A Prayer at Christmas

Come Holy Infant, be born in us anew ...
Come, sweet Christchild, restore our childlike wonder and wisdom ...
Come Good Shepherd, lead us into the place we dare not go alone ...

(To read the entire prayer, see page 5)
From the Bishop’s Desk

Christmas: Celebrating the theme most central: God’s incarnation

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Christmas is the season during which the whole Church celebrates the theme that is most central to our lives as Christians—God’s Incarnation, that is the eternal Word of God taking flesh from Mary and becoming one of us. That special one, Jesus Christ, is still present in us and in our world, working for our healing and growth, our direction on the right way of life, our comfort, our reconciliation, and our redemption. In the gospel for Midnight Mass, Luke tells us that the mystery of the Incarnation, God becoming one of us, will be found in an infant lying in the manger.

The story of the birth of our Savior, Jesus, in a stable checks any tendency to think that God’s presence in the world supports the structures of the abuse of power, authority and prestige that we humans most often construct.

The Christmas story never ceases to amaze us. In the Christmas story, there is poverty, squalor, the presence of animals, and there is splendor and enrichment. There is the simple stable and there is the great presence of angels. The Christmas story is filled with many contrasting views, and that is perhaps why it has such power and beauty and why we keep coming back to it year after year. God’s love manifested in the child in the manger, isn’t just for the pious and perfect. But the Christmas scene reminds us that God’s love is meant for all people, for the parents of Jesus as well as for the simple shepherds out in the fields, and for all of us—whatever be our condition or state in life and profession.

Christmas is still happening in our world because Jesus is being born and being made present in our love, in our service, in our prayers, especially in our Mass, and in the kindness and love we show one another. Jesus is present in the emergency room, in the homeless shelter; He is present in the people whose hearts are breaking. He is present in people working strongly for justice, and He is present in those who struggle with choices between war and peace. He is present in the decision between generosity and greed. He is present in the abstractions where His precious little lambs

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Catholic Engaged Encounter
The Diocese of San Angelo Family and Married Life Department will conduct an Engaged Encounter Team Recruiting Day February 26, 2011 at Christ The King Retreat Center in San Angelo.

Catholic Engaged Encounter is a weekend retreat away with other engaged couples with plenty of time alone together to plan for a sacramental marriage. It is designed to give couples planning marriage the opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together— their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, their attitudes about money, sex, children, family, their role in the church and society— in a face to face way.

If you are interested in attending this informational day and being an EE team leader, please contact your parish priest.

Career Opportunity
Due to the growth of the Knights of Columbus in Texas we have openings in various locations. There will also be a festive Christmas celebration/observance of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Fr. Gilbert Rodriguez will celebrate a Mass on December 12, at noon, and will be preceded at 7 p.m. by a “Serenade to Our Holy Mother.” On December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day, at 12:30 p.m. there will be a celebration of the Holy Mass. Q108 FM Radio in Odessa will also broadcast the Mass live.

St. Stephen’s will present the Ballet Folkloric group Tonantzin under the direction of Mrs. Berta Mata, the Matalchines of Odessa and also the presentation of local actors with the theatrical play of the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12. 

For more information on times, please contact St. Stephens.

Holy Angels Cruise
Holy Angels Parish is hosting an Alaska Sawyer Glacier Cruise on July 1-9, 2011. You’ll cruise through the Inside Passage with its majestic fjords, islands and bays and see the lush greenery of Tongass National Forest, the world’s largest and northernmost temperate coastal rainforest. Alaskan ports of call will include Juneau & Skagway. In addition, you will spend a day in Victoria, British Columbia and a day & night in Seattle, Washington. A brochure can be found on Holy Angels’ website (www.talleypress.com/holyangels/) or you can call Lori Hines at Holy Angels to request one. For more information call Lori at 325-942-8192.

Pilgrimage to Ireland
Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish has announced the dates for its annual trip to Ireland. The third annual trip will be held from August 3-12, 2011. The Irish adventure will visit Dublin, Glendalough, Blarney Castle, Waterford, Killarney, the Ring of Kerry, Cliffs of Moher, Galway, and other points of interest. Also included are pilgrimage stops at various Irish cathedrals and ancient monasteries, as well as the Basilica of Our Lady of Knock. Mass will be celebrated at several locations. There will also be a festive medieval banquet in an Irish castle, as well a dinner and cabaret night in Dublin. Msgr. Maurice Voity, Cathedral Rector, will again be the pilgrimage leader. Cost of the trip is currently $3,195 per person in twin, with departures available from San Angelo, Midland, Abilene and Dallas/Fort Worth. For more information, or to request a trip flyer, please contact Msgr. Voity at the Cathedral, 325-658-6567, or e-mail at mvoity@hotmail.com.

Scheduled Executions
The Angelus publishes the execution dates of Texas offenders on death row each month so that the faithful in the Diocese of San Angelo can pray for them. The following offenders face upcoming execution dates. Please pray for them as well as the victims, families and all who are affected by violence.

Australian healer to WT
Bishop Michael Pfeifer has invited Australian evangelist and healer, Alan Ames to return to Texas in February. Alan’s schedule:
Mon Feb 7—Abilene-St. Vincent
Tues Feb 8—Odessa-Holy Redeemer
Wed Feb 9—Midland-St. Stephen
(All masses at 7 p.m.)

Al’s story and God’s messages that Al delivers are so powerful you won’t want to miss his talk and buy his books and other materials to understand God’s messages on how we must live our lives in order to gain eternal salvation.

Al lives a deeply mystical prayer life with a close relationship with The Lord and has been graced with the gift of Healing. There have been many documented healings both physical and spiritual. Some healings occur immediately; others occur over time. Documented healings may be found on Al’s web site: www.alanames.org.

‘It was a good morning for our parish’

[BISHOP’S NOTE: Recently a letter was sent to all the priests of the Diocese, notifying them that one of our dear priests, Father Joe Uecker, CPPS, is battling a case of cancer, and at the writing of this article, an operation was to take place on December 4. Father Joe Uecker humbly requested that I be present with him at Sunday Mass November 21 at St. Anthony’s Church in Odessa to celebrate with him and all the community the Sacrament of the Sick during the Sunday Liturgy. What a touching moment this was for all of us — to see our brother priest humbly ask for God’s help and assistance — and to see the beautiful response of the people of God that Father Joe served so well for many, many years. Father Joe shared with me his impressions about this beautiful celebration in the enclosed message that I share with all of you. His example of believing in the power of God that works through the Sacrament of the Sick and his humble example of asking all people to extend hands and pray over him indeed was a beautiful teaching moment for all of us who were present. Father Joe, thank you for giving me the privilege of celebrating the Eucharist with you and all the people, and to have the joy of celebrating the Sacrament of the Sick with you in the presence of hundreds of people who love you very much. We are all praying for you. God’s peace.’

— Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Good Morning, Bishop.

Thank you so much for yesterday, for coming to celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick. I think what we did was worth many CCD classes on what the sacrament is about. Probably most people had never seen the sacrament celebrated. After both Masses, several people talked about their own on-going struggle with cancer, some about to have surgery. Of course, I invited them to come for the sacrament. Some people do not realize that they must be married by the Church. But this is another way of getting more people to come and prepare for that as well. It was just a good morning for our parish.

Thank you very much. -- Father Joe

November 22, 2010
**DIOCESAN DATES**

**Bishop's Calendar**

**DECEMBER**

11 -- COLEMAN, Sacred Heart – Mass of Thanksgiving for Father Romanus at 10:30 a.m.

12 -- MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe – Mass for the 50th Anniversary of the Parish at 1 p.m.

13 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at 6:30 p.m.

14 -- EDEN, Detention Center – Mass at 1:00 p.m.

15 -- MIDLAND, St. Stephen’s – Advent Night of Prayer for Priests, Sisters and Deacons of the Midland/Odessa Deanery at 6:30 p.m.

16 -- SAN ANGELO, Baptist Memorial Hospital – Mass at 2 p.m.

17 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – Christmas Mass for Angelo Catholic School and Personnel at 8:30 a.m.

18 -- CARLSBAD, San Angelo State School – Prayer Service at 11 a.m.

19 -- MIDLAND, Our Lady of San Juan – Dedication of New Church at 3 p.m.

21 -- SAN ANGELO, Shannon Hospital – Mass at 11 a.m.

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

22 -- SAN ANGELO, Pastoral Center – Staff Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Staff Christmas Luncheon at 11 a.m.

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

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

25 -- SAN ANGELO, Goodfellow AFB, Christmas Day Mass, 9 a.m.


6 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

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

9 -- Presbyteral Council Lunch

10 -- Catholic Daughters Christmas Party

12 -13 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

13 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

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

18 -- San Angelo ACTS Christmas Party

20 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

21 -- Adoration, 5-6 pm

24 -- Office Closed ½ Day – Christmas Holiday

27 -- Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

31 -- Office Closed ½ Day – New Year’s Eve

**JANUARY**

1 -- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral – New Year’s Day honoring Mary the Mother of God Mass at 9:00 a.m.

2 -- MERETA, Holy Family – Mass at 10:45 a.m.

3-7 -- SAN ANTONIO, Bishops’ Annual Retreat

9 -- LENORAH, St. Isidore – Mass at 11:00 a.m.

10-11 -- CORPSUS CHRISTI, Meeting of Kenedy Memorial Foundation

12 -- SAN ANGELO, Newman Center – Mass at 12:00 noon

13 -- SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center – Staff Meeting at 11:00 a.m.

14 -- BIG SPRING, Holy Trinity – Diocesan Ordination of Patrick Del Escritorio del Obispo

**La navidad celebra el tema más central de nuestras vidas — la encarnación de dios**

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

La navidad es la temporada durante la cual la iglesia entera celebra el tema más central de nuestras vidas como cristianos — la encarnación de Dios, es decir la palabra eterna de Dios tomando carne de María y llegando a ser uno de nosotros. Esa persona especial, Cristo Jesús, aún está presente con nosotros y en nuestro mundo, curándonos, dirigiéndonos en el camino correcto, dándonos consuelo y reconciliación, y es nuestra redención. En el evangelio de la Misa de Gallo, Lucas nos dice que el Misterio de la Encarnación, Dios llegando a ser uno de nosotros, se encontraría en el infante acostado en el pesebre. La historia del nacimiento de nuestro Salvador, Jesús, en un pesebre corrije cualquier tendencia de pensar que la presencia de Dios en el mundo apoya la estructura del abuso de poder y autoridad y prestigio estructurales que son muy comunes en nuestra sociedad.

La historia navideña nunca cesa de asombrarnos. En la historia navideña, hay pobreza, humildad, miseria, pastores, la presencia de animales, y hay esplendor, luz, esperanza, el misterio del amor de Dios. Ahí está el pesebre sencillo y una gran presencia de ángeles. La historia navideña está llena de punto de vistas contrastantes, y quizás es por eso que tiene tal poder, inspiración y belleza y por la cual regresamos a ello año tras año. El amor de Dios que está manifestado en el niño en el pesebre no es solamente para el piadoso y perfecto. Sino el escenario navideño nos recuerda que el
Celebrating 50: The Diocese of San Angelo 1961-2011

From the Editor

RR Commish Williams, a West Texas Catholic, has promising political future

By Jimmy Patterson / Editor

AUSTIN — There are more than a handful of Austin insiders who will tell you that the next big charismatic political figure to emerge on the national scene is a Catholic from West Texas.

Popular sentiment last year was that Texas Railroad Commissioner Michael Williams, a Midland native and graduate of St. Ann’s School, was to be hand-picked by Gov. Rick Perry to fill what was to have been a vacant U.S. Senate seat. But then Kay Bailey Hutchison did not vacate that seat during her unsuccessful bid to win the Republican nomination for Texas governor. And that was, as they say, all she wrote.

Now, instead, Williams is left to work hard for what he gets. Instead of being named to fill a senate seat, it is believed that he will campaign for that seat. Even he strongly hints at that possibility, but will say little more at this time.

“Nobody knows if Kay will stay,” Williams said in November. “And then I’d have to mount a challenge to a sitting senator. Right now, though, we’re gonna focus on the people’s business between now and June and then go straight into the campaign.”

Currently a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament in his hometown of Arlington, Williams counts as his early influences former history teacher James Bradford and student council sponsor Olga Banks, fellow Catholic and former Midland mayor Ernie Angelo, former Midlander President George W. Bush, and Sister Bonafée and Sister Leonardane at St. Ann’s School.

When we talked on Election Day at his downtown Austin office, Williams also shared his feelings about the current president, Barack Obama. His review wasn’t exactly glowing.

“We know there’s some real buyers’ remorse going on right now. If you were listening closely to the president and not just to the style but to the substance — if anyone had actually scratched the surface and looked deeper than just the performer — we probably should have known this was coming,” Williams said. “The president has truly overplayed his hand. Maybe he’ll do what President Clinton did in 1994, but I don’t see him pulling back into the center. I just don’t see him standing ready to be of service to them.

He knew full well that the diocese which had been assigned to him was a missionary diocese, a “frontier” for the Catholic Church, and he readily accepted the challenge of such an assignment.

The diocese was still new. Parishes were too isolated in many cases. While there were clusters of parishes in the larger population centers there was little affinity among them because of the great distances which separated them. In a word, the people and the priests of the diocese were so thinly scattered over such a vast area that they were relative strangers to one another.

Parochialism and isolationism were natural consequences of the geography, the economy and the history of the territory.

(Please See ARCHIVES/24)

Fr. Tom Goekler dies unexpectedly in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY -- Father Tom Goekler, MM, died unexpectedly on November 25 in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Fr. Tom was 69. Funeral Mass and burial was November 29, in Guatemala City.

Fr. Tom was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Hartford, Conn., on May 4, 1967. He served in several parishes there and was active in the Catholic Worker House movement. He became an associate of Maryknoll, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, and worked in Nicaragua and China. In January 1999 he moved to Chamelecon, a neighborhood of San Pedro Sula in Honduras, where he dedicated himself to addressing the problems of poverty and gang-related difficulties facing young people in the area. He founded Caminando por la Paz, to assist children to get a better education. In 2008, Fr. Tom moved to Guatemala City to continue the same type of work there.

Fr. Tom hosted several groups from the Diocese of San Angelo, to work with him in Chamelecon. These included parishioners of St. Ambrose in Wall, St. Ann in Midland, St. Joseph/St. Agnes in Fort Stockton and others. The missionary experience touched and converted the hearts of the participants and many have been back to Central America repeatedly to share in solidarity with Catholic brothers and sisters there. Fr. Tom also assisted in the Hermanamiento, the partnership between the Dioceses of San Pedro Sula, Tyler, and San Angelo. He visited the Diocese of San Angelo often, the last time being in August of this year.

Memorial donations to support the work of Caminando por la Paz, for the education of children in Chamelecon, are recommended. Donations may be sent to Holy Spirit Peace & Justice Community, P.O. Box 3443, McAllen, TX 78502, with the memo of “Honduran Scholarship Project.”

Fr. Tom apparently died peacefully in his sleep. May he rest in peace. Amen.

(Please See COMMISH/20)
A Prayer at Christmas

by Jeanie Miley

Come Holy Infant,
be born in us anew ...

Come, sweet Christchild,
restore our childlike wonder and wisdom ...

Come Good Shepherd,
lead us into the place we dare not go alone ...

Come, Great Physician,
and heal our wounds -- our self-inflicted and those we
have inflicted on others -- make us whole and healthy ...

Come, Redeemer,
and buy us back from the lesser gods -- set us
free into joy, and give us life and love and laughter ...

Come, Prince of Peace,
and turn us from war -- re-form us as your peacemakers

Come, Light of the World,
into our shadows and our dark places where we love to hide
give us courage to let our own light sparkle and shine ...

Come, Living Water,
and quench our thirst with that which satisfies ...

Come Bread of Life,
nourish us with that which makes us strong and bold ...

Come, Beloved,
and make us lovers of you, of each other, and of the world.

Come, Emmanuel,
dwell in our hearts -- be with us always and in all ways ...

Come Holy Mystery,
shatter our small ideas of you; break open the boxes in which we
have confined you -- take away our certainty of anything but
you great love for us.

Come, Lord Jesus,
be born in us again and again and again.
Questions answered regarding formal cases brought to diocesan tribunal

By Rev. Tom Barley
Judicial Vicar
Diocese of San Angelo

During the Year of the Family, it is important to explore a variety of marriage situations in which the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo may be able to help you or someone that you know who wishes to have a past marriage reviewed for annulment. Previously, we looked at Lack of Form where a Catholic has married outside of the Church, divorced, and then wishes to marry again in the Church. This month we begin a series of articles on Formal Cases—Annulments.

Formal Cases of previous marriages are when a Catholic married in the Catholic Church; or when a Catholic married outside of the Catholic Church, but with the permission of his Bishop; or when a non-Catholic married a non-Catholic in a religious, civil or common-law marriage. These cases are when someone is seeking an annulment or what is now called a Declaration of Invalidity (Declaration of Freedom to Marry).

Let us consider some commonly asked questions.

What is marriage? Marriage is a sacred and committed, covenant relationship between a man and a woman in which they form a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children. (C. 1150). In Canon Law, each marriage is considered to be valid until proven invalid. (C. 1060). Marital consent of the parties, legitimately manifested between persons free to marry, makes marriage. Marital consent is an act of the will which is given and accepted through an irrevocable covenant in order to establish marriage. (C. 1057). Therefore, while marriage thrives in a loving relationship, it does not end if a couple quits loving one another. A covenant relationship is patterned after the divine relationship of God, the Father, with the people of Israel as well as the divine relationship of the Christ with the Church. These relationships can never be broken.

What is invalid? The terms “legal” and “illegal” pertain to civil law. To be “valid,” an act must have certain traits and qualities. Likewise, invalidity is a Church term meaning that something, which is required for validity, is missing. The Church has gleaned from the divine relationships that, in marriage, the required elements are certain abilities, intentions, actions, understandings, and characteristics. All that is required for marriage must be present or intended or fulfilled by both parties for validity. If a required element is missing at the moment of consent (vows), then the marriage may be determined to be invalid. The Church recognizes the civil marriage was legal, but it might determine that the marriage was missing an essential component in order for it to have been valid.

What affects does an annulment have on the children? Because civil law and canon law operate independently of each other, canon law has absolutely NO EFFECT on the legitimacy of children of the marriage. Indeed, the Church views all children as “gifts of God”.

Why should I get an annulment? God is the originator of any vocation. And, if you suffered a divorce, your calling to the vocation of marriage remains constant. So, in the future, you may wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony. If your ex-spouse is living, an annulment will be necessary. More importantly, the annulment process is an opportunity to address prayerfully any unresolved hurts or issues. Many people who petition for an annulment find God’s healing and peace that has been absent from their lives in the years following turmoil in the marriage.

Will my petition be confidential? Yes. However, the Respondent does have a right to review the Acts of the case. Rarely is this right enacted.

Will I need a civil attorney? No. A civil attorney has no status in the Tribunal cases. Church Advocates serve in that capacity in Tribunal cases.

Does every petition for an annulment get approved? No. Each case is judged on its own merits, the testimony, and marriage law in canon law. Furthermore, this is not an automatic process or a giving of favors to certain people. In each case, the Judge seeks the truth through testimony and proofs. The Judge uses moral certitude in deciding the verdict in the case.

How long does it take to get an annulment? That depends on several factors (i.e., how quickly you contact your parish office, complete the petition and get the required documents; how fast the Tribunal can review your case; how long it takes to get sufficient testimony from witnesses; and, how much time it might take for each party to respond). We inform those who petition the Tribunal that it can take a year or longer, depending on all of the factors mentioned. Furthermore, we encourage the petitioner to complete their work sooner than later.

How much is charged for an annulment? The Diocese of San Angelo charges $200 for an annulment. Of that amount, $100 goes to the Diocese and $100 goes to the Appellate Court in San Antonio for automatic review of the case.

What documents will I need in an annulment? Basic documents include: a recent official copy of your Baptismal certificate from your church of Baptism, your marriage license, and your divorce decree.

Other concerns: If your fiancée also has a previous marriage, it must be submitted to the Tribunal at the same time as your petition.

What if I or my intended is not Catholic? Why does the Catholic Church have to annul a non-Catholic marriage? The Catholic Church becomes involved with non-Catholic marriages that have ended in divorce only when the non-Catholic asks for a sacrament from our Church—marrying a Catholic or joining the Church. The Tribunal becomes involved to establish that both parties are free to marry.

How do I begin an annulment? First take some time on prayer. Then contact your parish office and talk to the priest or a tribunal advocate in the parish.

Tribunal Office – Diocesan Pastoral Center (325) 651-7500
Rev. Tom Barley, JCL, Judicial Vicar
Mr. Tom Burke, JCL, Judge
Mrs. Jean Gully, Secretary
USCCB Annual Meeting

Bishops elect new leadership, pass agreement on baptism

By Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE -- The 2010 fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was devoted primarily to internal matters -- the election of new conference leaders, discussion of how their own statements should be produced, budgetary and structural questions and information about how they can better integrate new media into diocesan structures.

They also affirmed an historic agreement to recognize baptisms in four Protestant church communities.

Public sessions made up the first two days of the Nov. 15-18 assembly, with the bishops spending the remainder of the meeting in executive session.

The last public action the bishops took was a nearly unanimous vote Nov. 16 to approve the preparation of a brief policy statement on assisted suicide, which they will debate and vote on at their spring assembly in June.

Before the afternoon vote Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, outlined the "increasingly urgent threat" posed by the wider use of assisted suicide in the United States.

The one surprise of the meeting came Nov. 16 when the bishops voted for new leaders of their conference. Breaking with precedent, the sitting vice president, Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., was not elected to succeed Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, who was completing his three-year term as president.


It marked the first time since the bishops' conference was reorganized in 1966 following the Second Vatican Council that a sitting vice president who sought the presidency did not win election. In two elections, in 1974 and 1977, circumstances dictated that the vice president did not rise to lead the conference.

"I'm surprised, I'm honored, I'm flattered and a tad intimidated," Archbishop Dolan told Catholic News Service shortly after being elected.

In a statement, Bishop Kicanas said he respected the wisdom of his "brother bishops in choosing their new president and vice president. I greatly appreciated their expressions of thanks to me for my service as vice president." He said that being vice president was "a marvelous experience" and he now looked forward to focusing on the needs of his own diocese.

During the executive session Nov. 17, Cardinal George named Bishop Kicanas chairman of the board of Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency. Archbishop Dolan held the post but had to vacate it upon his election as president.

In other voting Nov. 16, the bishops also chose treasurer Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., as vice president and Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va., as treasurer. They also selected chairmen-elect for six committees. Archbishop Kurtz and Bishop Bransfield took office at the conclusion of the meeting, while the chairman-elect were to be in charge of their committees beginning in November 2011.

The election of officers and chairmen-elect took place by electronic voting, with the results of available almost instantaneously. But the bishops used a secret ballot to pick the next general secretary of the USCCB. They chose Msgr. Ronny E. Jenkins, a USCCB associate general secretary since 2006.

A priest of the Diocese of Austin, Texas, Msgr. Jenkins will succeed Msgr. David Malloy at the close of the bishops' spring assembly in June.

The other candidate for general secretary was Msgr. David Kagan, vicar general of the Diocese of Rockford, Ill.

In another action Nov. 16, the bishops, by a 204-11 vote, affirmed the "Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism." It was drawn up over the past six years by a team of scholars from the Catholic-Reformed dialogue group, made up of representatives of the USCCB, Christian Reformed Church in North America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America and United Church of Christ.

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, called the bishops' vote "a milestone on the ecumenical journey."

The bishops approved a $180 million balanced USCCB budget for 2011 but voted to keep the 2012 diocesan assessment at the 2011 level.

Meeting Highlights

2010 USCCB fall general assembly

- Broke with precedent to elect Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan as president rather than Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, USCCB vice president.
- Affirmed a historic agreement with four Reformed church communities that will allow mutual recognition of baptisms.
- Elected Msgr. Ronny Jenkins as USCCB general secretary, with his five-year term to begin in June.
- Heard a lengthy update on relief and reconstruction efforts following the January earthquake in Haiti.
- Approved a $180 million balanced USCCB budget for 2011 but voted to keep the 2012 diocesan assessment at the 2011 level.
- Authorized the drafting of a brief policy statement on assisted suicide.

Education, National Collections, Pro-Life Activities, Justice, Peace and Human Development, and Migration and Refugee Services -- had requested exceptions to plans submitted earlier, and the Committee on Priorities and Plans had approved them.

The bishops approved changes for the first four offices a 214-15 vote and then in a separate vote, after some discussion, approved the changes for MRS.

Cardinal George opened the first day of the meeting with his farewell presidential address. In it he criticized those who define the church's usefulness by whether it provides "foot soldiers for a political commitment, whether of the left or the right."

He devoted much of his talk to reviewing the debate over health care reform earlier this year and the "wound to the church's unity" caused by differences over the final legislation.

In discussing health reform in his address, Cardinal George said "developments since the passage of the legislation" have confirmed that "our analysis of what the law itself says was correct and our moral judgments are secure." He did not specify what those developments were.

The USCCB opposed passage of the final health reform legislation, saying it would permit federal funding of abortion, inadequately protect the conscience rights of health care providers and leave out immigrants. Other Catholic groups, including the Catholic Health Association and many orders of women religious, said the final bill and an executive order signed by President Barack Obama would exclude any possibility of federal money going to pay for abortions under the health plan.

Cardinal George said the debate also raised the question of "who speaks for the Catholic Church."

"The bishops ... speak for the church in matters of faith and in moral issues and the laws surrounding them. All the rest is opinion," he said.

The cardinal addressed several other issues in his outgoing speech, among them concern for Christians in the Middle East. He said Christians were "uniquely ... without protection in the wake of the American invasion of Iraq."

"As bishops, as Americans, we cannot turn from this scene or allow the world to overlook it," Cardinal George said.
Getting ready for the game of life

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

"Stars shine, but teams win," says coach Speedy Morris to his St. Joseph's Prep basketball players in Philadelphia at the beginning of every season. His friend Jay Wright, head men's basketball coach at Villanova, makes the same point by telling his players that "you're on the court for the glory of the name on the front of your jersey [Villanova], not the one on the back [your own]."

Student athletes who balance the academic and athletic dimensions of their lives can grow on both fronts -- as athletes and as educated human beings.

They can learn a lot about life from their coaches, of course, but also from each other.

The wisdom of teamwork over me-first showboating on the field or court can be explained by coaches, but it has to be seen by the players themselves in the actions of their teammates.

Leaders in sports don't just show up to captain the team. They emerge from the ranks.

They are, of course, skilled enough to be on the team in the first place, but their rise to the leadership level takes more than athletic prowess. It takes humility. In truth, it takes humility plus ambition.

Someone has come up with a good word for that, and that word is "humbition."

In the out-of-school world of business, the leader is sometimes called a "quarterback," who calls the plays and "reads" the defense to be able to lead the offense and move the ball on the ground or in the air toward the goal.

This, for the quarterback in business, is an application of brainpower, not muscle; it requires thinking, not brawn. And it requires humbition -- the ability and desire to get ahead.

In sports and life, goals are important, and achieving them is the work of leadership.

To switch for a moment to another sport, consider Connie Mack (1862-1956), the "Grand Old Man of Baseball," a founder of the American League and long-time manager of the Philadelphia Athletics.

In his playing days, Mack was first and foremost a catcher. A recent biography describes his catching as "first class." He had the ability to get inside a hitter's head and feel for what a pitcher should throw in a given situation.

Mack had baseball intuition and instincts, but he also had an understanding of human nature.

At this time of year, with the World Series results in the record books, youngsters let big-league baseball yield to school soccer and football, and those sports will soon give way to basketball.

The "stars" get their recognition, trophies and other awards, but the "teams" will take possession of the championships.

In this annual practice-and-performance process, leaders emerge, character is formed, and human potential is prepared to meet the future challenges our nation will face.

There is more to sports than mastery of the game.

Gaining an understanding of human nature is one of the benefits of high school or college athletics.

Teammates get a lot of that by observing one another as well as listening to their coaches. They get it even more, however, in the classroom and from books, which, of course, have to be opened to be read.

So, as we cheer them on from courtside or sidelines, let's let our student-athletes know that what we value most is steady growth in the life of the mind. That's why the schools they represent exist. And that's why schools have sports to help the young get ready for the game of life.

(Jesuit Father Byron is university professor of business and society at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia. E-mail: wbyron@sju.edu.)
Let's not define all Muslims by the actions of fanatics

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

What's more uncomfortable than being in a room full of people, the discussion turns to religion, and a subtle undercurrent of Catholic-bashing begins? We've probably all found ourselves there.

The worst for me was a dinner party with some former Catholics, old friends I hadn't seen in a while. For several, the "divorce" from the church hadn't been amicable.

Two had husbands who had never been Catholic. These men peppered the group with sincere questions -- about the clergy sexual abuse crisis, for instance.

The "recovering" Catholics, as they might call themselves, were off and running with tales of woe, ranging from bad experiences in Catholic school to current nightmares from the headlines.

It was a social event, I knew that arguing was counterproductive, and I departed with relief when dessert was finished.

After attending a talk by Nihad Awad, I wonder if life for many American Muslims is like a never-ending evening spent in a room full of Muslim bashers. Like my friends, who perhaps did not even sense, or simply ignored, my discomfort, are we non-Muslim Americans creating an undercurrent against Muslim citizens?

Awad is the executive director and co-founder of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the largest non-profit Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, and he was speaking at a local university.

In effect, he is a leader of a civil rights movement that many other Americans don't recognize or perhaps don't see as a need.

Awad began his evening with a description of Islam. As many Catholics know, Mary is accorded great status in the Quran. The prophets are honored, including Jesus, whom Muslims revere, but whose nature is viewed very differently from the Christian view.

In his soft-spoken description of Islam, Awad painted a picture of a faith which believes in equality of the sexes, charity for the poor, non-violence except in defense and tolerance for other faiths.

"You are not a true believer if you go to bed with a full stomach and your neighbor is hungry," Awad, a devout Muslim, told us. "The word 'jihad' did not even exist in the Quran."

One of the gentlemen in the audience asked a question many of us share.

"There are so many different kinds of Christians," he began. "In Kentucky where I'm from, some think Christianity means handling snakes."

Essentially, the man asked: What about all the Muslims who don't share your progressive ideas?

Clearly, there are Muslims with perverted ideas of their faith. But Awad wanted us to know that millions of American Muslims are generally not among them. As a group, said Awad, they are better-educated than the average American, prosperous and progressive. His message, essentially, was why wouldn't we encourage this open-minded, progressive group, rather than lump them together with fundamentalist criminals.

There were American Muslims killed on 9/11. There were Muslim first-responders who answered the call on 9/11. There was a Muslim place of prayer in the Twin Towers before they were destroyed.

Awad expressed particular frustration at the media, which doesn't report on Muslim efforts in the United States to condemn violence. After 9/11, a group of diverse U.S. Muslim organizations immediately repudiated violence in the name of faith. They couldn't get covered.

Do we call Timothy McVeigh a "Christian" fanatic? Is my Catholic faith defined by the Inquisition, the crusades or the fact that Adolf Hitler was born into a Catholic family?

How preposterous that would be.

Let's not define American Muslims by the actions of a few fanatics, or by the stance of dictators in far-off lands.

Put aside cynicism, put on that Christmas music

By Karen Osborne
Catholic News Service

My husband really likes Christmas music. In our house, it starts around Halloween. Trick-or-treaters barely get cookies, presents and the love of my family.

I used to love Christmas music so much.

Christmas used to be my favorite holiday, a time when I was able to rediscover how much I loved sugar cookies, presents and the love of my family.

I used to love "O Holy Night," because my cousin Courtney would sing it for us at each Midnight Mass. Now, I switch it off.

I used to roll in laughter when Christmas parodies played on the radio. Now they just make me roll my eyes.

I used to love "O Holy Night," because my cousin Courtney would sing it for us at each Midnight Mass. Now, I switch it off.

I used to roll in laughter when Christmas parodies played on the radio. Now they just make me roll my eyes.

Working in a mall bookstore, I listened to "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Silent Night" so many times that I felt like elves were coming out of my ears.

I saw only the annoying parts of Christmas, blinded to the gleeful smiles of children as they were hoisted, one-by-one, to their first encounter with Santa.

What had happened to me? As we become older, many things we used to love have a tendency to lose their meaning. Experts call this process desensitization.

Do you remember that song that changed your life? Listen to it too much, and it loses its edge. Do you love burritos? Eat them every day for five weeks and see how you feel!

Love playing basketball? Play for eight hours every day, and you're bound to feel tired of it now and again.

I used to love the Space Mountain roller coaster at Disney World, but by now I've ridden it so many times that I know where all the turns are! It's not so much fun anymore.

You'll often hear the word "assault" in discussions of violent movies and video games. The more violent the video games are that people play, the more "normal" lots of gore and guts become.

In a way, this process is part of becoming older. That's why you'll hear people around this time of year talk about how to keep their "sense of wonder."

That sense of wonder is important. It helps us to see the world as we once did when we were younger -- a world full of new and exciting things. It
Making Sense of Bioethics

**Fighting terminal illness – and its inherent fears – realistically**

By Rev. Thad Pacholczyk

In modern times, dying is more and more often portrayed as a cold, clinical reality to be kept at arm's length, relegated to the closed doors of a hospital, almost hermetically sealed from the rest of our lives. When it comes to the event itself, we diligently work to avoid confronting it, addressing it, or acknowledging it. Because of this cultural backdrop, patients receiving a diagnosis of a terminal illness can be tempted to indulge in unrealistic expectations about what lies ahead, clinging to unreasonable treatment options and hoping for highly improbable outcomes.

The patient-survival curve for various terminal diseases often shows patients clustered around a median survival time of perhaps several months or a year or two, with survivability extending out along a more slender tail into the future for an ever smaller number of people. Yet rather often, that long tail seems to become the focus, even the obsession, of so many patients and doctors. As Dr. Atul Gawande put it recently in a thought-provoking essay in The New Yorker:

"There is almost always a long tail of possibility, however thin. What's wrong with looking for it? Nothing, it seems to me, unless it means we have failed to prepare for the outcome that's vastly more probable. The trouble is that we've built our medical system and culture around the long tail. We've created a multi-trillion-dollar edifice for dispensing the medical equivalent of lottery tickets — and have only the rudiments of a system to prepare patients for the near-certainty that those tickets will not win."

One is reminded of the words of the old platitude: "No one gets out of this life alive." Because clinicians tend to view death in terms of failure, and because our medical system generally values outcomes over doing something over doing nothing, even when it may be futile to do so, rational, measured decision-making at the end of life can become difficult, as Dr. Gawande emphasizes:

"The simple view is that medicine exists to fight death and disease, and that is, of course, its most basic task. Death is the enemy. But the enemy has superior forces. Eventually, it wins. And, in a war that you cannot win, you don't want a general who fights to the point of total annihilation. You don't want Custer. You want Robert E. Lee, someone who knew how to fight for territory when he could and how to surrender when he couldn't, someone who understood that the damage is greatest if all you do is fight to the bitter end."

Trying every option in the face of terminal illness, pursuing all medical possibilities no matter how unlikely to succeed, and raging against death can easily become the default position in a culture that hesitates to acknowledge or discuss death openly. Yet approaching our own mortality with a greater dose of realism helps us make better decisions about when to roll back the medical interventions and focus our energies on preparing for death. Hospice and palliative care can be important and helpful adjuncts in this process. When done well, these approaches allow us to focus on improving the remaining time for those with a terminal illness. Pain management, comfort care, acknowledgement of the coming death, family support and an opportunity for spiritual reconciliation are essential elements in these approaches. Far from abandoning the needs of patients, hospice and palliative care seek to properly acknowledge that in some cases, efforts at curing should be scaled back while efforts at caring for the patient should be scaled up.

Terminal ill patients who choose to discuss end of life treatments with their families and doctors more often opt for palliative care or hospice care, leading to more appropriate medical care near death, and better overall outcomes and satisfaction. They also tend to spend less money and do not die significantly earlier. Rather they often die more peacefully than those receiving aggressive interventions, which tend to be associated with a poorer standard of life and a worse bereavement adjustment.

Our instincts so often tell us that facing death means facing fears about loss of control and dignity, increasing dependence on others, intractable pain, dying too soon (or not soon enough), increasing costs, being alone and fear of the unknown. Because we die only once, we have little or no experience to draw upon when these matters come upon us in the first person. Yet when doctors and nurses are willing to have the hard discussions and say what they have seen, when families become willing to acknowledge death and mortality, and when spiritual preparations are allowed to hold priority of place, patients can better and more peacefully prepare for what lies ahead when they receive the summons of approaching death in the form of a terminal illness.

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

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**Trading consciences for cash registers**

**Fertility a healthy, natural God-given state of a woman’s body**

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In this article, I share with you the moral dimension of some recent issues and concerns that affect the health of women, and offer the Catholic teaching as regards how these important issues need to be addressed for the total well-being of women—their spiritual, moral, physical, and psychological and health. The reflections that I share are taken from a recent article by Mary McClusky, “Promoting Women’s Health: Beyond the Fine Points,” who is the special projects coordinator at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Today we are rightly concerned about damage to women and children from environmental toxins, yet many ignore the health risks and consequences of flooding a woman’s body with hormones from the birth control pill or chemical abortions. As advocates of so-called “reproductive health services” celebrate the 50th anniversary of the pill, and the new law allowing federally subsidized health plans to treat abortion as “health care,” it’s time again to break through the catch phrases and examine the fine print. Doing so reveals the unpleasant truth that advocates of contraception and abortion frequently undermine women’s health by trading their consciences for cash registers.

Why else would Planned Parenthood recently reveal plans to implement “tele-med” abortions in all its clinics by 2015? Implemented in Iowa two years ago, “tele-med” abortions allow doctors to forgo a physical exam, counsel pregnant women by teleconference, and press a button to remotely dispense the deadly concoction RU-486. The woman completes the abortion alone at home. Not only does the drug cause the death of the woman’s unborn child, the FDA reports complications from at least a thousand women. Even Exelgyn, the drug’s maker, reports that 29 women have died worldwide. Yet Planned Parenthood wants to increase profits by killing more children, endangering women’s lives, and potentially violating state laws.

Makers of the new abortifacient drug ulipristal (ellaOne) are currently pushing the FDA to approve it for over-the-counter use as abortion advocates deceptively promote the drug as just another contraceptive “morning-after pill.” Ulipristal is actually a derivative from the abortion drug RU-486. A group of pro-life obstetrician-gynecologists has filed testimony to block its approval.

Product information from the recently-developed contraceptive product “Essure” reveals contradictory information and physical risks not mentioned in the slick new ad campaign. Wire coils are inserted into the fallopian tubes through the cervix, expanding and causing tissue to grow around them over the next three months. Flaunted in ads as “permanent,” the fine print reveals that “you can become pregnant even years after the Essure micro-inserts are placed” and “very little is known about how well the Essure micro-inserts work beyond the first 5 years.” Only two clinical trials have been conducted involving 745 women.Thirty percent of them experienced cramping, 13% pain, 11% nausea/vomiting, 9% dizziness/ lighthead-
Vatican

Pope addresses sex abuse, condoms, possible resignation

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

ROME -- Pope Benedict XVI's book-length interview is certain to spark global attention, and not only for his comments suggesting that condom use might be acceptable in some circumstances.

In the 219-page book, "Light of the World: The Pope, the Church and the Signs of the Times," the German pontiff spoke candidly on the clerical sex abuse scandal, relations with Islam, papal resignation and the "threatening catastrophe" facing humanity.

The wide-ranging interview was conducted by German writer Peter Seewald, who posed questions in six one-hour sessions last summer. The book was to be released Nov. 23 at the Vatican, but ample excerpts were published three days earlier by the Vatican newspaper.

The book reveals a less formal side of the pope, as he responds simply and directly on topics as diverse as the joy of sex and the ban on burqas. Much of the conversation focuses on the pope's call for a global "examination of conscience" in the face of economic disparity, environmental disasters and moral slippage.

The pope repeatedly emphasized that the church's role in a largely broken world is not to impose a "burden" of moral rules but to open the doors to God.

Even before the book's release, media attention centered on the pope's remarks on condoms in AIDS prevention. While repeating his view that condoms cannot be the only answer to the AIDS epidemic, the pope allowed that in some specific cases -- for example, that of male prostitutes -- use of a condom could be a step toward taking moral responsibility for one's actions.

An entire chapter and parts of others were dedicated to the clerical sex abuse scandal. The pope called it "a great crisis" that left him "stunned by how wretched the church is; by how much her members fail to follow Christ."


(Please See POPE/21)

Vatican

Pope's remarks have opened new chapter in condom debates

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- In a new book, Pope Benedict XVI said the use of condoms may be a sign of moral responsibility in some specific situations when the intention is to reduce the risk of AIDS.

The pope addressed the issue in the book-length interview, "Light of the World: The Pope, the Church and the Signs of the Times," which was to be released Nov. 23. The Vatican newspaper published excerpts from the book Nov. 20, including the comments on condoms.

In the book, the pope repeated what he said during a trip to Africa last year, that "we cannot solve the problem (of AIDS) by distributing condoms." Focusing exclusively on condoms damages human sexuality, making it "banal" and turning it into a kind of "drug," he said.

(Please See BOOK/20)

Benedict to 24 new cardinals: ‘Authority means service’

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI created 24 new cardinals, including two from the United States, and called them to be strong in spreading and defending the faith and promoting peace and tranquility within the church.

Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington and Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, prefect of the Vatican's supreme court, joined other new cardinals from 13 countries Nov. 20 in formally professing their Catholic faith and fidelity to the pope.

After the oath, all but one of the new cardinals knelt before the pope to receive a red biretta, a three-cornered red hat, which the pope said, "signifies that you must be ready to act with strength, to the point of shedding blood, to increase the Christian faith, for the peace and tranquility of the people of God and for the freedom and growth of the holy Roman church."

Cardinal Antonios Naguib, the Catholic Coptic patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt, received a new patriarch's hat with a thin red trim added to the traditional black veil.

The pope also assigned the new cardinals a "titular church" in Rome, making them members of the Rome diocesan clergy, which is what the church's first cardinals were. Cardinal Burke's titular church is St. Agatha of the Goths; Cardinal Wuerl's is St. Peter in Chains, the church famous for hosting Michelangelo's statue of Moses.

The consistory to create new cardinals took the form of a prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica. With the exception of the pope's homily and the prayers of the faithful, the service was in Latin. It was the first papal service featuring the new director of the Sistine Chapel Choir, Msgr. Massimo Palombella, and the musical innovations included a brass section and the Psalm sung by a trio.

Outside the basilica a storm was approaching and as Pope Benedict announced the name of the new Cardinal Laurens Monsengwo Pasinya of Kinshasa, Congo, the applause for him was accompanied by a roll of thunder.

At the end of the service, the College of Cardinals numbered a record 203
Onlookers watch, above left, as a crane raises the dome over San Miguel de Archangel parish in south Midland in November. A Mass dedicating the new church building, above, is scheduled for December 19 at 3 p.m. Above right photo shows the size comparison between the old and new church at San Miguel. Photos Page 12 and above, Alan P. Torre. Photo above right, Page 13, by Jimmy Patterson.

By Jimmy Patterson / Editor

The best ideas often have two key human components: dreamer and instigator. Such is the case with the spectacular new church on the southwest side of Midland.

The late Fr. Tom Kelley, pastor at the church from 1997 until his death from cancer in 2005, had a vision for the new church. The Rev. Frank Chavez, pastor of the church since 2006, has been the driving force behind making sure the dream of the late pastor and the southside parishioners was fulfilled.

On December 19, dream becomes reality and Our Lady of San Juan Church becomes San Miguel de Archangel Church when the Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, Bishop of San Angelo, visits Midland for the new church’s 3 p.m. dedication Mass.

“God’s providence came to us in the form of people and finances,” Fr. Chavez said. Chavez called the new church and its new name a “fresh start.”

The patron saint of the diocese is St. Michael and the new church becomes the first in the diocese to bear the St. Michael — or San Miguel de Archangel — name.

“It has been fascinating seeing this all put together,” Chavez said. “It’s been like a puzzle; nice, but a lot of pressure.”

Sporting a price tag of $4.2 million, parishioners have to this point raised $3 million mostly through a series of fundraisers, including the raffle of a vintage automobile donated by Msgr. Jim Bridges, pastor of St. Stephen’s, who Chavez said has been a big supporter of the new church.

Faced with the possibility of having a new church in which to worship, the congregation dug deeper than it ever had before.

“We had a $400,000 matching grant and two years to meet that challenge and we did,” Fr. Chavez said.

The new church, designed by architect Bob Zentner, who has completed several church designs in the diocese, is in the style and color of a Spanish mission. A dome behind the altar towers high above the building’s chapel, making San Miguel a structure easily seen from several blocks away — and far larger than the previous church building.

The new church will feature a baptismal font upon entering. Adjacent to the baptismal font will be a glass-covered container filled with water, made to resemble running waters. The glass in place over the water is strong enough to withstand 4,500 pounds and is meant to process on or simply walk over. During funeral Masses, caskets can rest atop the running water.

The church will accommodate seating for 1,200. Plans are for it to soon feature stained glass and murals throughout. The design was inspired by Holy Angels Church in San Angelo, though the ceilings in San Miguel feature a more mission-styled ceiling.

San Miguel de Archangel’s parishioners will be able to retain a piece of their past when they celebrate daily Mass in the Our Lady of San Juan church, and meet in the old church building, which has been renamed Fr. Tom Kelley Hall.

Our Lady of San Juan church to become San Miguel de Archangel at December 19 dedication Mass
Bishop affirms timeline for implementation of new missal in US

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- Catechetical preparation to implement the new translation of the Roman Missal next Advent is proceeding in U.S. parishes "with much enthusiasm and wide acceptance by both clergy and laity," according to the outgoing head of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Divine Worship.

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, N.J., who concluded a three-year term as chairman at the close of the bishops' fall general assembly Nov. 15-18 in Baltimore, affirmed the timeline for implementation of the new missal and disputed what he called "a report surfaced through some segments of the Catholic press."

The 36-page report, whose source has not been made public, is titled "Areas of Difficulty in the Received Text of the Missal" and cites what it said are problems of mistranslation, omission and repetition in the missal translation that received "recognitio," or confirmation, from the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments in August.

The report is believed to have been sent to English-speaking bishops' conferences around the world.

"The critique that has circulated has necessarily failed to take into account the final version of the text, which incorporates some corrections issued by the congregation since transmittal of the full text to the English-speaking conferences of bishops," Bishop Serratelli said in a Nov. 18 statement.

In addition, he said, the final review and copy-editing process has uncovered "some minor questions of consistency, typographical errors and layout" that are being addressed by the congregation.

"As the work of editing and assembling nears completion, there is assurance that the published text will be available in more than ample time for implementation in Advent 2011," Bishop Serratelli said.

He said he issued the statement in hopes that it would "clarify the situation and, in so doing, give us the calm needed to welcome and implement the new text."

Bishop Serratelli said that in addition to enthusiasm and acceptance, he has found "an attitude of openness and readiness to receive the new text" in the U.S. church.

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, then-president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, announced Aug. 20 that the "third typical edition" of the Roman Missal would go into use at English-language Masses in the United States on Nov. 27, 2011.

"From that date forward, no other edition of the Roman Missal may be used in the dioceses of the United States of America," the cardinal said in a decree of promulgation for the missal.

Announced by Pope John Paul II in 2000 and first published in Latin in 2002, the missal is the book of prayers used in the worship in the Latin-rite church. It underwent a lengthy and rigorous translation process through the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, followed by sometimes heated discussions over particular wording at USCCB meetings during much of the past decade.

Other English-speaking bishops' conferences went through a similar process and submitted recommended changes to the Vatican congregation.

In days of declining values, dioceses are stressing importance of marriage, family

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON -- Despite a recent Pew Research Center survey that found a growing number of Americans -- now 39 percent, up from 28 percent in 1978 -- think marriage is becoming obsolete, family ministers across the county say they believe marriage remains a strong institution.

And they're taking steps to keep it that way.

"That (survey) says that over 60 percent agree that marriage is not becoming obsolete," said Bill Boomer, executive director of the Department of Marriage and Family in the Cleveland Diocese. "The majority of first marriages still last. It is still possible to be married for a lifetime."

Professional ministers such as Boomer, while not buoyed by the survey's results, told Catholic News Service that they believe marriage will survive, but he acknowledged they must come up with ways to impress upon young generations the important role marriage plays in society.

They also say the Catholic Church's view that marriage can only exist between one man and one woman is important to share with modern-day culture.

"If we don't get that message out, that Christian message out, the next few years, our culture will have succeeded in defining marriage for us," said Lorrie Gramer, co-director of the Family Life Office in the Diocese of Rockford, Ill.

The Pew survey examined a wide range of issues related to marriage and families. In addition to finding that nearly four in 10 people consider marriage less important as an institution, the survey also revealed that slightly more than half -- 52 percent -- of all adults were married in 2008 compared with 72 percent in 1960.

The decline in marriage has occurred primarily based on educational background. By a 64 percent to 48 percent margin, college graduates are more likely to be married than people with a high school diploma or less.

While people in both groups were just as likely to say they want to marry, according to the survey, people with a high school diploma or less placed a higher premium on financial stability as a very important reason to marry.

The survey also found that a vast majority of respondents do not see marriage as the only foundation of family life, with 86 percent saying a single parent and child is a family, 80 percent saying an unmarried couple living together with a child is a family and 63 percent saying a same-sex couple raising a child is a family.

Percent of U.S. parents with children age 17 or younger who say their family eats dinner together

Around the Table

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
Our Faith

Why study scripture?

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service

Q. Our parish has sponsored several Scripture classes in recent years. They have been enlightening and interesting but make some of us wonder how an ordinary person can understand what the Bible is saying without years of study.

What did people do before such classes were available? (Florida)

A. First, let’s be clear that one does not need advanced studies to read the Bible profitably. Few of the first Christians were scholars of the Scriptures, but it was for them that the word of God and the Christian message were written, and they understood that message quite well.

It’s the same with us. The Gospels and other New Testament writings, for example, are down-to-earth, and their meaning for our lives is open to anyone who reads them with faith and prayer. Ignorance of the Scriptures, said St. Jerome, is ignorance of Christ. That goes for all of us, old or young, learned or not.

On the other hand, there is much to gain from even a bit of study. Pope Pius XII, in his 1943 groundbreaking encyclical on interpreting Scripture (“Divino Afflante Spiritu”), noted that the sacred authors had their own ways of telling stories, using peculiar idioms of speech or exaggerated modes of expression and other elements common to the times they wrote.

In other words, ancient people did not always express their ideas in ways we use today. They wrote in the forms of description in use by people in their own day and locality. Whenever and wherever the sacred writers lived, they used any mode of expression that would help to impress their ideas more deeply on the people they were addressing.

Scriptures in the form we have them today were written over many hundreds of years. For centuries before that, the stories were handed down generation after generation over the campfires, for example, or in family or civic and religious celebrations. Obviously, an enormous variety of cultures and changes of language underlie that seemingly simple book we call the Bible.

There’s no question, then, that the more we learn about those ancient realities, the better we can understand what the Bible is telling us. “The supreme rule of interpretation,” said Pope Pius, “is to discover and define what the writer intended to express.”

This sense of a Bible passage is not as obvious in the speeches and writings of biblical authors as it might be in writings today. One cannot simply apply the ordinary rules of grammar and assume to know what the writers meant, the pope said. We must, “as it were, go back wholly in spirit to those remote centuries of the East and with the aid of history, archaeology, ethnology and other sciences accurately determine what modes of writing ... the authors of that ancient period would likely use, and in fact did use.”

We are blessed today to have unprecedented access to this kind of knowledge. During the past two centuries or so, science has uncovered vast information revealing how ancient people lived -- the food they ate, their laws, how they lived their daily lives, their relationships and marriages and wars, what or who and how they worshiped, how they carried on their business and trades, how civic life was organized, how they cared for their dead, and the language and words they used.

All of this cast light on nearly every part of the Bible, from the stories of creation in Genesis to the parables of Jesus.

Fortunately, many Catholics today, individually or in parishes such as yours, take advantage of the available personnel and publications that can enrich our understanding and enjoyment of the word of God.

It is undoubtedly one of God’s great gifts to our generations.

Vatican II’s most challenging document turns 45

By Tony Magliano
Catholic News Service

The most important event in the modern history of the Catholic Church was born 45 years ago.

On Dec. 8, 1965, the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church’s 21st and most recent ecumenical (general/worldwide) council, officially concluded.

Pope John XXIII (now Blessed John), who opened the council and Pope Paul VI, who closed it, together with the world’s bishops, wanted to make the ancient Catholic faith relevant to contemporary men and women of all cultures. They called on modern Catholics to fully embrace the ageless Gospel message of love, justice and peace, and to use it to heal and transform our suffering world.

The roadmap they designed to help guide us on this urgently important journey was Vatican II’s powerful and prophetic document on social justice and peace, “Gaudium et Spes” (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World).

Many observers call this the most important document in the church’s social tradition.

The compelling tone of this entire document is reflected in its first sentence: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

The document instructs us to do no less than bring the transforming power of the Gospel to the world’s often greedy and violent cultural, political and economic institutions.

But sadly, we have not responded well. The bishops’ clarion call to social justice and peace has been ignored by too many.

Pope Paul VI and the world’s bishops declared that "abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes." Yet, 45 years later, abortion on demand and throughout all nine months of pregnancy still continues to claim the lives of approximately 1.2 million unborn babies in the U.S. every year! And throughout the world the number is in the tens of millions.

The bishops insisted that "the right of having a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one’s family belongs to everyone." But sadly, according to the United Nations, more than 1.4 billion fellow human beings live in extreme poverty and are struggling to survive on less than $1.25 a day!

One very significant reason as to why the poor remain poor is due to an insane, ina

(Please See MAGLIANO/23)
JUST 4 KIDS

John asks if Jesus is 'the one who is to come'

Even though John the Baptist was in prison, he would hear rumors and stories about the amazing things that Jesus was doing. When some of his disciples came to visit him in his cell, he sent them out to find Jesus and to ask him a question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

After hearing this question, Jesus gave the men an answer: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

When John's disciples left, Jesus decided to speak to the crowds that always gathered around him about John. "What did you go out to the desert to see?" he asked them. "A reed swayed by the wind? ... Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet?"

Jesus paused to allow the people to think about what he was saying to them, and he especially wanted them to think about John.

"This is the one," he said emphatically, "about who it is written: 'Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.'"

The people began to ask each other questions in whispers, wondering what Jesus meant.

Then he said plainly to them, "Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ...

And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah, the one who is to come. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

Jesus knew that John the Baptist was not always understood by the people who saw or heard him. He dressed differently and spoke loudly.

So Jesus said, "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said, 'He is possessed by a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is vindicated by her works."

Then Jesus smiled, extended his hands and said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Matthew 11 — Q&A
1. What did John want to know about Jesus?
2. Which prophet did Jesus compare John to?

BIBLE ACCENT
Matthew's Gospel has been one of the best loved of the four that are included in the New Testament. He presents the life and ministry of Jesus from his ancestry to his death and resurrection, but he also shows what Jesus expected of those who wanted to be his followers.

Many of the most famous passages in the New Testament can be found in Matthew, such as the temptation of Jesus, the beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the choosing of the apostles and the passion narrative. Matthew included many of the parables Jesus told to teach lessons to the people, as well as accounts of a number of the miracles that Jesus performed.

We can learn about how to be the kind of Christian Jesus wants us to be by reading through the Gospel of Matthew.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAINTS
St. Adelaide
Adelaide (931-999) was pledged by her family to be the wife of Lothair, the son of a man named Hugh of Provence. Lothair married Adelaide when she was 16 years old, and he stepped into the role of the king of Italy.

In the year 950, Lothair died and he was succeeded by Berengarius, who wanted Adelaide to marry his son. She refused, so Berengarius had her exiled to a castle on Lake Garda. She was rescued by Otto the Great, who was the king of Germany. She married him, and they had five children.

In spite of living through a live of political conflict, Adelaide remained kind and generous and was usually cheerful. She worked to restore monasteries where monks and nuns could lead their religious lives. We honor her on Dec. 16.

KIDS' CLUB
Share your thoughts on this week's Bible story with family and friends by writing an essay in response to this question:
What role did John the Baptist play in the ministry of Jesus?

PUZZLE
Fill in the blanks:
2. Bible book with the shortest name.
3. The fourth Gospel.
4. The Son of God.
5. This Bible book follows the Acts of the Apostles.
6. He led Israel out of Egypt.
7. The first king of Israel.
8. Number of testaments in the Bible.
9. The first word of Genesis.
Family

Successfully raising the imperfect child

By Bill and Monica Dodds
Catholic News Service

You know your children aren't property. And you know your children aren't perfect.

Parenting gets easier -- and harder -- when you admit you aren't raising a perfect child. Your imperfect child does things he or she shouldn't do, and doesn't do things he or she should do. Just like the rest of us.

So how do you strike the proper balance between telling your wonderful children that they were created by God and are loved by him and by you, and reminding them that they need some improvement here or there?

These are a few points to consider.

1. A parent's love isn't conditional. It isn't withheld because a child doesn't get a high enough grade on a book report or plays well enough in a ballgame.

2. A parent's love doesn't overlook slackness. You know what we mean. The book report isn't done until the last minute, and little or no effort and thought are put into it. The game is lost because someone (related to you) was a ball hog when teamwork was needed.

3. Children are both childlike (innocent, trusting and loving) and childish (self-centered, impatient and demanding). They can flip from one to the other on a dime. Part of your God-given job is to help them learn to control those childish impulses as they grow in wisdom, age and grace.

4. At some points along the parenting road, your children listen more to their peers than they do to you. Peers who are good kids help your child become or remain a good kid. Peers who aren't so good make it hard for your child to be a good kid.

5. No matter how great a parent you are, your child is going to mess up sometimes as a grade-schooler, a teen, and an adult. This is because God gave him or her free will, so every human being is bound to make poor choices. (Except for Jesus and his mother Mary, but even then the Gospels tell us that parenting was no picnic.)

On the Web: 100 Years of Top Names

The Social Security Administration lists the top five children's names for each year from 1910 to 2009. Go to ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/top5names.html.

ANSWERS

1. NT
2. Job
3. John
4. Jesus
5. Romans
6. Moses
7. Saul
8. Two

Family

The cold hard truth brought on when unsuspecting

By Jimmy Patterson / Editor

On a recent weekend I was forced to stay at home during the recovery process after minor surgery and during my time convalescing, my cable and internet provider decided they would disrupt my service and therefore further scramble my life. And so for parts of three days, I was without what I had hoped to have to sustain me during my time during the feeling-better phase.

No internet. No email. No college football Saturday afternoon. Heck, God has such a great sense of humor that he decided to pull the plug on me during the one game of the Cowboys’ abysmal year in which they looked outstanding.

Yet I couldn’t watch it.

By the time Monday arrived, I was pleading with the cable company in as civil a manner as I could: Just ... fix it ... NOW. PLEASE! I didn’t care what it took, but I knew that if they weren’t there that morning, I was going to begin calling them every 30 minutes until I saw a bucket truck in the alley. Good for them that they put me atop the priority list. They did not want to have to deal with a wounded writer who had been without contact with the outside world for almost three days.

I thought maybe the isolation experience would lead me into quiet times and reflection, and conversations that I might not otherwise have. But instead I found that simply because I could not have my cable and my internet and my outside world contact I simply wanted it all that much more. Interestingly enough, when the services were restored Monday morning, I didn’t even turn on the TV, but I did burn up the Wifi lines for a few hours catching up with all that had to be done.

I did learn some things about myself during my cessation from all things virtual and online:

- Ken Burns’ "Baseball: The Tenth Inning" is another riveting example of why he is the king of documentarians.

- I actually like George W. Bush a lot. His new book “Decision Points” has made for some good reading about his West Texas roots and it has been fun getting to know him better.

- And I am finding the PBS documentary “God in America” to be both fascinating and maddening at the same time. If the first two episodes are any indication, the show will roast and baste the Catholic Church although it is simply retelling history. I hope that is not the case, but I don’t see much escape from it. (At the time of this writing I had not finished the last two episodes, so I’m not sure how it will end.)

When not deriding the church for its sins of the past (and no doubt ultimately for its sins of the present), it has left me with a fascinating look into colonial America and the religions of the early settlers.

But even before America was settled, it was occupied by Native Americans who had religious ideas of their own. The Catholic Church was not kind to those native Americans and in return, the natives were not much better to the Catholics.

Throughout my recovery process, I am left with one 30-second snippet of dialogue that came within “God in America’s” first five minutes. The words are those of a man named Porter Swentzell, who the show’s producers identified simply as a Santa Clara Pueblo. Although a young man, his ancestors have no doubt left him with a keen understanding of faith, spirituality and religion. And what he spoke in those first five minutes of the documentary I cannot shake, probably mostly due to my internet and cable being taken away. I don’t like what Porter said about me. So with his words and hopefully a dash of my own self-discipline I can make some changes as to what I consider vital in my life.

“Our whole world around us is our religion,” Swentzell said. “Our way of life is our religion. The way we behave toward one another, and towards others, is our religion. The very moment we wake up in the morning until we go to bed and even when we sleep, that’s our religion.”

And so the question begs: What is your religion?
**Culture / Books**

**Intensity up in darkest ‘Harry Potter’ installment**

By Joseph McAleer
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — The Hogwarts gang is on the run in "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1" (Warner Bros.), the penultimate film in the wildly successful franchise based on J.K. Rowling’s fantasy novels. As in Rowling’s final volume, the tone here is darker, the action more intense, and the violence intended to shock as the forces of good and evil are set on their inevitable collision course.

"These are dark times, there’s no denying," intones Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour (Bill Nighy) as the film opens. And how. The Ministry has been taken over by Death Eaters, loyal to the evil Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes). Their mission is twofold: Rid the world of Half-bloods (part witch, part nonwitch) and their supporters, and find Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe, of course), the "Chosen One."

No one is safe, not even a kindly Hogwarts teacher fond of Muggles. She is brutally tortured, then murdered by Voldemort and fed to a giant snake in one of the many intense moments that would have younger viewers diving under their seats.

But the main focus is Harry, and his loyal pals Hermione (Emma Watson) and Ron (Rupert Grint), who rally to his side. As in the previous films, the special effects are thrilling, from whiz-zoom broom rides in the skies to the elaborate set-pieces of the Ministry of Magic.

Casting spells that enable them to travel instantaneously from place to place, Harry, Hermione and Ron jump all over the real world, from Piccadilly Circus in London to the Scottish Highlands. Director David Yates (a veteran of two previous Harry Potter films) offers a picturesquely travelogue of the British Isles that is a soothing respite from the film’s otherwise relentless clashes.

Their travels are not just about escaping Voldemort; our trio is in search of items that can destroy the Evil One, including the titular "Deathly Hallows," three items that, together, make one "Master of Death."

Here, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" ventures into "Lord of the Rings" territory. Like Frodo Baggins, Harry -- all grown up and accepting his destiny -- embarks on a perilous journey to rid the world of evil. But, also like Frodo, Harry is tempted by darkness, as are his friends.

The film offers lessons about perseverance, loyalty, friendship, and self-sacrifice as it builds to a cliffhanger climax. Rowling’s novels are famously religious, yet "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" has some welcome, pseudo-Christian moments. Returning to Harry’s birthplace in search of clues, Harry and Hermione find themselves outside a church on Christmas Eve. They listen wistfully to the hymns sung within, thinking of happy family moments of long ago.

Similarly, Ron finds his way back to his friends on Christmas Day, when a mysterious light appears, directing him to the source of all good.

Less welcome is an incident that sees one of Harry’s friends and protectors wounded by a Death Eater, who leaves a gaping hole in his head. The victim exclaims, with a grin, "I'm a saint. I'm hole-y. Get it?"

The magical elements in the script are benign, serving to support the plot, not endorse the evils of sorcery. The romantic tension of earlier films takes a back seat to the action this time, with a few exceptions: stolen kisses, close dancing, and a peculiar fantasy scene, invented by Voldemort, showing Harry and Hermione explicitly nude and about to have sex -- all designed to enraged Ron, which it does.

The film contains much action violence with frequent peril, brief partial nudity in a sexual context, scenes of murder and torture and a few vaguely sexual references. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

**Book recommendations abound for Christmas giving**

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Here are some new books suitable for Christmas giving or with Christmas themes:


- "The Notre Dame Book of Prayer," edited by Heidi Schlumpf, photographs by Matt Cashore. Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame, Ind., 2010). 301 pp., $27.95. With a foreword by Father Theodore Hesburgh and an afterword by Father John Jenkins, this collection of traditional and contemporary prayers relates each set of prayers to photographs of campus locations, including the Grotto and Notre Dame Stadium.

- "Blessed and Beautiful: Picturing the Saints" by Robert Kiely. Yale University Press (New Haven, Conn., 2010). 288 pp., $40. Written by a professor emeritus of English from Harvard, this book includes 130 color images of saints painted by Renaissance artists in Italy, along with meditations on the lives of more than a dozen saints, seen as real people rather than icons of perfection.

- "What I Keep: Photographs of the New Face of Homelessness and Poverty" by Susan Mullally. Baylor University Press (Waco, Texas, 2010), 93 pp., $34.95. These photographs, taken at the Church Under the Bridge beneath Interstate 35 in Waco, offer a portrait of 21st-century poverty by asking the homeless and formerly homeless what object they would never give up. The answers are touching and varied -- a stuffed animal found in a dumpster, a 1945 penny to remember the year his mother was born, a great-grandmother’s "antique" 7UP bottle, a father’s watch or a musical washboard. This book might help children and adults alike change their perspective on Christmas "loot."

- "Full of Grace: Encountering Mary in Faith, Art and Life" by Judith Dupre. Random House (New York, 2010). 332 pp., $40. In a series of stories and essays, illustrated by classic Renaissance portraits and contemporary images, Dupre takes a new look at Mary as mother and virgin, saint and peasant, and examines her artistic, cultural and historic influence -- even as one of the central women in

(Please See GIFTS/20)
chaste life and chastity is a virtue that strengthens our choice not to give in. Some say no one will know if we have sinned unless we get pregnant, but God's eyes are ever-knowing of all our sins. In times God's grace comes to us as a reminder, those who call us friend or girlfriend/boyfriend are not true unless they respect us, our body, and our God. We would not disgrace the name of our God for a five minute heated moment with a man/woman that does not respect us or our virtue. Many times this is the hardest virtue to keep but we believe we will continue to follow our Lord and be received by God rather than be in the "in crowd" who so easily dismiss us as they please.

Chastity is a virtue we do not see in most teens these days. By reading your message, bishop, on chastity, we realize the true meaning and importance of saving yourself for marriage. It made us realize how important it is to find true love and not give someone who does not love you for who you are but only wants your body. Your letter has influenced us in a major way.

We believe that sex should wait until two people are married. Teens shouldn't have sex just because it's cool or just because everyone is doing it. It should be with that person you're going to spend the rest of your life with, so it will be something special. Sex before marriage doesn't have true meaning and will only get you into trouble. Waiting for that special moment to be truly united in marriage with someone is — and will be — worth the wait!

Jesus is the light that helps you remember what is right. As a shepherd, He wants to lead you in the right direction, a direction that leads you to Heaven. Calling the Holy Spirit is like calling on extra strength to help us fight the temptations; and to look at Mary as an example for leading us to Christ and following his footsteps. Your body is a vessel that God works through; it should only be used for spreading the good news of Christ and following in Christ's footsteps.

Keeping connected to God in prayer is very important. All he asks of us is the acknowledgement that he is present in our lives.

The Confirmation Class
St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Stanton
But the pope went on to say that in particular cases -- he mentioned prostitutes -- condom use may be justified as a first step toward taking moral responsibility for one's actions.

Here is the key passage as translated in the English edition of the book. The pope was asked whether it was "madness to forbid a high-risk population to use condoms."

"There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward discovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants. But it is not really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality," the pope said.

Peter Seewald, the German journalist who conducted the interview, then asked: "Are you saying, then, that the Catholic Church is actually not opposed in principle to the use of condoms?"

The pope answered: "She of course does not regard it as a real or moral solution, but, in this or that case, there can be nonetheless, in the intention of reducing the risk of infection, a first step toward a different way, a more human way, of living sexuality."

The Italian translation -- the only one officially released to date by the Vatican -- has a slightly different wording: it uses the feminine "prostitute", not male prostitute, and says this is an example of where condom use can be "justified."

It was the first time Pope Benedict -- or any pope -- has said publicly that condom use may be acceptable in some cases.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said Nov. 21 that the pope was not "reforming or changing" the church's teaching on sexual responsibility, but rather considering an "exceptional situation" in which sexual activity places a person's life at risk. While the pope was not morally justifying disordered sexual activity, he was saying that use of a condom to reduce the risk of transmitting the disease may be an act of moral responsibility, Father Lombardi said.

The spokesman said it would be an exaggeration to call the pope's comments "revolutionary," but he said they offered a courageous and important contribution to a long-debated question.

The pope's remarks underscored a distinction made previously by other church experts: that the church's teaching against condoms as a form of birth control is different from its position on condom use in disease prevention. The comments seemed destined to open a new chapter in the church's internal debate on that issue.

For years, in fact, Vatican officials and theologians have studied the morality of condom use to reduce the risk of AIDS. The Vatican has never proclaimed a "ban" on condom use in AIDS prevention; on the contrary, some Vatican theologians and officials have argued that for married couples in which one partner is HIV-infected, use of condoms could be a moral responsibility.

More generally, however, they have argued that promotion of condoms as the only or best answer to AIDS carries grave risks, mainly by promoting the idea that condoms guarantee "safe sex." In that sense, the pope said on his flight to Cameroon in 2009 that rather than solve the issue of HIV/AIDS, condoms "increase the problem." He encouraged campaigns to promote responsible sexuality instead.

When that episode was raised by Seewald in the book, the pope seemed to bristle.

"The media coverage completely ignored the rest of the trip to Africa on account of a single statement," he said. He said he felt "provoked" by the question, because the church does so much to care for AIDS patients.

"I had the chance to visit one of these wards and to speak with the patients. That was the real answer: The church does more than anyone else because she does not speak from the tribune of the newspapers, but helps her brothers and sisters where they are actually suffering," he said.

In the book, the pope criticized the "fixation" on condoms in AIDS prevention, but without categorically ruling out their use.

"As a matter of fact, you know, people can get condoms when they want them anyway. But this just goes to show that condoms alone do not resolve the question itself. More needs to happen," he said.

"Meanwhile, the secular realm itself has developed the so-called ABC Theory: Abstinence-Be Faithful-Condoms, where the condom is understood only as a last resort, when the other two points fail to work," he said.

The "ABC" campaign has received coverage in Vatican media in recent years. After his 2009 trip to Africa, the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, published an interview with an Italian medical missionary, Brother Daniele Giusti, who said the ABC method has worked well in Uganda. He evaluated condom effectiveness in these terms: "The condom has worked in concentrated epidemics and among particular groups: prostitutes, homosexuals and drug addicts. Not so in other cases."

It's worth noting that in a different section of the new book, the pope defended the 1968 encyclical "Humanae Vitae," which taught that, in the context of married love, contraception techniques, including condoms, are immoral because they close off the possibility of the transmission of life.

"The basic lines of 'Humanae Vitae' are still correct. Finding ways to enable people to live the teaching, on the other hand, is a further question," the pope said. He indicated that pastors should show some tolerance for Catholics who have difficulty with the teaching on contraception.

"We should not take the failure to live up to this high moral standard as an authoritative objection to the truth. We should try to do as much good as we can and to support and put up with each other and create conditions for better understanding of the teaching, he said.

The pope noted that the church accepts natural regulation of conception. He said that method presupposes that couples take time for each other, and is far different from taking a pill "so that I can jump into bed with a random acquaintance."

Theologians who advise the Vatican have underlined that it makes little sense to apply the church's teaching against contraception to sexual acts outside of marriage, since those acts are already considered immoral.

In a 2006 interview with Catholic News Service, Msgr. Angel Rodriguez Luno, a moral theologian at Rome's Holy Cross University and a consultant to the Vatican's doctrinal congregation, said that "if unmarried persons do not abstain from sexual relations, or if spouses are not mutually faithful, these are sexual acts which are immoral in themselves, whether or not a condom is used."
CARDINALS

(From 11)

members, with 121 cardinals under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope. With the induction of Cardinals Wuerl and Burke into the College of Cardinals, the United States has 18 cardinals, 13 of whom are under the age of 80.

Only Italy has more cardinals. With 10 new cardinals, Italy has a total of 48 members of the college, 25 of whom are under 80.

In his homily, Pope Benedict said he chose as cardinals "pastors who govern important diocesan communities with zeal, prelates in charge of dicasteries of the Roman Curia or who have served the church and the Holy See with exemplary fidelity."

The Gospel reading used for the prayer service was St. Mark's account of the disciples vying for a place of honor with Jesus, and Jesus telling them, "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all."

Pope Benedict told the new cardinals that Jesus' "style of living became the basis of new relationships within the Christian community and of a new way of exercising authority."

Even after Jesus explained to the disciples that following him would involve suffering, they demonstrated that they had "expectations and plans for greatness, authority and honor in the eyes of the world," the pope said.

Jesus was patient with them, he said, but he also made it clear that to be his disciples they must be totally obedient to God and follow "this road that passes through humiliation, suffering and death for love."

Pope Benedict told the new cardinals they must recognize that becoming "unique and precious" collaborators in the papal mission to serve the church is not an honor they can take credit for, but is a vocation to which they are called.

Jesus' teaching that authority means humble service is a message that continues to be valid for the church, "especially for those who have the task of guiding the people of God," the pope said. "It is not the logic of domination, of power according to human criteria, but the logic of service, the logic of the cross, which is at the basis of every exercise of authority."

Cardinal Angelo Amato, the prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes who worked closely with the pope as secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, addressed the pope on behalf of his fellow new cardinals.

He told the pope that being called to the College of Cardinals "gives rise in us to feelings of awe for the magnanimity and love of the Holy Father for us. With trepidation we recognize our limits before the awareness of the great dignity with which we are being clothed and which we are called to give witness to with our lives and our activities."

POPE

(From 11)

understands why some Catholics, particularly victims, have responded by leaving the church in protest.

"It is difficult for them to keep believing that the church is a source of good, that she communicates the light of Christ, that she helps people in life -- I can understand that," he said.

The pope said media coverage of the abuse scandal was partly motivated by a desire to discredit the church. But he added that the church must be "grateful for every disclosure" and said the media could not have reported in this way "had there not been evil in the church."

The pope pointed to the church's new rules and policies on sex abuse, but he appeared to acknowledge that more might have been done. He noted that in 2002, the Vatican and U.S. bishops established strict norms to curb sex abuse in U.S. dioceses.

"Would it have been Rome's duty, then, to say to all the countries expressly: Find out whether you are in the same situation? Maybe we should have done that," he said.

The pope said that in responding to sex abuse allegations against the founder of the Legionaries of Christ, the late Mexican Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, "unfortunately we addressed these things very slowly and late."

The allegations were eventually substantiated and the order has been placed under Vatican leadership for a period of reform.

Pope Benedict said Father Maciel remains for him "a mysterious figure, one who lived an immoral and twisted life but who built up his religious order with dynamism -- a "false prophet" who nevertheless had a "positive effect." As for the future of the Legionaries, the pope said it was basically sound but needed corrections that do not destroy the enthusiasm of its members.

The pope was asked if he considered resigning in the face of such burdens as the sex abuse crisis. He responded: "When the danger is great one must not run away. For that reason, now is certainly not the time to resign." But he added that if a pope is no longer physically, psychologically and spiritually capable of handling the duties of the papacy, he has a right and perhaps an obligation to resign.

The pope spoke candidly of his age and health, saying his schedule of meetings and trips "really overtaxes an 83-year-old man."

"I trust that our dear Lord will give me as much strength as I need to be able to do what is necessary. But I also notice that my forces are diminishing," he said.

The pope laughed when Seewald suggested that he looked good enough to be a fitness trainer, and said he has to conserve energy during his busy days. Asked whether he uses an exercise bicycle a doctor had given him, the pope replied: "No, I don't get to it at all -- and don't need it at the moment, thank God."

He said he spends his free time reading, praying and sometimes watching DVDs -- typically with religious themes -- with members of the papal household.

Much of the book dealt with the pope's strategy for presenting the church's message in a largely skeptical world. The essential problem today, he said, is that the prevailing model of economic and social progress that leaves out God, and thus omits the ethical aspect.

Impending climatic disaster actually provides an opportunity to evangelize and promote moral decisions, he said.

The problem, though, is that populations and countries seem unwilling to make sacrifices -- which is where the church can make a difference, he said.

It is urgent to "bring the question about God back into the center," he said. "The important thing today is to see that God exists, that God matters to us and that he answers us."

He said the church can do this only if its own members live the faith in their daily lives. He said that simple task should be the priority today, rather than embarking on major initiatives like a third Vatican Council.

The pope said the church's task is threatened by a "new intolerance" that would limit religious expression in the name of non-discrimination, for example in banning the display of crucifixes in public schools, or in condemning specific church teachings.

"When, for example, in the name of non-discrimination, people try to force the Catholic Church to change her position on homosexuality or the ordination of women, then that means she is no longer allowed to live out her own identity," he said.

In that regard, the pope said other religions face similar pressures. He said, for example, that he saw no reason for Western countries to ban the burqa, the Islamic veil, as long as it is worn voluntarily.

On other topics, Pope Benedict had this to say:

- He defended the encyclical 'Humanae Vitae,' which taught that artificial contraception in marriage is morally wrong, but said the church needs to find ways to help people live the teaching and show tolerance to those who have problems with it.

- The pope noted that the church accepts natural regulation of conception. He said that method presupposes that couples take time for each other, and is far different from taking a pill "so that I can jump into bed with a random acquaintance."

In general, he said, the church has to return to the "genuinely Christian attitude" of joy, as well as discipline and responsibility, in sexuality.

- He said dialogue with Muslims has improved during his pontificate, in part because Muslim scholars accept that Islam needs to clarify its relation to violence and its relation to reason.

- The pope took issue with critics of the wartime policies of Pope Pius XII, saying that he "saved more Jews than anyone else" by quietly opening doors to church institutions.

- He said he began distributing Communion on the tongue during papal Masses not because he was opposed to Communion in the hand, but to "send a signal" about respect for the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
amor de Dios es para todos, para los padres de Jesús como para los simples pastores campesinos, y para todos nosotros—sea lo que sea nuestra condición o estado en la vida o profesión.

La navidad aún ocurre en nuestro mundo porque Jesús sigue naciendo y sigue haciéndose presente en nuestro amor, en nuestro servicio, en nuestras oraciones y en el cariño y amor que nos enseñamos el uno al otro, especialmente en una manera misteriosa y amorosa de cada miza. Jesús está presente en el cuarto de emergencia de nuestros hospitales, en los centros de refugio; está presente en la gente cuyos corazones están quebrantados, está presente en la gente que trabajan duramente por justicia, y está presente en esos que luchan en escoger entre la guerra y la paz, está presente en la decisión entre generosidad y codicia. Él está presente en los aborígenes donde sus preciosos pequeños corderitos son matados. Está presente en esos momentos de amor cuando todo parece carente de amor, y en los momentos de esperanza cuando todo se ve desesperanzado. La navidad abraza y transforma ambos, la luz y la oscuridad.

A veces sabemos más acerca de nuestro gran Dios cuando sabemos menos. Imagínate que eres un de los pastores en la primera noche navideña. Estás solo en una noche obscura y estrellada, cuidando tus ovejas. Todo está calmado, y todo está brillante. Podrías sentirte pequeño e insignificante, pero estás incluido en una gran imagen maravillosa del amor de Dios y diseño que nunca podrías comprender pero solo confiar que está allí. En esta imagen más grande hay una estrella—no entre las demás estrellas, sino una estrella brillante especial. De repente un ángel se aparece y te clama que algo hermoso será revelado en un pequeño niño, envuelto en pañales, acostado en un pesebre. Viajas hacia Belén a ver este niño, y cuando miras en sus ojos, miras tu reflexión. Antes de llegar realizas que estás presente en el niño antes de que llegues, y él también está contigo. Sospechas que cuando el niño crezca, el llamará a la gente a entender y vivir una nueva vida, enfatizando como todos estamos conectados en el amor de Dios y amarnos el uno al otro es nuestra primera responsabilidad. Con el tiempo regresas a casa. Estás parado de nuevo en el campo cuidando tu rebaño. Pero tu vida ha cambiado. Has conocido al niño. Se te ha pedido que abrasen a ese niño y dejes que este niño guíe tu vida en un espíritu nuevo de verdad, esperanza, paz, justicia y amor.

Lo que encontramos en la historia navideña es la idea que el sagrado, el espíritu de amor, es encarnado en nuestro mundo; en otras palabras, la compasión y el amor del Padre se hacen presentes, encarnados y es el símbolo básico y más profundo de nueva vida, de la posibilidad de esperanza en un niño, un niño en un pesebre, en un recién nacido en un hospital o hasta un niño en una choza en un país lejano o en una casa pobre de nuestra ciudad. La historia navideña no fue algo singular, pero sigue en nuestro tiempo. La historia navideña, la encarnación del amor de Dios continua hasta nuestro tiempo. Esta encarnación de Dios se hace presente en el pueblo de Dios, en forma física—en el amor, poder y compasión. Sucede donde la esperanza habita entre desesperación, dondequiera que el gozo habita entre tristeza, dondequiera que el amor habita entre el odio, dondequiera que la paz se proclama entre guerra, ahí amor está sucediendo y Jesús está naciendo. Esta es una verdad convincente de la historia navideña. Esto es lo que el niño en la cuna nos anuncia. Nos reunimos con amigos y familia durante la navidad para ser inspirados por la posibilidad que durante un tiempo cuando la guerra y la violencia es incontrolable, la idea de paz en la tierra y buena voluntad hacia la humanidad podría aún llegar hacer más que un dicho y algo para acoger y vivir en nuestra vida diaria.

El príncipe de paz en el pesebre nos llama para asumir una actitud y conducta de arrepentimiento, preparándonos para un compromiso renovado a aquel a quien es el la fuente de todo bien, verdad, justicia y amor y quien nos llama cada navidad para rehacer y remodelar nuestra comunidad mundial, comenzando con la comunidad donde vivimos. El tiempo presente no es distinto al periodo de hace tiempo con su desparramada violencia, profunda pobreza, degradación ecológica, intolerancia étnica, y discriminación del género. Nos preguntamos donde, en este momento, podemos discernir señas de esperanza, fuente de luz, fuerzas de paz? Entonces la pregunta es: ¿estamos preparados a seguir el camino a aquel quien es nuestra respuesta completa—y el niño en el pesebre que es el príncipe de paz?
are being slain. He is present in those moments of love when everything seems loveless, and in the moments of hope when everything seems hopeless. Christmas embraces and transforms both light and darkness.

Sometimes we know the most about our great God when we know the least about God. Imagine that you are one of the shepherds of the first Christmas night. You are alone on a dark and starlit night, keeping watch over your sheep. All is calm, and all is bright. You might feel small and insignificant, but you are included in a larger marvelous picture of God’s love and design that you can never grasp but only trust that it is there. In this larger picture is a star—not a star among stars, but a special shining star. Suddenly an angel appears and says that something beautiful is being revealed in a small child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. You make your way to Bethlehem to see this child, and when you look into his eyes you see your own reflection. You realize that you are present in the baby even before you arrive, and he is in you, too. You suspect that when the baby grows up, he will call people to understand and live a new way of life, stressing how connected we all are in God’s love and that our first responsibility is to love one another. Eventually you make your way back home. You are standing again in the field keeping watch over your flock. But your life has changed. You have met that baby. You are asked to embrace that baby and let this child guide your life in a new spirit of truth, peace, justice and love.

What we find in the Christmas story is the idea that the sacred, the spirit of love, is Incarnate in our world; in other words, it is being present, Incarnate, is the most profound basic symbol of new life, of the possibility of hope—in a child—a child in a manger, a new child in a hospital or even in a hut in some far away country. This was not a once and only event. The Christmas story, the Incarnation of love continues on into our time. This Incarnation of God being made present—in love, power and compassion—happens wherever hope abides amidst despair, wherever joy abides amidst sorrow, wherever love abides amidst hate, wherever peace is spoken amidst war, love is happening there and Jesus is being born. This is a compelling truth of the story of Christmas. This is what the child in the crib announces to us. We gather with friends and family at Christmas to be inspired by the possibility that at a time of rampant war-making and violence, the idea of peace on earth and good will toward men may still become more than a slogan and something to take hold and live in our daily lives.

The Prince of Peace in the manger is calling us to assume an attitude and behavior of repentance, preparing us for a renewed commitment to the One who is the source of all goodness, truth, justice and love and who calls us each Christmas to reshape and remake our world community, beginning with the community where we live. The present time is not unlike that period long ago with its widespread violence, deep poverty, ecological degradation, ethnic bigotry, and gender discrimination. Where, at this moment, can we discern signs of hope, source of light, forces of peace? And then the question is: Are we prepared to follow the pathway of the One who is our complete answer—and the infant in the manger who is the Prince of Peace?

According to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, world military spending exceeded $1.5 trillion dollars in 2008... just imagine the good that could be accomplished with such huge sums of money. Global poverty could be completely eliminated! — Tony Magliano

Mom or Dad. That doesn’t mean you can’t recapture some Christmas-morning glee by playing Santa yourself for poor children! Show that movie or song you loved to a family member for the first time. Take a friend on Space Mountain. Change up the rules for a pickup game of basketball and give yourself a new challenge! Put on that Christmas music!
By S. Adelina Garcia, OSF

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — November 12-14, 2010 was a weekend to remember for those who attended the Region 10 Catholic Youth Conference in Little Rock, Ark. Twelve parishes from the Diocese of San Angelo participated (St. Margaret, Big Lake; St. Ann, Sonora; Holy Family, Abilene; St. Francis, Abilene; Holy Trinity, Big Spring; St. Joseph, Stanton; Our Lady of Lourdes, Andrews; Good Shepherd, Crane; St. Mary, Odessa; Our Lady of Guadalupe, Midland; Holy Redeemer, Odessa; St. Joseph, Odessa).

VaLimar Jenson and Brian Johnson were the keynote presenters. Both have wonderful voices that touched our hearts when they sang, but even more powerful were their words and challenges on living lives of justice in today’s society. The highlight of the weekend was a procession from Central High School to the steps of the state capitol. Central High School was the site of an event that called the attention of the world in 1957 when nine teenagers integrated an all white school against the wishes of the governor who had called in the state national guard to prevent them from entering. President Eisenhower in turn called in the 101 Airborne U.S. Army to escort the young people to the school and prevent the mob from turning violent. During these early years of television the news media drew world attention to the situation.

Different groups visited Central High School and the museum, Heifer International, Heifer Ranch in Perryville, 3,000 Crosses for Life at Mount St. Mary School, and participated in other activities educating them about the global reality. Kenya, a drumming program on community building and racial and cultural tolerance was fun, challenging, enlightening, and extremely education. It was wonderful to see and hear nearly 2000 people creating music and harmony just by listening to one another, reaching out to one another… and doing it with drum sticks!

As Minnijean Trickery, one of the Little Rock 9, kept reminding the young people, “remember, we were just ordinary teenagers living ordinary lives trying to live a life of dignity. We were your age but we knew it was not about us but about our people.” What a challenge! Age has nothing to do with the transformation of the world. As Pope Paul VI said, “If you want peace, work for justice.”

ARCHIVES

(From 4)

Bishop Leven immediately sense the lack of unity and knew that it would be the most serious problem he would encounter in his new assignment.

He realized, of course, that without a sense of community in the diocese little could be accomplished in building up the church.

And because of what he had so recently observed in San Antonio, he realized too clearly that bitter discord and hostility could easily erupt where a spirit of unity was wanting and that such an eruption could inflict immeasurable pain, grief and suffering in the whole Church in a diocese. Therefore, Leven’s top priority was to work toward greater unity and harmony among the clergy and the people of the diocese which had been committed to his care.

“I would like to have the opportunity of drawing the whole people of God into the planning of the future,” Leven said. “As soon as possible I would like to get consultations with as wide a base as possible to say what we want the diocese to be like in eleven years from now. I have always felt that councils of the laity and councils of the priests are absolutely essential. It is just inconceivable to me that in this work in which priests and the laity are so closely tied together that this is not recognized. ... We have to see our problems together and we have to define them together.”