Catholic politicians cannot vote for a law that "contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals." It said that phrase refers not only to life-and-death questions like abortion and euthanasia, but also to the protection of the family based on marriage between a man and a woman.

Italian bishops now face the tricky task of deciding whether the new legislation fits that description, or whether it leaves wiggle room for Catholic lawmakers.

# Israeli archaeologist dismisses claim about tomb of Jesus

JERUSALEM (CNS) - The claim by filmmakers that a tomb uncovered nearly 30 years ago in Jerusalem is the burial site of Jesus and his family is "all nonsense," said an Israeli archaeologist.

"In their movie they are billing it as 'never before reported information,' but it is not new. I published all the details in the *Antiqot* journal in 1996, and I didn't say it was the tomb of Jesus' family," said Amos Kloner, who wrote the original excavation report for the predecessor of the Israel Antiquities Authority and is

now a professor of archaeology at Israel's Bar-Ilan University.

"I think it is very unserious work. I do scholarly work ... based on other studies," he said. "It is all nonsense."

Filmmaker Simcha Jacobovici and Oscar-winning director James Cameron announced at a press conference in New York City Feb. 26 that by using new technology and DNA studies they have determined that among the 10 ossuaries - burial boxes used in biblical times to house the bones of the dead - found in the cave by Mr. Kloner in 1980

are those of Jesus, his brothers, Mary, another Mary whom they believe is Mary Magdalene, and "Judah, son of Jesus."

According to press reports, the filmmakers said they had worked on the project with world-renowned scientists, including DNA specialists, archaeologists and statisticians. They said the ossuaries were not identified as belonging to Jesus' family when they were first discovered because the archaeologists at the time did not have the knowledge and scientific tools that now exist.

Mr. Kloner noted that Jesus' family was from Galilee and had no ties to Jerusalem, casting serious doubt that they would have had a burial cave in Jerusalem. He added that the names on the ossuaries were common during that time, and their discovery in the same cave is purely coincidental.

He said the tomb belonged to a middle- or upper-middle-class Jewish family during the first century and the cave was in use for 70-100 years by the family.

The documentary film by

Jacobovici and Cameron is to be aired on the Discovery Channel March 4. A book on the topic, written by Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino and published by HarperCollins, went on sale Feb. 27.

Other books, films and articles about the tomb, including a full-page feature in London's *The Sunday Times*, a British Broadcasting Corp. documentary film and a book called "The Jesus Dynasty" by James D. Tabor, have been published and produced on the topic in the years since the tomb's discovery.

# Arkansas Benedictines bear weekly witness to toll of war



A man runs down a street warning people to flee shortly after car bomb attacks in Baghdad, Iraq Feb. 12. Three bomb attacks at popular markets in Baghdad killed 88 people and wounded 150 on that single day. (CNS photo/Reuters)

FORT SMITH, Ark. (CNS) - Each Sunday, Benedictine sisters from St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith join area residents at the corner of a local park to bear witness to the toll of war.

In their weekly witness at what has been dubbed the Peace Corner, they hold up a banner showing how many American soldiers and Iraqi citizens have died since the invasion of Iraq began March 20, 2003.

"We meet between noon and 12:30, holding our banner near Rogers Avenue so that people coming home from church can see it," Benedictine Sister Rosalie Ruesewald told the Arkansas Catholic, newspaper of the Little Rock Diocese.

An ecumenical organization called Justpeace sponsors the weekly witness. The group is an outgrowth of the Benedictine order's commitment to peace and social justice that began in 1970, when St. Scholastica Monastery established a social awareness committee.

Because of its consistent work in these areas, the committee -

made up of Benedictine Sisters Madeline Clifton, Catherine Markey, Ann Michele Raley, Magdalen Stanton and Consuela Bauer, in addition to Sister Rosalie - received the 2006 Peace Heroes Award from the Omni Center for Peace, Justice and Ecology in Fayetteville.

"We chose the name Justpeace for our motley group because we realized that there could be no peace without justice," said Sister Rosalie, coordinator of the social awareness committee.

The weekly witness at the Peace Corner and the candlelight peace vigil, which took place Jan. 1 to commemorate the 3,000th military death in Iraq, are quiet and low-key.

"Our events aren't political. We have a quiet spiritual setting, and do our homework ahead of time," said Justpeace member Chuck Pennington, a member of First Community Church in Fort Smith.

That homework has three components - prayer, legislative activism and education.

Regular Justpeace bulletins

advise members of pertinent bills before Congress and the state Legislature, and members are encouraged to write or call their legislators to support not only peace in Iraq, but other social justice issues, such as raising the minimum wage, adequately caring for returning veterans and establishing fair immigration policies.

Justpeace meets for a monthly discussion group at St. Scholastica Monastery on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The meeting is both social and educational and often features speakers who have firsthand knowledge of their subject.

"One of the best assets the sisters bring here is education. Educating the people is the only way to bring about social change, counteract emotional reasoning and political bias and encourage dialogue," Mr. Pennington said.

"This group is made up of people who believe that peace is possible and that we are called upon to be peacemakers," Sister Rosalie said.

## Polish nuns expelled for refusing to accept superior

OXFORD, England (CNS) - A group of Polish nuns has been expelled from their order after refusing to accept a new superior.

Archbishop Jozef Zycinski of Lublin published the Vatican decree expelling the members of the Sisters of the Family of Bethany, a Polish order, for "open violation of monastic vows."

The president of Poland's Conference of Female Superiors told Catholic News Service Feb. 22 she had requested an explanation for the unprecedented action and was satisfied correct procedures had been followed.

"The Church gave them a chance to defend their stance and has now made its decision," said Ursuline Mother Jolanta Olech, whose conference represents 93 female religious orders in Poland.

"The drama lies in the fact that they've refused to accept Church directives and thus found themselves excluded. It's hard to see how this conflict will end, but it seems there can be no good solution," she said.

A statement from the general council of the Bethany Sisters said concern had arisen over "personal and organizational decisions" by the order's former superior general, Sister Jadwiga Ligocka, who had recruited novices with inappropriate "character and personality traits" and caused "deep unease" by claiming "private visions" in conflict with Catholic teaching.

## Pope says Church could not have grown without women's early contributions



Pope Benedict XVI waves during his weekly general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Feb. 14 at which he highlighted the fidelity and responsibility of women in the early Christian community. (CNS photo/Reuters)

By CINDY WOODEN  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY - Highlighting the fidelity and responsibility of women in the early Christian community, Pope Benedict XVI said the Church could not have grown and developed as it has without the contribution of women.

"The history of Christianity would have had a very different development if it had not been for the generous support of many women," he said Feb. 14 at his weekly general audience.

Pope Benedict said that as he neared the end of his audience series on the apostles and early Church leaders, he wanted to focus on "the many female figures who played an effective and precious role in spreading the Gospel. Their witness cannot be forgotten."

The pope said the women who helped spread the Gospel and ensure the growth of Christianity - such as Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha, Joanna, Susanna, Priscilla and Phoebe - should be known, honored and remembered.

Going through New Testament references to women in the life of Jesus and the early Christian community, Pope Benedict did

not get into questions such as the ordination of women to the priesthood and diaconate.

Instead, he said Jesus freely chose only men to be among the Twelve Apostles, "fathers of the new Israel" - the Church - and he said the New Testament reference to Phoebe as a "deacon" was an indication of her important responsibility in the community at a time before the title took on a "hierarchical" meaning, implying ordination.

Still, the pope said, it must be recognized that "unlike the Twelve, the women did not abandon Jesus at the hour of his passion" and, in fact, it was a woman - Mary Magdalene - who announced to the apostles the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Of course, the pope said, among the women who played "an active role" in the life of Jesus and the early Church, the most important was Mary, "who with her faith and her maternity, collaborated in a unique way in our redemption."

Pope Benedict said that St. Paul, in his New Testament letters, makes clear that women were essential in the life of the early Church and that they are called to use their gifts for the good of the community.

# Lenten message a departure from customary, archbishop says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - While calling Catholics to perform concrete acts of charity during Lent, Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 Lenten message focuses not on social problems, but on an individual's relationship with God, said Archbishop Paul Cordes.

Presenting the Lenten message at a Feb. 13 press conference, Archbishop Cordes, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, said the pope departed from the customary social focus of papal Lenten messages in order to emphasize that Christian charity must have a religious motivation.

The 2007 message, a meditation on the crucified Christ as the fullest sign of God's love, called on Christians to contemplate Christ's suffering and then work to alleviate situations in which human life and dignity are threatened by poverty, oppression, exploitation, loneliness and abandonment.

Archbishop Cordes said Christians must be pleased that "the biblical commandment of love for one's neighbor" is being followed by a variety of foundations and philanthropic agencies that have no religious motivation.

But at the same time, he said, they must ensure their own acts of charity flow from and witness to the love of God.



Archbishop Paul Cordes, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, listens to Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, during a press conference to present Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten message at the Vatican Feb. 13. (CNS photo/Catholic Press)

"We are not talking about ignoring service to people in order to serve God, but rather of making it clear that precisely by serving

others we are serving God," said the archbishop, whose office promotes Catholic charitable giving and distributes aid in the pope's name.

The archbishop was joined at the press conference by Italian Father Oreste Benzi, famous in Italy for establishing the John XXIII

Foundation and its network of communities for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, for women freed from prostitution and for the severely handicapped.

"If I simply give the poor some 'thing,' I have given little," Father Benzi said. "But if I give them Jesus, I have given them everything."

Archbishop Cordes said that without faith Christian charity may alleviate some suffering, but it will not be able to give people the new life and sure hope that come from a personal relationship with Jesus.

"The absence of God is worse than material poverty because it kills every firm hope and leaves the person alone with his pain," he said.

The archbishop said that fighting secularism has been the main thrust of Pope Benedict's first two years as head of the Church and that when he calls on Catholic charities to be more explicitly Christian it is part of his overall effort to counter "a forgetfulness of God."

Even Christians, the archbishop said, "forget God, not formally, but concretely in their daily actions."

The papal Lenten message is a reminder that "faith requires me to work for good and for justice for those who suffer; I cannot be Christian looking only at myself," Archbishop Cordes said.

## Benedict *Continued from page 1*

had been desecrated, Pope Benedict said that, when faced with any sign of evil, "we must look deeper, to the Lord who offered reparation for the sins of the world."

While it may appear to many people that the balance between good and evil in the world is tipped toward evil, "the Lord put the immensely greater weight of good on the scale" with his death and resurrection, the pope said.

"God himself entered history," he said, and believers are called to imitate his love and mercy, adding further to the side of good.

Asked how to be effective in youth ministry, the pope said, "unfortunately, I live fairly far (from this reality) and cannot give many concrete suggestions."

But, he said, the key thing is to be close to young people, giving them proof that "living a Christian life is possible today."

Most young people today "live in

a world far from God and in this cultural context find Christ and the Christian life, the life of faith, difficult," he said.

Pope Benedict said no one, young people included, should be led to think that "it is possible all at once to live a 100 percent Christian life, without doubts and sins."

The Christian life, he said, is a continuing process of conversion, of stumbling, asking forgiveness and starting over.

The process is a source of good for others as well, he said, because when someone experiences his own shortcomings and forgiveness of his faults, he finds it easier to accept the shortcomings of others and offer them pardon.

A Rome pastor, lamenting the fact that many Catholics are ignorant of the Bible, asked the pope how priests should approach educating the faithful to read the Scriptures.

The pope said he hoped the



Pope Benedict XVI blesses a priest during a meeting with pastors from the Diocese of Rome at the Vatican Feb. 22. In a meeting punctuated by applause and laughter, the pope responded to questions on a variety of topics and encouraged priests to set aside time for prayer. (CNS photo/Reuters, L'Osservatore Romano)

October 2008 world Synod of Bishops would provide concrete suggestions, but in the meantime

he wanted to emphasize the importance of seeing each passage as a tiny part of one large story, the

story of God's saving actions.

"It is a journey that has a direction, and Christ is its arrival point," the pope said.

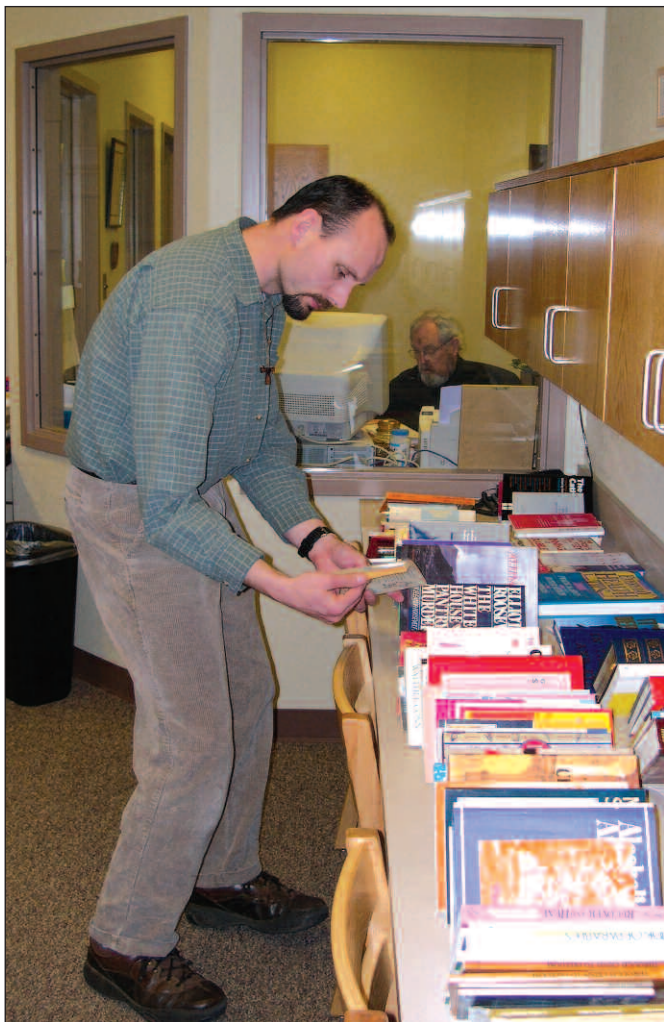
Pope Benedict also cautioned against anyone thinking they understand everything the Bible has to say.

"It is beautiful having understood a bit, but knowing at the same time that it is an unfathomable treasure waiting to be discovered," he said.

"The word of God is always greater than we are," the pope said in response to a question about multiple schools of theology and interpretation. "Different approaches are always needed."

"The theologian, in his professional responsibility and capacity, must try to find paths that respond to the challenges of our time, while at the same time, being aware that all of this must take place within the faith of the Church," he said.

## 'Book Run' features late priest's library collection



Erick Bell, director of the Family Life Office, checks out the book collection of the late Father Jake Males on Feb. 22. Father James White (at his desk behind the window) opened up the collection to priests and Chancery staff.

The would-be "Sooners" were thwarted when they lined up early for the Book Run of 2007 held at the Diocese of Tulsa Archives on Feb. 19. The archivist did not let them enter until 11 a.m. on the dot.

Father James D. White had notified priests, deacons and Chancery staff that he would open the archives for a chance to peruse the vast book collection Father Jake Males left to the Diocese after his death last fall.

Msgr. Patrick Gaalaas, Father Mike Dodd, Father Carl Kerkemeyer, Father Josh Litwack, Father Valentine Ndebile and several employees waited outside until the appointed hour came and Father White buzzed them through. (Actually, Father Valentine said he sat in his car because he knew Father White wouldn't relent. "It speaks well of Father White as a man of principle and order," Father Valentine said.)

The archivist and historian staged the Book Run in honor of the 100th centennial of the state of Oklahoma. That milestone came after Indian territories were opened for settlement in the Land Run of 1889, when some early birds illegally snuck into the territories prior to the official opening.

Even though the early birds had to wait, they were not disappointed with their selections.

Father Males' sister, Patricia Mack, had brought 19 boxes and seven crates of miscellaneous tapes and CDs the priest had collected over his lifetime.

Father Dodd, pastor of St. Anne Church in Broken Arrow and a member of the Marriage Tribunal, made away with Schnackenburg's commentary on the Gospel of John, various books with legal themes, a few on the sacrament of marriage, six having to do with grammar, editing, usage, etc.

"One of my favorites is called 'Latin for All Occasions,' which teaches you to say all kinds of useful phrases such as 'I hate Astroturf' in Latin," Father Dodd said. "There's a

good Latin bumper sticker: 'Si hoc adfixum in obice legere potes, et liberaliter educatus et nimis propinquus ades,' which is translated as: 'If you can read this bumper sticker, you are both very well educated and much too close.'"

Msgr. Gaalaas selected what he wryly called "a little light reading": a collection of essays on the New Testament by a German Bible scholar; a Bible dictionary; "A Life of Jesus" by Japanese novelist Shusaku Endo and "The Cum Ran Documents of Early Christianity" and "A Letter on Apologetics" and "History of Dogma" by French philosopher Maurice Blondell.

Father Valentine favored practical books on ministry, including "Amusing Grace: A Humor to Heal Mind, Soul and Body" by King Duncan and Angela Akers. "I need such books because I like to use humor in my homilies," said Father Valentine, who was ordained in 2005.

Monica Skrzypczak, director of religious formation and the Pastoral Studies Institute, carted away three boxes full of volumes, and she and her assistant, Mary Malcom took a couple of cookbooks.

"Above all, I was impressed with the late Father Jake Males," Father Valentine said. Although he didn't know the late priest, "his library collections testify that he was a studious priest. Basically, that is what all priests are called to do if they are to be effective."

Father Males, a convert to Catholicism who was ordained at the age of 41, was a public school teacher for 16 years and served in nine parishes throughout the Diocese until 1999, when he retired after years of declining health. He moved to Franciscan Villa in 2001 and lived there until his death Sept. 25, 2006.

Msgr. Gaalaas described the late priest as "a quiet, patient man with a wonderful sense of humor. Alzheimer's Disease deprived us of a good and gentle pastor and shepherd."

"Good stuff," Father Dodd added. "Prayers to Father Males."

## Sister Ayleson, Glenmary priest, Benedictine monk die

A Glenmary priest and a Sisters of Divine Providence nun who served the people of the Diocese of Tulsa in their younger years and returned in retirement died last month, as did a brother at St. Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee.

Sister Ayleson Maxwell, CDP, died Feb. 9 in Tulsa, where since 2003 she has served as a volunteer at St. Francis-Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. She was 86.

Glenmary Father Joe Dean, also 86, known as "Dean of Missioners," died Feb. 14 in Mount Pleasant, Texas, of an apparent heart attack.

And Brother Matthew Thomas Bach, O.S.B., a monk of St. Gregory's Abbey who arrived last fall after the abbey where he had spent most of his life, Holy Cross in Canon City, Colo., closed, died Feb. 18 of a stroke. He was 64.

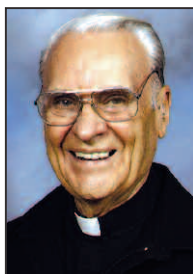
Sister Ayleson was born in Drumright and made her first profession of vows at age 21. She devoted her early ministry to education and taught primary and high school grades at schools throughout New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma.

She was the last principal at Sacred Heart Academy in Vinita, where she served from 1961-67. The previous two years, she taught at St. Anthony School in Okmulgee and returned to her native state to serve at Sacred Heart Church in Miami (1975-76) and at Assumption Church in Duncan (1976-1990.)

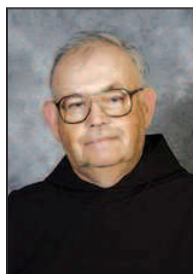
After teaching at Nativity of Our Lord Church in Noel, Mo., from 1990 to 2003, she retired to Tulsa, where she volunteered at St. Francis Xavier Church. She and her sister, Sister Bertina Maxwell, CDP, lived together in a house near Church of the Madalene, and Father Jack Gleason officiated at her Memorial



**Sister Ayleson Maxwell**



**Father Joe Dean**



**Brother Matthew Thomas Bach**

Mass Feb. 24.

Sister Ayleson donated her body to science, and in lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made in her memory to the Sisters of Divine Providence, 515 S.W. 24th St., San Antonio, Texas, 78207.

Father Dean, a native of Chicago, joined Glenmary in 1943, and his assignments included 10 missions in Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi. Of those 10, he founded four, each of which represented the first Glenmary missions in those states.

He served at St. Agnes Church in Antlers in 1994-1995 and returned to the Diocese of Tulsa to administer St. Francis de Sales Parish in the interim between Father John Brown's reassignment and Father Chet Artysiewicz's arrival.

"A large part of Father Joe Dean's magic was that each

person he talked to was, at least for that moment, the most important person in the world," said Father Dan Dorsey, president of Glenmary.

Assigned to West Point, Miss., at the height of the civil rights movement, Father Joe Dean was credited for building a presence in the community that prevented the outbreak of riots like those plaguing the rest of the country during that time. Father Dorsey said he was "a champion of the underdog."

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Feb. 20 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and memorials are requested to Glenmary Home Missioners, P.O. Box 465618, Cincinnati, 45246.

Brother Matthew Thomas Bach, a native of Wisconsin, told people he was a great, great, great, great, great, great grandson of Johann Sebastian Bach, was received as an internal oblate at Holy Cross Abbey in Colorado in 1961 and for many years did custodial work there. In 1980, he made simple perpetual vows and later Solemn Vows.

One of his proud moments came on Sept. 20, 1989, when he received his high school diploma at the high school operated at Holy Cross, Abbot Lawrence Stasyszyn of St. Gregory's said.

Brother Bach was sad when Holy Cross began closing its doors in 2004, but found a new home last September at St. Gregory's. He helped with riders and horses at the Charham Therapeutic Arena, assisted in the abbey business office and relieved caregivers in the abbey's health service.

Abbot Stasyszyn celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 20 in the Abbey Church.

**Diocesan  
briefs**

**Marriage need mending?**

Couples whose marriages are in trouble can get all the tools they need to repair the relationship – as long as both husband and wife are willing to do the work – at the upcoming Retrouvaille Weekend in Tulsa.

Pre-registration is required for the March 9-11 retreat, and couples will have to arrange for child care, said Anita Gunter, one of the Retrouvaille alumni who helps present the weekends. Father Jim Caldwell is the spiritual adviser.

“They have to come ready to work on their marriage,” Mrs. Gunter said. “This has helped literally thousands of marriages,” she said of the international ministry.

Prior to the weekend, husbands and wives will be interviewed separately to establish that both are truly committed to improving the marriage, she said.

To pre-register, call 695-7010. Retrouvaille Weekends are sponsored by the Family Life Office.

**Ministry of acolyte received**

Two seminarians from the Diocese of Tulsa – Elkin Gonzalez Perez and John O’Neill – were among 14 second-year students from Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana to receive the ministry of acolyte on Feb. 13 in the school’s St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel. They were installed by Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, O.S.B., of Indianapolis.

An acolyte is appointed to assist a deacon or priest, primarily in the celebration of Mass. He also attends to the needs of the altar and may distribute Communion as an auxiliary minister.

Acolytes do not give the Benediction, since they are neither a priest nor a deacon, but they may be entrusted with the public veneration of the Blessed Sacrament.

**More deacon nights scheduled**

March will bring three more sessions in a series of information nights for men who want to explore the possibility that God is calling them to service as deacons, and most of them will be held outside the metropolitan Tulsa area.

Topics will include the life and ministry of the deacon, what a vocation is and how to recognize it and finally what the Diocese offers deacon candidates for their spiritual formation and theological training.

First up is a session at 7 p.m. March 6 at Sacred Heart Church in Miami, followed by another at 5 p.m. March 11 at the Chancery Office, 12300 E. 91st St., Broken Arrow. Next up will be a 7 p.m. meeting March 19 at St. John the Evangelist Church in McAlester.

For information on these meetings, please call the Diaconate Office for the Diocese of Tulsa, 294-1904, or email the vicar for deacons at msgr.patrick.branks@dioceseoftulsa.org.

**Pilgrimage deadline extended**

The deadline for securing a spot on Bishop Edward J. Slattery’s pilgrimage to France late this summer has been extended to April 1.

The Aug. 26-Sept. 6 pilgrimage will include stops in Paris, Notre Dame, the site of the Normandy invasion and other sites in northern France, but the culmination of the journey will come when pilgrims arrive at Fontgombault, the mother house of the Benedictine monks who are building Our Lady of Clear Creek Monastery near Hulbert.



The Abbey at Fontgombault dates to the 11th century.

**Stewardship** *Continued from page 5*

When we imitate Jesus, we become more like him.”

When that happens, people are on the road to holiness, he said.

“Each and every person here without exception is called to a life of holiness,” said the Archdiocese of Indianapolis priest, adding that such a life involves sharing with Christ “every day what’s happening in your life.”

Father Tam Nguyen told parishioners he had been delighted when Father Mahan agreed to come to Christ the King for a three-day Lenten retreat. The pastor first heard Father Mahan at a stewardship workshop last spring at Church of the Madalene and was so impressed that he immediately issued the invitation.

“He was still open for one weekend during 2007 Lent,” Father Nguyen said. “Father Mahan is a great speaker and a very spiritual priest.”

Father Mahan told Christ the King parishioners that part of his job is traveling to talk about stewardship as a way of life, travels that have taken him all over the United States as well as Canada, Australia and the Philippines.

He also is author of “More than Silver or Gold,” a 2005 book whose title was the theme for Christ the King’s Lenten retreat.

In his homily, he said the Eucharist is a gift that is worth more than silver or gold, and “we’re meant to pass on this gift.” He quoted St. Teresa of Avila as saying “Christ has no body here on earth now but yours.”

In addition to being homilist and celebrant at the weekend Masses, Father Mahan led evening retreats Feb. 25, Feb. 26 and Feb. 27, each with a different take on the theme.

He described Lent as a “remedy” to the crazy and hectic world in which we live.

Its elements of prayer, penance and service to others are “all meant to bring us back to the Lord Jesus,” as are the sacraments that are emphasized during Lent.

The final mission session was to include confessions heard by several priests. “I know that’s a tough Sacrament for some people,” Father Mahan said. “If that’s you, please come Tuesday evening, and the priest will help you make a good confession.”

People frequently are skittish



Father Mahan speaks with parishioner Chuck Kepper, a Pearl Harbor survivor, after Mass. “He kept telling me incredible story after incredible story, which is pretty understandable,” Father Mahan said. “There are fewer and fewer of them left.”

because they have not been to confession for a long time or feel they have committed so many sins they wouldn’t know where to start.

He reassured the congregation, saying that by participating in the sacrament “you will discover the Lord’s mercy is without limits.”

The first night of the mission attracted an enthusiastic and engaged crowd, Father Mahan said the following day, including a large contingent of the youth group. He said he was pleased, not just because the mission conflicted with the Academy Awards ceremony but because many young people were involved in the state basketball tournament that weekend in Oklahoma City.



Father Daniel Mahan gives the homily at the 11 a.m. Mass Feb. 25 at Christ the King Church, where he led a Lenten retreat on stewardship that continued through Feb. 27. He was invited by Father Tam Nguyen, Christ the King’s pastor, to help the people of the parish “experience a deep spiritual renewal during Lent.”



**Laureate breaks ground for center**

Bishop Edward J. Slattery joined Saint Francis Hospital officials Feb. 13 to break ground for a 19,000-square-foot research center that will be located on the west side of Laureate Psychiatric Clinic and Hospital’s west side at 66th Street and Yale Avenue. Construction of the \$14.1 million facility began immediately and is scheduled to be complete in spring 2008. The center will be equipped with the region’s first 3.0 Tesla functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) laboratory for advanced studies of brain functions as well as office staff for researchers, laboratory facilities and patient exam and interview rooms. A new parking garage also will be built.

## Bob LaFortune

# James A. Robinson: a life of service to community, Church

The Tulsa Catholic and civic communities lost an active and involved member with the death of Jim Robinson on Feb. 6 at age 77. His life was one of many contributions of not only financial resources but of his personal time, energy and talents. Whatever commitment he made was done with enthusiasm and a generous spirit.



We were high school classmates at Cascia Hall School in the 1940's but separated by several years. We became close friends over the past 20 years through some mutual business interests and our service as volunteers at St. John Medical Center. In more recent years my wife, Jeanne, and I shared many vacations and trips with Jim and his wife, Betty.

I am confident that Jim's Catholic school education, from grade school at Marquette through high school, was a major factor in his life. Following high school he joined the U.S. Air Force and then attended Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University) for an undergraduate degree. He then attended Oklahoma University for a law degree in 1953.

Jim joined the legal staff of Cities Service Oil Company and in 1959 became an assistant attorney at National Bank of Tulsa. In 1964, after only five years on staff, he became general counsel. He later became a partner in the law firm Rogers, Bell and Robinson and, subsequently, joined

Robinson, Boese and Davidson, eventually serving as its president.

While in private practice Jim gave his time and talents to various causes, among them the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, St. John Medical Center and St. John Health System. He served several terms as president of Tulsa Boys Home and had a special interest in Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless.

I was fortunate to serve with Jim on the boards of St. John Medical Center and St. John Health System. He had a deep appreciation of the mission and ministry of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother as owners and administrators of these excellent health care organizations. He often joked about the many early morning meetings but was always present and fully engaged as a volunteer.

No commentary on Jim Robinson would be complete without mentioning his friendship with Alfred Boudreau. Both were partners in Affiliated Bank Group, a multi-bank group that was eventually sold to National Bank of Tulsa in 1983. However, the downturn in the bank industry in Oklahoma eventually led to the re-establishment of new bank affiliations that proved to be very successful.

But Al Boudreau was more than a partner; he was a mentor, a confidant of Jim and a loyal friend in the truest sense of the word.

I am sure that all of Jim Robinson's experiences and

acquaintances led him to the creation of Friends of Catholic Education. Too, this was the one accomplishment of his life of which he was proudest. In this effort he was greatly assisted by his daughter, Anne Roberts, who has served as one of its trustees and is the principal administrator.

It is specifically established to fund scholarships for K-8 students in Catholic schools. The schools currently receiving aid are Holy Family Cathedral, St. Catherine, Sts. Peter and Paul and St. Francis Xavier.

Currently, 100 scholarships are funded per year at a cost of \$180,000. Half of this is raised from donors, with a private match of an equal amount.

"Friends" has a modest endowment but still needs significant other contributions to maintain this effort. It is a 401(c)3 organization so donations are fully tax-deductible. Friends of Catholic Education may be contacted at 1924 S. Utica, Suite 1004, Tulsa, OK 74104.

Though Jim can no longer personally direct the operation of "Friends," his daughter has made the commitment for it to continue. Let's hope and pray that the support from Catholics and non-Catholics alike will continue to keep his dream and this valuable assistance for Catholic education a reality.

*Bob LaFortune, former mayor of Tulsa is a parishioner of Christ the King and serves on the Diocese's seminary board.*

## Job opportunities

**Jobs in a Box, a service to readers of the Eastern Oklahoma Catholic, carries ads free of charge. Brief ads will run in two issues of the EOC. Please be specific when listing skills and/or experience offered or required for a particular job.**

### Write to:

Jobs in a Box, The Eastern Oklahoma Catholic  
P.O. Box 690240, Tulsa, OK 74169

Fax your information to 294-0920.

E-mail to [easternokcatholic@dioceseoftulsa.org](mailto:easternokcatholic@dioceseoftulsa.org)

**PRINCIPAL** - San Miguel School of Tulsa, serving approximately 75 students in grades 6-8, seeks a principal for the 2007-2008 school year. Ideal candidate will be highly motivated with excellent people skills who will help ensure the long-term future and success of the school, overseeing all administrative functions. Applicants must be practicing Catholics, have a master's degree - preferably in education administration - and classroom teaching experience. Must demonstrate a working knowledge of and practice strong educational, administrative and communications abilities and commitment to partnership with the Diocese of Tulsa, parents and faculty. Salary and benefits are commensurate with experience and qualifications. Interested applicants should contact the President/Principal Search Committee, 820 S. Boulder Ave., Tulsa, 74137. Phone is 582-9177.

**MEDICAL ASSISTANT** - Xavier Medical Clinic

(a program of St. Francis Health Systems and Catholic Charities) has an immediate opening for an assistant to the medical director. Good interpersonal and organizational skills, attention to details and basic computer literacy required; ability to speak both English and Spanish strongly preferred. A medical background would be most helpful. The position requires 20-25 hours per week with the potential for expansion. Duties include organization and coordination of multiple office functions including filing, ordering supplies, appointments, patient records, data entry, payment and financial arrangements, assisting with medical clinic programs and coordination of some volunteer activities. If interested, provide resume to: Phyllis W. Lauinger, M.D., Xavier Medical Clinic, 2448 East Admiral Blvd. Tulsa, OK 74110.

**TRANSLATORS/INTERPRETERS** - Saint Francis Hospital has immediate openings for on-call translators/intepreters available Monday through Friday during the day. Candidates must be bi-lingual in medical terminology and must pass a medical Spanish proficiency exam. Candidates must have a HS diploma or GED. Please call 494-1451 for additional information or apply online at [www.saintfrancis.com](http://www.saintfrancis.com) under nursing support/translator.

**PART-TIME JANITOR** - Catholic Charities in Tulsa has an opening for a part-time janitor. This evening and possible weekend position requires a high school diploma/GED or janitorial experience. The duties include performing general janitorial duties (routine sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting, light lifting, emptying trash, cleaning restroom, periodic deep

cleaning) at office facilities and clinics. Interested individuals should make initial application to Catholic Charities, 739 N. Denver Ave., P.O. Box 6429 Tulsa, Okla. 74148, (918)585-8167, FAX 918-582-2123.

**PARISH STAFF** - St. Benedict Church has an immediate opening for a parish secretary/bookkeeper. Requirements include experience in Microsoft Office, Excel, Outlook and Publisher. Must have working knowledge of bookkeeping and payroll. Must be able to type minimum of 75 wpm, ten-key by touch, and multi-task. If interested contact Msgr. Gaalaas at 455-4451.

**VENDORS NEEDED** - St. Therese Church in Collinsville will host the annual St. Therese azalea festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 21. Vendor tables are \$10 each. Organizers are seeking a variety of vendors, including: garden statuary, bird houses, bird feeders, shrubs, trees, garden tools and accessories. Call Dee at 371-2704 for reservations and more information.

**SUMMER NANNY** - Christ the King couple seeks mature, responsible high school junior or senior or college student to care for their 10-year old daughter during certain weeks of summer recess at their family residence. Hours will be from 8:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. References and background check will be required. Fax letter of interest, resume and salary requirements to 382-9332.

**SECRETARY** - Small downtown law firm seeks reliable part-time secretary for front office. Must have prior office experience. Legal experience

preferred. Good telephone and people skills a must. Computer skills required. Fax resume and salary history to 382-9319.

**PRINCIPAL** - Trinity Junior High, a seventh through ninth grade school located in Fort Smith, Ark., with over 20 years of academic excellence in Catholic education, is seeking a principal. Candidate must be a practicing Catholic with a master's degree in school administration preferred. Applicants should possess proven leadership and strong human relation skills and energy and passion for education. Inquiries should be e-mailed to The Search Committee, Trinity Junior High School at [ctkpastor@christ-king.org](mailto:ctkpastor@christ-king.org).

**YOUTH CARE WORKERS** - Employment opportunities are available at the Tulsa Boys' Home, a residential treatment facility that serves young men ages 11 to 18. Currently seeking youth care workers and therapists. Excellent benefit package provided. For details see [www.tulsaboyshome.org](http://www.tulsaboyshome.org) or contact Ken Callen at 918-245-0231 ext. 5066

**FILE CLERK** - Toklan Oil and Gas Corporation has an opening for a part-time file clerk to work in the accounting department 8 to 10 hours per week. Responsibilities include filing billing and revenue statements and other miscellaneous office duties. Toklan is located mid-town, approximately 10 minutes from TCC and OSU. Flexible schedule available for students. Dress is "nice casual". Parking is free. Pay is \$8 per hour or commensurate with experience. To apply, contact Marilyn McGee at [mmcgee@toklanog.com](mailto:mmcgee@toklanog.com) or 582-5400 x 114.

## Exploring paradox of most Catholic continent

LIMA, Peru (CNS) - When Church leaders from throughout Latin America gather in Brazil in May for the fifth general conference of the Latin American bishops' council, they will be grappling with the contradictions of life on the world's most Catholic continent.

While more than 450 million of the region's 551 million people are considered Catholic, "the practice of the Christian faith is in profound crisis, which is reflected in the type of societies we have," Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini Imeri of San Marcos, Guatemala, president of the Guatemalan bishops' conference, told Catholic News Service. "They are societies in which there is a great deal of violence, societies that try to follow lifestyles in which consumerism and hedonism predominate, societies that lack social justice."

Economic justice, corruption, migration, education and civic participation are among the issues that bishops in the region will discuss at the conference, which is expected to draw more than 160 voting bishops and 80 other participants to Aparecida, Brazil, outside Sao Paulo, May 13-31.

Pope Benedict XVI, who will travel to Brazil for a five-day visit May 9-13, will officially open the conference.

In a meeting with papal nuncios from Latin America in Rome Feb. 17, the pope outlined some of the issues Church leaders face in Latin America, including the growth of evangelical churches - still generally referred to as "sects" in this majority-Catholic region - and "the growing influence of postmodern hedonistic secularism."

In examining the reasons for the lure of Pentecostalism, the bishops will have to take a critical look at the Catholic Church's own practices.

Part of the attraction of other churches lies in "a failure to awaken a missionary commitment in Catholics and a lack of priests and religious," said Cardinal Javier Errazuriz Ossa of Santiago, Chile, who is president of the Latin American bishops' council.

"It's not that people leave the Catholic Church because they oppose it, but in seeking a relationship with God and seeking the Gospel, and having lost a livelier contact with Catholic communities, they go to other pastors who are talking about Jesus Christ," Cardinal Errazuriz said.

The conference's dual emphasis on discipleship and missionary commitment is meant to spur an awakening so that "every Catholic feels called by Jesus Christ to be a disciple and to be sent out to change the world in accordance with the Gospel," he said.

The bishops must grapple with how to educate Catholics to take on that task, he said.

Although Pope John Paul II once called Latin America "the continent of hope," a brighter future remains elusive for nearly half the region's people. More than 40 percent live in poverty, and income distribution is the most unequal in the world. In countries such as Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, El Salvador and Guatemala, the wealthiest one-fifth of the population receives half the country's income, while the poorest one-fifth take home a scant 3 percent.

"This is poverty born of social and economic inequality, poverty that affects human life and dignity, and poverty that is a form of violence," Bishop Ramazzini said.

## San Miguel director stepping down; praised by educators, priest

San Miguel School has begun searching for a new director after founding and current director Curt Adams submitted his resignation to the Catholic Schools Office.

"I realized last year that I needed to take a step back," Mr. Adams said Feb. 21. "The all-encompassing nature of providing services for the kids who need them - with very few resources - was taking me away from my family."

Mr. Adams and his wife Vicky, principal of St. Catherine School, have a 2-year-old son. "Other commitments were keeping me too busy, and as Brody gets older, I want to be around more." He said his family wants to stay in Tulsa keeping them close to family and his wife's school. "We have no plans to leave."

"Dr. Adams' contributions to the San Miguel School community are beyond measure," said Todd Goldsmith, superintendent of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Tulsa. "His selfless devotion to the students and mission of San Miguel have made the school a success story."

As to what the future holds for the man who opened San Miguel in 2004, Mr. Adams said he doesn't know. He received a doctorate in education in 2003 and wants to continue teaching, but at the college level.

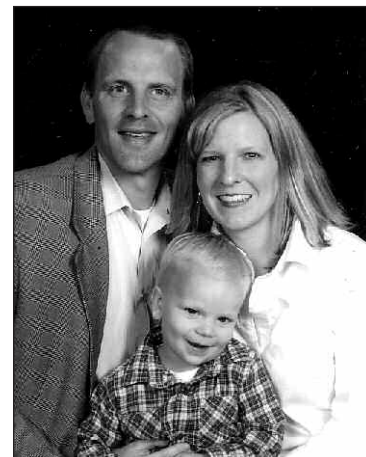
Mr. Adams said he also is interested in research and policy and hopes to connect the two to improve education for at-risk youth.

He has begun interviewing with local universities and is optimistic about his future and the future of San Miguel, a Lasallian school for at-risk middle school students that will graduate its first eighth-grade class this spring.

Many of these graduates will



Curt Adams, principal/director of San Miguel School, explores the civil rights movement with eighth-graders on Feb. 26, challenging them to discuss topics such as segregation and violent and non-violent protests. Mr. Adams recently submitted his resignation to the Catholic Schools Office, making this his last year as San Miguel's principal and director.



Curt, Vicky and Brody Adams

attend Bishop Kelley High School, also founded on the Lasallian teaching philosophy. "Curt turned a dream into a reality" when he started San Miguel, said Alan Weylend, president/principal of Bishop Kelley. "He is a driven, mission- and spirit-filled person whose goal is to help those in need."

"Curt is a wonderful man, and he will never be totally disconnected from the school," said Margaret Ellison, development director for San Miguel. The school is housed in the basement of St. Francis Xavier Church and Diocesan Shrine and in a couple of portable buildings on the church grounds.

Father Jose Maria Briones, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, said he is especially grateful for the efforts of Mr. Adams. "San Miguel School of Tulsa has been a blessing for many families that attend the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Francis Xavier Church. This has been, and will continue to be, a great opportunity for our kids to start a brilliant future filled with great opportunities."

Father Briones thanked Mr. Adams for his dedication to the students, the staff and said he wishes him the best in his future responsibilities.

## Archdiocese criticizes new Mexican law against abuse of women

MEXICO CITY (CNS) - The Mexico City Archdiocese criticized a new law designed to curb violence against women, saying it is unclear and promotes confrontation between the sexes.

An editorial column published Feb. 18 in the archdiocese's weekly bulletin lauded efforts to reduce abuse, but said the law, which went

into effect Feb. 1, contains "omissions and exaggerations."

The law, approved by Mexico's Senate in December, classifies different types of violence against women - ranging from physical to economic and emotional. It also requires Mexican states to prosecute these offenses and provide support, such as shelters, for victims.

"A law that seeks to eradicate violence against women is a good initiative ... but we should not fall into the game of feminism, which tries to pit genders against each other rather than find equality in human relations," the column said.

It also questioned the law's inclusion of certain terms - such as "coldness," "indifference" and

"negligence" - that are used to define "psychological violence."

"How should a judge interpret these terms?" the column asked.

The law has received both criticism and praise in recent weeks.

Women's groups and members of the left-leaning Democratic Revolution Party have said the bill

is an important step in the country's long struggle against machismo and domestic abuse.

Lawmakers from the conservative National Action Party have vowed to modify the law, saying it has legal shortcomings and overlaps the jurisdiction of Mexico's states and municipalities, which are similar to U.S. counties.

## Charles Michie to leave youth office, forms consulting firm

By MARILYN DUCK

Charles Michie, who for the past decade has been coordinator of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Tulsa, will leave his post March 9 to launch what he called a long-deferred dream to run a consulting firm that helps people and organizations "achieve their God-given potential."

Empowerment Enterprise is the name of Mr. Michie's new venture, in which his partners are his wife, Sheila, and Jim Killerlain, formerly of the Williams Company and a parishioner of St. Pius X Church. Its mission is to help individuals, families, for-profit businesses and companies, and non-profit organizations with team building, strategic planning, leadership development and communications.

"This has literally been on the back burner for a long time, and now it's time to have the time to make this dream materialize," Mr. Michie said Feb. 22. "What I really enjoy doing is working with a group of people to form a team and then help that team develop a vision. The goal is to maximize efficiency to allow them to achieve their mission."

Mrs. Michie will continue teaching sixth grade at San Miguel School, her husband said. The couple attends Sts. Peter and Paul Church.



Charles Michie, a.k.a. Mick

"It is with a heavy heart that I accepted the resignation of Charles Michie," Chancellor John Johnson said. "Mick has been responsible for the development of many progressive programs that have touched the lives of so many of our youth. We will truly miss his enthusiasm, energy and bright

smile."

Msgr. Patrick Gaalaas, vicar general, will embark on a national search for a successor, targeting alumni from Catholic universities that have a strong youth minister's curriculum, Mr. Johnson said. "Until a decision is made for a leader of this critical ministry, Monica Skrzypczak will serve as the interim leader." Miss Skrzypczak is director of the religious formation department, which includes youth and young adult ministry.

Among the programs Mr. Michie established and/or oversaw are retreats for young people of all age groups, some of which focus on Christ's love as it can be reflected in faithful relationships with parents, family, teachers and friends. Other themes involve the call to experience Jesus' Paschal Mystery in daily life, outdoor or adventure team building outings; exploration and reflection of the issues, needs and life values of early adolescence, moral decisions for friendships, chastity and Christian identity.

The youth and young adult office also has coordinated trips to regional and National Catholic Youth Conference pilgrimages and World Youth Day pilgrimages. It sponsors and organizes the Diocesan Youth Rally each fall and, until this year, operated the Diocesan Summer Camp program, which has been

discontinued.

Empowerment Enterprise will offer many of the same services Mr. Michie has led in the youth and young adult ministry, including workshops and retreats, outdoor team building exercises and training in the culture of life, ethics and healthy work as well as "servant leadership."

Mr. Michie, raised in St. John the Evangelist Parish in McAlester, earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Oklahoma State University and a master's in public administration from the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa.

He and Mrs. Michie have two children, both of them Cascia Hall graduates. Jacqueline lives in Santa Rosa, Calif., and Joseph will graduate this spring from Merrimack College near Boston with a degree in chemistry.

Mr. Michie said he views Empowerment Enterprise as an apostolate. "You don't work here 10 1/2 years and not have a committed ministry perspective. I am just simply asking the Lord, 'You lead, and I will follow.'"

"One of the most powerful lessons I've learned working for the Diocese is that prayer supersedes my own energies."

## James Robinson founded schools' good 'Friends' organization

By BARB HILGER

The Friends of Catholic Education Endowment Trust is set up to be just that - a friend to people who are seeking a Catholic education for their children. The fund was established in 1997 by James Robinson when he learned that St. Catherine School was in danger of closing.

With the help of some friends, he set up the fund to make the rising cost of Catholic education affordable to families who do not have the financial means to pay tuition. Mr. Robinson died Feb. 6.

This financial assistance is "currently restricted to four Catholic schools that are in parishes that do not have the financial wherewithal to operate a school," according to the Friends' October newsletter.

The organization operates separately - and differently - than other groups that help parents send their children to Catholic schools, notably the St. Francis of Assisi Trust Fund. That organization provides aid directly to parents at all Catholic schools in the Diocese and funds the annual grants as a percentage of



Board members of Friends of Catholic Education recently visited Sts. Peter and Paul School, one of four Catholic schools their organization supports. From left are Joe Mueller, Anne Roberts, Mike Elvir, Father Tim Davison, the late Jim Robinson and Bob Sullivan.

its endowment. Individual school endowments work similarly.

The Friends organization is committed only to the four at-risk schools - St. Catherine's, Sts. Peter and Paul, Holy Family and St. Francis Xavier Bilingual Institute, a pre-school.

The organization has no overhead, which means every dollar donated is first matched by the organization and in turn given in scholarships. The fund is a 501(c) 3 trust and is independent of the Diocese of Tulsa and other organizations.

There is no application process. The principals and pastors of the schools have the responsibility of assessing financial need.

"Mr. Robinson recognized that principals and pastors could best say where the money should go," said Vicky Adams, principal at St.

Catherine School.

When the fund was established, \$18,000 was contributed, and 10 scholarships were provided at St. Catherine. When the Friends learned that other schools were in similar circumstances, fundraising was increased, and \$90,000 was raised. The private match of an additional \$90,000 from the Friends provided 100 scholarships for all four schools.

"Because of the good stewardship of the principals, the money is actually stretched further every year," the newsletter stated. To date, more than 1,700 full and partial scholarships have been given over the 10 years the fund has been established.

Mr. Robinson's legacy will live on in the Catholic education system through the group he founded. Tax deductible contributions can be made to Friends of Catholic Education, 1924 S. Utica, Suite 1004, Tulsa, OK 74104.

**Editor's note:** Bob LaFortune has written a tribute to his long-time friend James Robinson in a guest column on Page 13.

**Education news briefs**

**National Merit Finalists**

The following seniors advanced to National Merit Finalist standing in the 2007 scholarship program:

**Bishop Kelley**

Kathryn Fox  
Patrick Gugliuzza  
Tammy Le

**Cascia Hall**

Madison Blocker  
Andrea Cody  
Patrick Collins  
Michael Dunlap  
Patrick Forsyth  
Michael Griffin  
James Kucinskas  
Caroline Marra  
Tracy Pfeiffer  
Stephanie Sawyer  
Jeff Stewart  
Isabel Tinker  
Eric Weeldreyer

**Boots-'N-BBQ**

Marquette School has reached 50 percent of its goal to start a Religious Inclusive Special Education (RISE) program this fall. Families continue to inquire about RISE, but the school is unable to accept any more special-needs students without more financial backing. Donations pay for teaching assistants, additional curriculum and a special education coordinator.

The school is hosting its second Boots-'N-BBQ April 27; for more information call 584-4631.

**Bricks available**

Sts. Peter and Paul School begins its second phase of fundraising to build a stage and install a new gym floor to replace the current concrete one. The school has reduced the price to purchase a memorial brick from \$1,000 to \$250.

The bricks may memorialize groups in the parish, individuals who are living or deceased or anyone who wishes to support the school. The school is seeking broad participation from parents, the Hispanic community as well as English-speaking parishioners, alumni and friends of the school.

To purchase a memorial brick, send buyer's name, address and phone number, along with check and name of person or group to be memorialized to Sts. Peter and Paul, 1428 N. 67th E. Ave., Tulsa, 74115.

*'We're not just a bunch of nerds'*

**First class of scholar hopefuls present capstone projects**

By AMANDA WILLIAMS

"Success should be a journey, not a destination," Brother Bernardine Kuzminski, F.S.C., wrote daily on his classroom chalkboard during the 35 years he taught at Bishop Kelley High School. After his death in 2001, the Brother Bernardine Scholars program was created to honor his memory and commitment to excellence.

The first freshman participants were accepted in 2002, and the 20-member pioneer class began presenting their senior projects Feb. 15, culminating four years worth of service, scholarship and enrichment. The presentations will continue through April 11.

The inaugural students, who are to graduate in May, presented their projects in a variety of formats, including documentary, artistic renderings, dramatic performances, videos, slide shows and research paper presentations on topics ranging from sports psychology to "My Family's Journey from Vietnam."

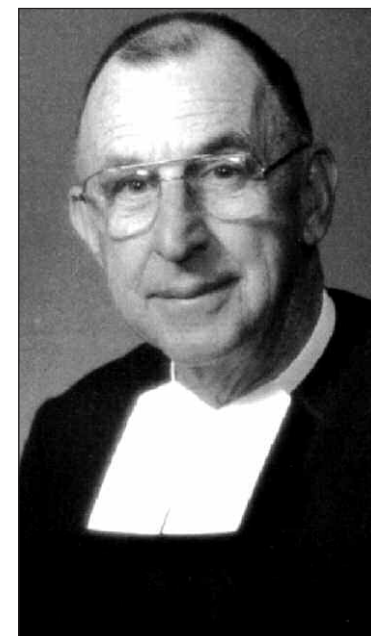
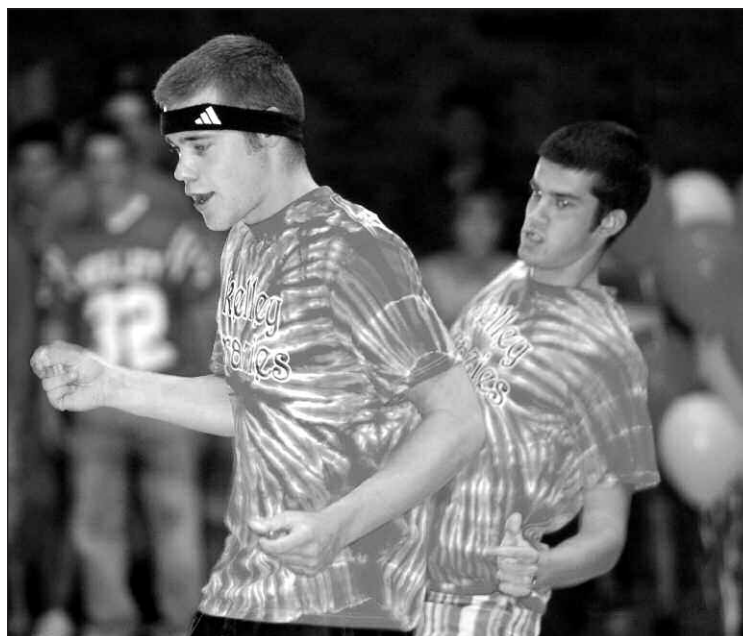
Bishop Edward J. Slattery attended the Feb. 27 presentations, which were on "Cultural Effects of Bullying," "The Tulsa Race Riot," "What it Takes to Win the Tour de France" and "Philosophy of Deconstruction of 'Batman Returns.'"

Each year young people are selected based on placement test scores, middle school transcripts, teacher recommendations, written applications and personal interviews. The four-year honors program requires students to pursue a rigorous course of study, participate in extracurricular activities, engage in self-directed learning, view learning as a year-round process and attend enrichment seminars and cultural events.

Cultural enrichment seminars the Class of 2007 scholars-to-be attended include presentations by Bishop Desmond Tutu, Colin Powell, Sen. John Glenn as well as trips to museum exhibits and theatrical and film performances.

Another key component of the program is service – students must commit a minimum of 20 hours tutoring others.

The program is demanding, but participants say the benefits they have received during the past four years go beyond strengthening their



Bishop Kelley Seniors and Brother Bernardine Scholar program participants Robert Dennis, left, and Reid Spears perform for the Kelley Krazies spirit group. Robert was a leader in starting the group, which began training and performing this year. At right is Father Bernardine Kuzminski, F.S.C.

**Scholars-to-be projects**

The following Bishop Kelley seniors began presenting their capstone projects Feb. 15. The presentation is one of the final requirements toward becoming a Brother Bernardine Scholar upon graduation.

- Robert Dennis - sports psychology
- Jessica Doll - animation: characteristics and aspects
- Peter Elliot - history and impact of the Internet
- Audrey Ellsworth - pediatric leukemia
- Kathryn Fox - Salvador Dali and his art
- Michael LaGarde - "How I learned to stop worrying and love rhetoric"
- Tammy Le - "My family's journey from Vietnam"
- Tim MacDonnell, World War II – the Pacific theatre
- Bailey McBride - the Tulsa Race Riot and its implications
- Tanner Miller - out of Africa – the origins of man
- Kelsey Miranda - teen volunteerism
- Kevin Nhan - religion and medicine
- Molly O'Connor - Oklahoma history, pre-statehood
- Rachel Ogletree - cultural effects of bullying
- Sandy Ruiz - American epidemic of childhood obesity
- Ben Russo - The life of Bishop Francis Clement Kelley
- Alex Schneider - "What it takes to win the Tour de France"
- Reid Spears - marathon preparation
- Cory Wilson - philosophy of deconstruction in "Batman Returns"
- Cliff Woodford - nutrition and effects of low-calorie diet

chances for winning admission to a good college, scholar students said.

"We have a really diverse group, drawing students from every activity and interest area at Kelley," senior Bailey McBride said. "We're not just a group of nerds."

"The program has a lot of different demands, both academic and extra-curricular," added Kelsey Miranda. "But the students who go into the program are driven and naturally involved. We'd be doing all these things anyway."

Bailey applied to eight colleges and has been accepted and offered

scholarships to them all. One even offered her a free ride and a chance to study at Oxford.

"It (the scholar title) looks impressive on a college resume, but the benefits of what we learn during the four years outweigh the title received," Kelsey said.

In addition to the capstone project, throughout their high school career students must enroll in at least three honors-level courses each year, take a minimum of five advanced placement exams prior to graduation, complete four units each of theology, English,

math, science and social studies, plus two units of the same foreign language.

They also are expected to maintain honor roll status while participating in scholars' seminars, cultural enrichment programs, summer and extra-curricular activities involving religion, athletics, academics, service, leadership or fine arts. The title of "Scholar" can only be earned by completing all requirements prior to graduation.

The program attracts students with a wide variety of interests and talents. "They are involved in many aspects of school and community activities such as the National Merit Scholarship, academic bowls, speech and debate, choir, athletics, Boy and Girl Scouts, Youth Leadership Tulsa and more," said Betty O'Connor, director of development.

Program application materials declare that "in the spirit in which Brother Bernardine challenged so many of his students to strive for excellence, it is the intent of this program to challenge these scholars to maximize their God-given gifts and talents."

The Bernardine Scholars program was designed and overseen by Kelley faculty member Judith McMasters.

The remaining senior presentations are to be held at 7 p.m. March 5, 7 and April 11 in the Brother David Poos Science and Technology Center.

# 'I'm going to take Mr. O's job over'

By AMANDA WILLIAMS

Bishop Kelley High School rebuilds the Lasallian teaching force at the first annual Future Teachers dinner Feb. 12.

Kelley faculty invited 36 students with teacher-like qualities to a school-hosted dinner where they discussed the vocation of teaching, why Kelley teachers went into the profession and what they enjoy most.

"While talking with our faculty about how they came to be teachers, many said it was not because they were especially brilliant, but because a teacher in their past had touched their hearts and they wanted to affect students in the same way," said Gary Oberste, vice principal of student activities. "Because of the social and community interaction I had with the (Christian) Brothers when I was a freshman at Kelley, I knew within the first six weeks that I wanted to be a teacher." Mr. Oberste graduated in 1970.

"I knew I wanted to teach, but I wasn't sure I wanted to teach high school," said Teresa Guzman, a junior. "But as soon as I started at Kelley, I really liked the atmosphere and knew this was where I wanted to teach."

Teresa said that even though her favorite subject is English literature, she plans to focus on biology and nutrition in college and hopes to return as a science and physical education teacher at Kelley.

"I'm going to take Mr. O's job over," she said with a laugh.

Between 1946 and 1964, 78 million babies were born. Those people are now what society refers to as the baby boomers – and they're retiring in droves. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that over the next 10 years there will be a wide variety of open positions for the younger – and smaller – generations. The job outlook for educators is excellent because of the large number of teachers who are expected to retire over the 2004-2014 period.

Bishop Kelley identified this looming need and is working hard to build a new generation of Catholic educators committed to

and trained in the Lasallian tradition.

At the same time the school was hosting its first Future Teachers dinner, a Lasallian brother was visiting sharing a similar message.

Christian Brother Pat Conway, director of vocations for the Midwest district, made his second visit to the school promoting the Lasallian teacher immersion program for young men who want to become teachers. While the immersion program is a vocations discernment program for young men, participants are not committed to becoming Christian Brothers.

This year the immersion program does not include any Kelley students, but current participants visited the school to tell of their experiences working in AIDS houses, living in homeless shelters, working in kitchens and observing at a variety of schools, both advantaged and disadvantaged.

Mr. Oberste said the program is for students who are looking for more than a job in teaching – the young men are trying to find their calling.

"I definitely want to become a teacher and, though I haven't applied yet, will most likely go into the Christian Brothers immersion program," said senior T.J. Buckley. He said what affected him most from the dinner with faculty was when literature teacher Donna Bingham told students that whenever she reads or teaches about literature, the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. "It shows how important it is to have passion for the subject you teach," T.J. said.

Mr. Oberste said the school will continue to foster dialogue between faculty and students about the teaching vocation. "We are planting seeds. What better person to teach at Kelley than an alumnus who is committed to the school and the Lasallian tradition?"



Gary Oberste, vice principal of student activities, shares his enthusiasm for the future of education at Bishop Kelley with English teacher Kathy Scribner.

## High school alums return as faculty

### Bishop Kelley boasts 21 teachers and staff members who graduated from the school.

Michael McElwaine, 1966  
Kathy Sharp Pickup, 1968  
Katie Boudreau, 1970  
Gary Oberste, 1970  
Carol Kmetz, 1973  
Jane Oberste, 1977  
Dan Schmitz, 1977  
Jerry Iten, 1980  
Maureen Lawler, 1980  
Mark Glover, 1982  
David Dee, 1984  
Father Josh Litwack, 1989  
Medea Bendel, 1990  
Kristi Grisaffe, 1992  
Joy Marie Galliard, 1994

Scott Ellis, 1995  
Brandon Birks, 1998  
Amanda Cadion, 1999  
Maggie Cameron, 2000  
Megan Schaunaman, 2001  
Tom Griffin, 2002

### Cascia Hall has 17 former students, three spouses of alumni and 30 parents of current or former students who have returned to the school serving as full-time and part-time faculty, staff and coaches.

Full-time faculty:  
Father Ted Tack, 1944  
Father Bill Perez, 1955  
John LaFortune, 1977

Joe Medina, 1984  
Ted Sanderson, 1985  
John Santee, 1987  
Michael Loeffler, 1997  
Thomas Perrault, 2000  
Meredith Purgason, 2001

### Part-time coaches:

Jerry Henderson, 1957  
Mark Butterworth, 1973  
Jared Goldfarb, 1999  
Vaughn Graham, 1999  
Branon Vaughan, 1999  
Clint Engles, 2000  
Susan Neidermeyer, 2000  
Abby Schroeder, 2000  
Anne Wiruth, 2000  
Michelle Juergens, 2002  
Cameron Brosky, 2006  
Blake Marfechuk, 2006

## Newman Center dinner, 60th anniversary

The St. Philip Neri Newman Center is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year and invites all Catholics to the annual St. Philip Neri Society Dinner from 7-9 p.m. April 18 at the Allen Chapman Activity Center on the University of Tulsa campus.

Guest speaker will be Father Robert Sirico, president of the Acton Institute and a widely featured guest commentator on CNN, ABC, the BBC, NPR and CBS's 60 Minutes, among others.

He has also published in a variety of journals including the

New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, the London Financial Times, the Washington Times, the Detroit News, and National Review.

While Father Sirico is typically invited to speak on matters involving political, economic and social matters as they relate to religion, in Tulsa Father Sirico will speak on "When Liberty and Truth Embrace: Reflections on the Coming Springtime of the Church from the Heart of St. Philip Neri" who is the Newman Center's patron saint.

The annual dinner is the Newman Center's largest fundraiser. Milann Siegfried is the honorary chairperson, and Sam and Becky Rhoades will fill the position of patron chairpersons.

The Newman Center mission is to prepare university students for a life of faith, leadership and service to the world. Tickets are \$100 per person. Table sponsorship is also available beginning at the \$1,000 level. For more information please call Lisa Holden at 599-0204 or 625-3201.

## Documentary on monastic life has 'you-are-there' feel

By HARRY FORBES

NEW YORK (CNS) - If you've ever wondered about life in a monastery, a new documentary - already much praised and awarded in Europe - offers an unbeatable "you are there" impression.

The aptly named "Into Great Silence" (Zeitgeist) is German filmmaker Philip Groning's poetically filmed profile of a Carthusian monastery, Le Grande Chartreuse, secluded in the French Alps, and discreetly follows the cloistered monks in their daily - mostly silent and solitary - routines over a six-month period.

The order was founded in 1084 by St. Bruno of Cologne.

Mr. Groning's respectful, no-frills approach utilizes no narration or background music. Yet, the soundtrack is far from silent. The sounds of bells chiming, wood being sawed, footsteps falling on long corridors, Gregorian chants and the like are ever-present.

The film begins with a monk praying intently in his cell. From there, other monks and activities are observed, albeit from a careful distance. We see them performing their daily ablutions, sweeping the floor, shoveling snow, watering plants, cutting fabric for clothes, all without speaking, though there is not an absolute vow of silence there.

Gradually, Mr. Groning allows more intimacy, even showing us some of the monks in revealing



This is a scene from "Into Great Silence," a documentary by filmmaker Philip Groning about monks at a Carthusian monastery in the French Alps. (CNS photo/courtesy of Zeitgeist Films)

close-up, staring directly into the camera, alternately blank, uncomfortable or quizzical, but all without even a trace of guile. The priests are a mix of young and old, and Mr. Groning pays particular attention to a new member of their ranks, a black African novice.

The film is well under way before we hear any speech or observe any verbal interaction. The first speaking we hear is at a Sunday meal, the one day when the monks are free to talk. We also get to observe them on their weekly walk in the woods.

Later, Mr. Groning devotes a

lengthy sequence to the monks getting their hair cut and a very elderly monk having ointment spread on his skin by a younger colleague. Such interaction is rare, but telling in its strong sense of community. Near the end of the film, we see how playful these serious men can be, as they frolic in the snow and laugh.

By alternately combining a painterly formality (there are some still-life shots of fruit in bowls and tools) and a verite intimacy, Mr. Groning skillfully captures the textures and rhythms of this highly structured existence.

Many will find the film's austerity and nearly three-hour length overly demanding, but for those viewers willing to give themselves up to it, they'll be rewarded with a rich cinematic and spiritual experience.

In French and Latin with subtitles. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-I - general patronage.

*Harry Forbes is director of the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. More reviews are available online at [www.usccb.org/movies](http://www.usccb.org/movies).*

## 'Amazing Grace' offers rare portrait of man of God

By HARRY FORBES  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK - As any devoted watcher of late-night TV can tell you, the historical drama used to be a sturdy Hollywood staple, with "The Life of Emile Zola," "The Private Life of Henry VIII" and "The Young Mister Pitt" as prime examples.

William Pitt, England's youngest prime minister, actually figures heavily in the film under discussion: "Amazing Grace" (Samuel Goldwyn/Roadside), a film so good it just might resurrect the genre.

This compelling biography tells the story of William Wilberforce (Ioan Gruffudd), the great 18th-century British abolitionist.

Overcome by a desire to serve

God, Wilberforce seriously considers leaving politics and devoting himself to the Church. His epiphany comes in his garden where he reveals to his astonished servant that God has found him. Pitt and others convince Wilberforce that he can serve God best as a political activist and by making a difference in the cause to outlaw slavery. (The Christian concept that all men are created equal was, in fact, key in putting an end to slavery.)

With the help of Pitt (Benedict Cumberbatch), who sees to it that Wilberforce is elected to the House of Commons, and other like-minded friends in Parliament and elsewhere, Wilberforce would eventually, after tireless and courageous struggle over two

decades, help an anti-slave trade bill pass in Parliament in 1807.

But his triumph didn't come easily; he persevered through long bouts of illness and, for a time, with revolution in the air in France, the anti-slavery movement even carried a seditious stigma.

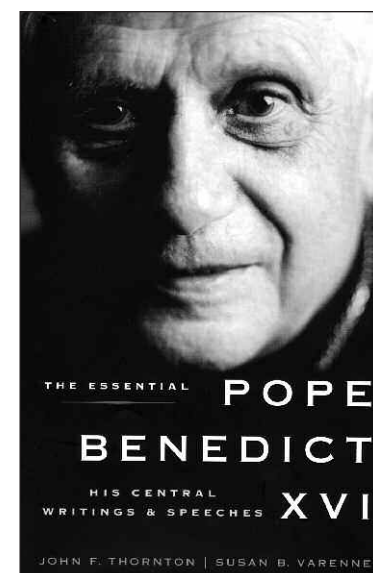
Prominent in the story is John Newton (Albert Finney), a former slave ship captain who, after renouncing his past, became a clergyman (and also wrote the words to "Amazing Grace"). At one point, Wilberforce enters a men's club and defiantly sings that hymn to demonstrate his conviction to the abolitionist cause, a stirring moment.

Wilberforce's domestic life, including his long-lasting marriage to like-minded Barbara Spooner

(Romola Garai), gets relatively little screen time, but "Amazing Grace" still registers as very much as a personal - as much as political - story.

The film has compelling performances from a first-rate British cast. With an audience-friendly script, its full-throttle emotional conclusion and overall handsome production design, director Michael Apted's film is especially admirable for its unabashed portrait of a passionate man of God, a rarity today.

"Amazing Grace" should find favor in schools, but this is no dry history lesson. Rather, it's a vital tribute to the man who, as his epitaph states, "prepared the way for the abolition of slavery in every colony of the empire."



## Collection of pope's writings to be published

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) - A new book to be published in March by HarperSanFrancisco is drawn largely from the shorter writings of the man about to begin his third year as the leader of the world's Roman Catholics and an "important thinker" for all people.

"The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches" opens with then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's sermon at the funeral of Pope John Paul II April 18, 2005, and closes with his first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est" ("God Is Love"), dated Dec. 25, 2005.

Edited by John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne, the 464-page hardcover book will sell for \$27.95 in the United States.

Major subject areas include Christian relations with Islam, Christian values, birth control and abortion, sexual misconduct in the priesthood, the ordination of women, anti-Semitism and the Catholic Church, and ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.

"Now that a leading Catholic theologian has assumed office as pope, many are eager to get an overview of his theology," said Cardinal Avery Dulles in a back cover comment on the book. "The present selection, drawn largely from his shorter writings, gives an excellent sampling. It will provide a first orientation to beginners and will enable veterans to supplement their familiarity with this important thinker."

By MARILYN DUCK

John Johnson considers himself blessed in many ways, including a great love for a mother he has never met.

"She was young – 15, 16, 17 – and I think she made the most unselfish decision any woman can ever make. I love her dearly for that," the chancellor of the Diocese of Tulsa said last month.

Mr. Johnson spent the first four months of his life in foster care, but during his time in foster care then "I apparently was just held for four months, which spoiled me," he says.

Next stop was home: He joined the family of Alfred M. and Ama Lou Johnson of Granite and their 4-year-old daughter, Susan. "For me to land in such a wonderful, loving environment with two of the best possible parents was truly a gift from God."

A lot of life experiences prepared Mr. Johnson for his current job, which in the corporate world might be called chief operating officer. He has a finance degree from the University of Oklahoma and worked for his alma mater in the college relations office as a recruiter. He moved on to a varied

career in business that included strategic planning, demographic studies and business development, including management and design.

Perhaps the most crucial and rewarding experience was meeting his wife, Margaret Wade Johnson, a third-generation parishioner of Christ the King Church. "It was love at first sight," Mr. Johnson says, and Margaret was the reason that a man who was raised in a faith-filled but Protestant home came into the Catholic Church.

Mr. Johnson also has a master's degree in international business from OU-Tulsa and has studied Canon law. And on May 26 the

chancellor will become Deacon John Johnson, when he and 10 other men will be ordained to the permanent diaconate. The program requires a commitment of one "study weekend" per month that begin on Friday night and runs through Sunday afternoon, plus a lot of out-of-class study time.

Mr. Johnson came to work at the Chancery as vice chancellor in January 2006 and assumed the chancellor position in April following the retirement of Dr. Henry Harder.

The job is a demanding one – Mr. Johnson has placed a table next to his desk to store the overflow of paperwork of any given day. Also grueling are his deacon studies, which will total 1,000 hours by the time of his ordination and are the equivalent of the formation men receive in the seminary.

He and Margaret are active at Christ the King Parish, and son Patrick is an active fifth-grader at Marquette School.

Despite all the claims on his time, Mr. Johnson said, he loves his job.

"Part of the thing I love about it is that I love challenges, I

"For me to land in such a wonderful, loving environment with two of the best possible parents was truly a gift from God."



Chancellor John Johnson relaxes after preparing breakfast for Chancery employees last fall.

## Chancellor settling into job he loves

love to be busy, and there's such a diversity of issues, a breadth of issues that it's fascinating," Mr. Johnson said.

"Where else can you work and have your faith be such an integral part of your work? You start meetings with prayers, and you work with people who are like-minded. We are serving God's people in our Diocese, and that's a reward in itself."

The people who work with Mr. Johnson can testify to all that, but something about John Johnson that they would be quick to add is this: He's a fun fellow to be around. As well as a thoughtful and considerate boss.

Last fall, he donned a chef's hat and jacket to prepare and serve his famous "melt-in-your-mouth pancakes" at a breakfast held on the patio at the Diocesan headquarters. (Secret ingredients: two cups EACH of sour cream and buttermilk.)

He has a quick, at times wicked wit, and he's self-deprecating to a fault.

Mr. Johnson likes to tell people that although he and his wife attended OU at the same time, they never met during their time in Norman. "Margaret says she doesn't know how she managed to miss a 6-foot 8-inch white guy, but she did," her husband says.

Mr. Johnson went to work for Johnson & Johnson (no relation) in his late 20s as a pharmaceutical rep and was on board when one of his clients, Tylenol, had to cope with a the

disaster of having someone lace its product with cyanide.

When Johnson & Johnson transferred him to Tulsa in 1980, he soon met Margaret on a blind date. When they decided to marry, Mr. Johnson said, "I knew we would have a church but at that time I did not realize the rootings of Margaret's Catholicism."

Although Mr. Johnson was traveling "80 to 90 percent of the time," the couple were regulars at Christ the King. When he showed up at his first R.C.I.A. session, Father Jerry McCarthy asked his parishioner, "Who are you sponsoring?"

His parents had done "an outstanding job of teaching us the faith," and so coming into the Catholic Church was not a difficult thing for him to do, Mr. Johnson said. In fact, many things drew him to the Church, including the pageantry and "dressings." His theological studies for the diaconate have given him a deeper understanding of the Church and its "fuller meaning."

Among the more unusual aspects of his business career is that he commuted for three and a half years – to San Francisco. His Tulsa firm had been bought out by a San Francisco company that used computer modeling to manage timber production, and though the travel was arduous, he loved The City, as the locals call it.

Eventually, though, he wanted to spend more of his time with Margaret and Patrick, so he opted for a more manageable commute: Tulsa to Dallas. But his work for BSW, strategic planning and business development for a large architectural firm, still kept him on the road to Asia, South America and Europe.

His business experience provided him a lot of "skill sets" that help him administer the Diocese, including how to use strategic planning and demographics in deciding where to site churches.

Yet perhaps the most valuable experience he said, was being in what he called a "huge" graduating class at Granite High School. Of the 24 students, 22 had been together since first grade; the two newcomers were twins who joined their classmates in fourth grade.

"The Catholic community here is so strong that it reminds me a lot of growing up in Granite. "There's a common bond that brings great comfort. We're serving God's people in our Diocese, and that's a reward in itself."

"The Catholic community here is so strong that it reminds me a lot of growing up in Granite. There's a common bond that brings great comfort. We're serving God's people in our Diocese, and that's a reward in itself."

# Connections

To let other parishes know what's happening in yours, please submit photos and news items to Connections, P.O. Box 690240, Tulsa, Okla. 74169-0240. Call us with news at 918-294-1904, fax us at 918-294-0920, or send e-mail to easterncatholic@dioceseoftulsa.org.

Another way to share the news is to add the EOC to your parish bulletin mailing list. We receive a few bulletins from outlying parishes, and it would be helpful to receive more bulletins to help us learn about news and provide a variety of information in Connections.

## Party kicks off St. Clement's 50th anniversary

By **BARB HILGER**

BIXBY – Big band music filled the hall at St. Therese Maronite Catholic Mission Feb. 17 for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of St. Clement Church in Bixby. The dinner and dance event was the first in the lineup of anniversary activities scheduled this year and was held at the recently completed St. Therese to accommodate the 170 guests.

“Father Elias (Abi-Sarkis) was gracious enough to let us use St. Therese’s parish hall since we’ve outgrown our own hall,” said Amy Tommey, St. Clement parish life coordinator.

The evening began with a blessing by Bishop Edward J. Slattery. Following dinner, the nine-piece band “The Zuits” entertained the guests with big band and swing music. “The musicians were students from University of Tulsa, and they were magnificent,” Mrs. Tommey said.

This kick-off anniversary event was for adults, but several family activities are scheduled. The year-long celebration will culminate on St. Clement’s feast day, Nov. 23. Masses that weekend will be celebrated by Bishop Slattery and Father James White. Father White has been asked to give the parish history, and Mrs. Tommey is planning a history-in-pictures celebration.

St. Clement of Rome began as a mission church primarily geared toward migrant workers in late 1957, with the first Mass celebrated in the home of Jack and Joan Sheridan. Beginning with fewer than 10 people, Mass celebrations moved from home to home until the numbers grew too large.

In October 1959, Bishop Victor J. Reed, the fourth bishop of Oklahoma, set out to establish a permanent church in Bixby, and a 10-acre site at 155th Street and Memorial Drive was purchased at auction for \$10,000.

The first Mass was celebrated in the current church building on July 17, 1960, at what was originally known as St. Francis of Assisi Mission. The name St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church was chosen to honor Bishop Francis Clement Kelley, the second bishop of Oklahoma. It also was a tribute to the still-standing St. Clement Basilica in Rome, which had its beginnings as a first-century house-church.



Rosemary Murphy dances with Father Josh Litwack while Sue McKenna and Tamma Clark, at right, wait their turns during an impromptu dance for Father Litwack’s 36th birthday at St. Clement’s 50th anniversary gala Feb. 17. (Photo by Colin Schmidt)

Given that the Bixby church itself began as a house-church, the name seemed appropriate.

Bixby is one of the fastest-growing cities in Oklahoma. According to the 2005 U.S. census, its population was 18,600, a 40 percent increase from 2000.

Recently, former pastor Msgr. Dan Mueggenborg, now assigned to the Pontifical North American College, brought back a rock from Rome that had been used to build St. Clement’s Basilica. Parishioners hope to use the rock as the cornerstone for the future new church building on land that was purchased at 161st Street, just east of Yale Avenue. The rock would signify a special connection to a site that has been a continuous place of Christian worship since the first century.



On Jan. 29, Father Joseph Chirayath brought Sister Mary Panchakuzhy Paily, Sister Rincymole Kappalamackal Thomas and Sister Shirley George to meet Bishop Edward J. Slattery.

### Antlers welcomes three nuns

ANTLERS – For the first time in 15 years, there is a nun in residence at St. Agnes Church in Antlers – three of them, actually - all Sisters of the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The sisters, who arrived Jan. 20, will help with parish ministry and prepare to work as nurses at Pushmataha Hospital.

Though he did not know the sisters personally, Father

Joseph Chirayath worked previously with this congregation while doing mission work seven years ago, and his sister belongs to the order.

Sister Rincymole Kappalamackal Thomas, Sister Shirley George and Sister Mary Pancakuzhy Paily, like Father Chirayath, are from India.

“They made a request to me to come here, and I made the proposal to the Bishop,” Father Chirayath said. He said he also proposed the idea to St. Agnes parishioners and was met with full support.

The parish in southeast Oklahoma has 45 families. It has been 15 years since a nun resided in the convent in Antlers, said Father James White, diocesan archivist and historian. At that time, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph worked at St. Agnes as the religious education director.

The Antlers Choctaw mission began in 1896 by Father William Ketcham, and St. Mary of the Angels School was founded the following year with the help of St. Katharine Drexel. A parish church was constructed in 1906 and was renamed St. Agnes Church. Remodeled in 1925, Sisters of Divine Providence supplied nearly 1,000 nuns to teach in this and other Oklahoma schools.

Because of the length of time since someone last lived in the convent it had fallen in disrepair, Father Chirayath said. Parishioners began making plans for the nuns’ arrival nearly a year ago and started renovations.

“Getting their visas to come here has taken time,” Father Chirayath said. In addition, the sisters will have to become certified in Oklahoma, a process they are currently working on. They could begin working at the hospital by fall.

“They are delightful, and we are excited about them coming,” said Vickie Bouffleur, chief nursing officer at Pushmataha Hospital. The delay in the sisters being able to begin serving patients because of paperwork processing by the U.S. Immigration Service is frustrating to the hospital and to the nuns, she said.

In the meantime, St. Agnes parishioners are helping the nuns settle in and perform pastoral work in the parish and “enjoy the beauty of small-town life as they learn about the culture of the area,” said Father Chirayath, who is pastor in residence at Immaculate Conception Parish in Hugo and also is pastor of St. Jude Parish in Boswell.