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U. S. Bishops Recommend Temporary Suspension of Sacramental Wine

by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

I am enclosing the latest information I have received from the USCCB Office of the Secretariat for the Liturgy as regards the critical issue of the growing spread of the influenza virus. I ask you to read this carefully and to give special attention to #6, #7, and #8.

After medical consultation, to be on the safe side, I am recommending that for the next two months through the end of February, 2004, that we give communion only under the species of the host. I point out that this is my recommendation, but the local Pastor or pastoral coordinator could decide otherwise in his or her judgment based on local medical and health advice.

In the May, 2003 BCL Newsletter, the Committee on the Liturgy addressed the spread of SARS disease and the Liturgy. In recent weeks, an early onset of the annual influenza epidemic has provided the opportunity for reflection on similar issues in regard to certain liturgical practices. After an extended consultation on this important pastoral issue, the Secretariat for the Liturgy offers the following questions of clarification.

1. What is influenza? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "influenza (commonly called "the flu") is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Infection with influenza viruses can result in severe illness and life threatening complications. An estimated 10% to 20% of U.S. residents get the flu each year: an average of 114,000 people are hospitalized for flu-related complications and 36,000 Americans die each year from complications of flu."

2. Why is there particular concern for the spread of influenza this year? Various concerns with the availability and efficacy of influenza vaccines, early onset of the disease and preliminary indications that the spread of the disease might be more significant this year contribute to increased caution. In its latest report, ending December 6, 2003, the CDC reports that "twenty-four state health departments reported widespread influenza activity, fifteen states and New York City reported regional activity, six states reported local influenza activity, and five states and Guam reported sporadic influenza activity."

3. What is the best way to prevent the transmission of the influenza virus? According to the Centers for Disease Control, "As with other infectious illnesses, one of the most important and appropriate preventive practices is careful and frequent hand hygiene. Cleaning your hands often using either soap and water or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizers removes potentially infectious materials from your skin and helps prevent disease transmission."

4. How is the influenza virus transmitted? According to the CDC, "influenza viruses are spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes, or speaks and spreads virus into the air, and other people inhale the virus. When these viruses enter the nose, throat, or lungs of a person, they begin to multiply, causing symptoms of the flu. The viruses can also be spread when a person touches a surface with flu viruses on it (for example, a door handle) and then touches his or her nose or mouth. A

see "SUSPENSION" page five



Pope John Paul II blesses children during the offertory procession at the Christmas midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. During his homily the pontiff said the birth of Christ brings encouragement to all. (CNS photo from Reuters)

Pope's 'Urbi et Orbi' Blessing for Christmas

by Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Here is the Vatican's English translation of Pope John Paul II's blessing "urbi et orbi" ("to the city and to the world") delivered Dec. 25 in St. Peter's Square.

1. Descendit de caelis Salvator mundi. Gaudeamus! The Savior of the world has come down from heaven. Let us rejoice! This proclamation, filled with deep rejoicing, echoed in the night of Bethlehem. Today the church renews it with unchanged joy: The Savior is born for us! A wave of tenderness and hope fills our hearts, together with an overpowering need for closeness and peace. In the crib we contemplate the one who stripped himself of divine glory in order to

become poor, driven by love for mankind. Beside the crib the Christmas tree, with its twinkling lights, reminds us that with the birth of Jesus the tree of life has blossomed anew in the desert of humanity. The crib and the tree: precious symbols, which hand down in time the true meaning of Christmas!

2. In the heavens there echoes the proclamation of the angels: "To you is born in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). What wonder! By being born in Bethlehem, the eternal Son of God has entered into the history of each person living on the face of the earth. He is now present in the world as the one Savior of humanity. For this reason we pray to him: Savior of the

see "POPE" page nine



"I Praise You, God, for I am Wonderfully Made - You Knit Me in My Mother's Womb."

(Jesus Began His Life on Earth as an Embryo)

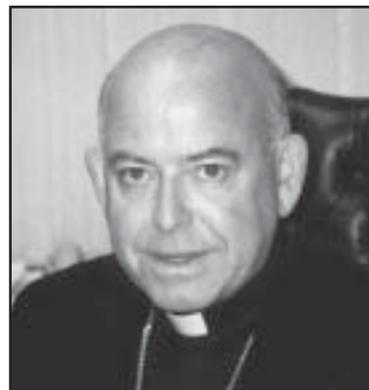
By Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

On January 22, 2004 we recall the tragic anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision that gave the legal right to kill the precious unborn at any stage of their development. As pro-life people solidly committed to defend life we ask Christ, our risen savior and redeemer, and the one who says, "I have come that you may have life, and have it in abundance," to bring an end to abortion, and take into God's eternal loving care all babies that have been aborted. Abortion is an act of violence claiming some 4,000 lives every day in our country, and this cannot be tolerated by a civilized society.

The word of God as found in sacred scripture gives us many clear references and indications that human life, from its beginning in a mother's womb, is sacred, and is special to God. Some eight centuries before the coming of Christ, God, through the prophet Isaiah, told us about the sacredness of unborn human life: "The Lord called me from birth, from my mother's womb he gave me my name. The Lord formed me as his servant from the womb." Then, in beautiful psalm 139, we hear the psalmist say about human life: "I praise you, God, for I am wonderfully made . . . truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb." In the Gospel of Luke we hear about the meeting of two unborn infants and the interaction between them. Elizabeth proclaimed to Mary in the visitation, "blessed is the fruit of your womb . . . the baby stirred in my womb for joy." Elizabeth said baby!

Earlier in the Gospel of Luke the annunciation scene tells us of Christ's conception,

see "EMBRYO" page eleven



"Te Alabo Señor Me Has Creado Maravillosamente, Dede El Seno De Mi Madre Me Formaste"

(Jesús Comenzó su Vida en la Tierra como un Embrión)

Por el Obispo Miguel D. Pfeifer, OMI

En 22 de Enero, 2004, recordaremos el trágico aniversario de la decisión ROE VS. WADE de la Corte Suprema que dio el derecho legal de matar a todo ser precioso no nacido aun, en cualquier estado de su desarrollo. Nosotros, como gente en favor de la vida y sólidamente comprometidos a defender la vida, pedios a Cristo nuestro Salvador y Redentor, quien ha dicho "Yo he venido para que tengan vida y la tengan en abundancia", para que se termine el aborto y lleva al cuidado amoroso y eterno de Dios a todos los bebes que han sido abortados.

El Aborto es un acto de violencia que reclama la vida de mas de 4,000 vidas cada día en nuestro país y que no puede ser tolerado por una sociedad civilizada.

La Palabra de Dios como la encontramos en las Sagradas Escrituras nos da muchas referencias e indicaciones de que la vida humana, desde su comienzo en el seno de la madre, es sagrada y especial para Dios. Cerca de ochocientos años de la venida de Cristo, Dios por medio del profeta Isaías nos hable de lo sagrado de una vida humana no nacida. "El Señor me llamó desde mi nacimiento, desde el vientre de me madre me formó para ser su mensajero". Y también el salmo 139 escuchamos lo que el salmista nos dice acerca de la vida humana "Te alabo Señor porque me has formado prodigiosamente ... Desde lo más profundo de mi ser tu me has formado en el seno de mi madre". Y en el Evangelio de San Lucas escuchamos el encuentro de dos infantes no nacidos aun: Isabel proclamó durante la visita de María: "Bendito es el fruto de tu vientre ... y el niño salto de gozo en me seno". Isabel dijo el niño.

En el principio del Evangelio según San Lucas la escena de la anunciación nos dice acerca de la concepción de Jesús, recordando que Jesús no vino como un bebe plenamente formado sino, como

see "EMBRIÓN" page ten

The Bishop's Schedule



January 2004

January 1: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Mass at 9:00 a.m.

January 4-8: San Antonio - Retreat for Bishops of Region X

January 9-11: Washington, DC - 100th Anniversary of NCEA

January 12: Brady, St. Patrick's - Meet with Pastoral and Finance Councils at 7:00 p.m.

January 13: San Angelo - Bless New Catholic Outreach Services

Building at 11:00 a.m.

January 14-15: Austin - Texas Conference of Churches Meeting

January 16: San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center - Mass for Staff at 8:30 a.m. and Staff meeting at 11:00 a.m.

January 17: Odessa, St. Mary - Mass at 6:00 p.m.

January 18: Midland, Our Lady of Guadalupe - Mass at 10:00 a.m.

January 19: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Ecumenical Prayer Service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King at 12:00 noon

January 20: San Angelo, Dioc-

esan Pastoral Center - Liturgy Commission meeting at 10:30 a.m.

January 21: San Angelo, St. Joseph - Mass for Workers at 12:00 noon

January 22: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Pro Life Mass at 12:00 noon

January 23: Sonora, St. Ann - Meet with Pastor and Pastoral and Finance Councils at 7:00 p.m.

January 24: Olfen, St. Boniface - Mass and Bless Renovation at 4:30 p.m.

January 25: Mertzon, St. Peter - Mass at 9:45 a.m.

January 26-27: Rest and Prayer
January 28: Fort Stockton, St. Joseph - Meet with Pastor and Parish and Finance Councils at 7:00 p.m.

January 30: Midland - Mass and Dinner with Members of Holy Sepulchre at 6:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY, 2004

February 1: Crane, Good Shepherd - Mass at 2:30 p.m. to celebrate 25th Diaconal Ordination of Deacon Julio Carrasco and Deacon Apolonio Gutierrez

February 2-4: Rest and Prayer

February 5: Midland, St. Ann - Meet with Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Councils at 7:00 p.m.

February 6: San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center - 8:30 a.m. Mass for Staff - 11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

February 7-8: Fort Worth

February 9: San Angelo, Christ the King Retreat Center - 11:30 a.m. Prayer and Luncheon with Women and Priest Religious to Celebrate the Consecrated Life

February 10: San Angelo, Diocesan Pastoral Center - Personnel Board Meeting at 11:00 a.m. Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Endowment Board meeting at 7:00 p.m.

February 11: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - 7:00 p.m. Mass for World Day of Prayer and Sacrament for the Sick

February 12: Abilene, St. Vincent - 7:00 p.m. Meet with Pastoral and Finance Councils

February 14: San Angelo, Holy Angels - 5:30 p.m. Diocesan Scout Awards Mass

February 15-17: Dallas, Annual Assembly and Board Meeting of

the Texas Conference of Churches

February 19: San Angelo, Catholic Outreach - Dedicate new building at 11:00 a.m. Sweetwater - Meeting with Pastoral and Finance Councils of Holy Family and Immaculate Heart parishes and missions at 7:00 p.m.

February 20: San Angelo, Christ the King Retreat Center - Natural Family Planning Workshop

February 21: San Angelo - Diocesan Conference Day at Convention Center

February 22: Eldorado, Our Lady of Guadalupe - Mass at 11:30 a.m. and meet with Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Councils after Mass

February 24: Colorado City, St. Ann - Meet with Pastoral and Finance Councils at 7:00 p.m.

February 26: Winters, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel - Meet with Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Councils

February 28: San Angelo, Sacred Heart - Catholic Schools Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.

February 29: San Angelo, Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart - Rite of Election at 1:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

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Vocation Circle

2004 Vocation Awareness Events

National Vocation Awareness
January 10-16, 2004

Seminarian Education Collection
January 24-25, 2004

World Day of Consecrated Life
February 7-8, 2004

Rite of Candidacy
Emilio Sosa, Ariel Lagunilla, and Ruben Covos
Assumption Seminary, Sunday, February 8, 2004

Live-in Weekend
Holy Trinity Seminary – Irving
February 12-15, 2004

Come-and-See Weekend
Assumption Seminary – San Antonio
February 28-29, 2004

Thinking of Priesthood
Come-and-See Diocese of San Angelo
Fr. Tom Barley & Fr. Jonathan Fassero, OSB
San Angelo – time and parish to be determined
Saturday, March 6, 2004

World Day of Prayer for Vocations
May 1-2, 2004

For more information, call Fr. Tom Barley at the Office for Vocations and Seminarians at (325) 651-7500.

Bishop Celebrates Christmas with Diocesan Seminarians



(Photo above, back row L to R) Fr. Bill DuBuisson, OMI, Fr. Hugh Wade, Bishop Michael Pfeifer, Fr. Tom Barley, Msgr. Larry Droll and Fr. Terry Brenon. (Front row L to R) Ruben Covos, Gilbert Martinez, Ariel Lagunilla, Emilio Sosa and Matthew Fenner. Ruben, Ariel and Emilio are third year Theology students at Assumption Seminary while Gilbert is a sophomore and Matthew is a freshman, both at Conception College.



(Photo to right) Margie Schillo (center) presents the Catholic Daughters Seminarian contribution to Emilio Sosa (left) and their contribution to the Diocesan Seminarian Burse to Fr. Tom Barley (right). (Photos by Peter Micale.)

Deacon Ernie Sanchez Retires After 27 Years of Service

by *Patty Ramos*

Deacon Ernie Sanchez, after 27 years of active diaconal ministry at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, is retiring. Ernie Sanchez has been a Martin County resident his entire life. He was born to Francisco and Maria Sanchez on October 20, 1923 in Stanton, TX. His immediate family includes five brothers and three sisters. In 1942, Ernie was drafted to the United States Army. A World War II Veteran, he served our country from 1942 through 1945. In December of 1947, he married Cruz Martinez. Together they have two

children, Jesus and Rosario and five grandchildren. Part of his employment history includes working for the construction company that began building Midland Memorial Hospital.

Ernie was ordained as a Deacon in August of 1976 by Bishop Stephen Leven after three years of diaconate studies. He was encouraged by Fr. Schmidt during his ten year involvement in the Cursillo Movement from 1963-1973 to take a step further on the ladder of his Evangelization by becoming a permanent deacon.

As St. Joseph's Catholic Church permanent deacon, Ernie says his most satisfying memories include baptizing the small children, many in emergency situations and to see the first child he baptized, Stephen Aguirre, now serving our country in the United States Army. He mentions that there are numerous accounts and fond memories to mention. The saddest moments he's encountered have been to see people die without their fulfilled sacraments, leaving Earth unprepared not knowing Jesus on a personal basis and to meet those who

are not close to God and do not realize that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

In addition, Deacon Ernie's comments on society are that the youth are overwhelmingly and widely influenced by the entertainment industry today that they have unfortunately lost touch with the importance of God in their lives. He's noticed that drugs have become a major player in the destruction of our youth as well. These changes became apparent to Deacon Ernie especially after World War II. When asked, "What would you do to help change the world today," Deacon Ernie replied: "I would like to see more Evangelization, more understanding of each other and follow the example of the

Pope who has traveled to many countries, speaking of peace."

Deacon Ernie would like to thank everyone: his wife, Cruz, for her continued support, especially Bishop Pfeifer, Fr. George, the other priests who have been here, all the organizations of the church, the community of Martin County, all community pastors, the American Legion, and the schools. Deacon Ernie Sanchez will greatly miss all his fellow deacons.

Deacon Ernie leaves our Catholic Community with these words in mind "Vivan de acuerdo con su sacramentos y iran por un buen camino." (Live out your sacraments on a daily basis and you will be following the right path)



RENEW - A Call For Parish Spiritual Renewal And An Evangelization Process

by Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

After much study and preparation, our diocese has adopted RENEW as a means of spiritual renewal and to strengthen the faith of the local communities and to prepare our people better for evangelization. RENEW involves all the people of a parish, giving them the opportunity of a lifetime to reflect together on subjects of most importance for the lives of people of all ages.

RENEW stresses the search for meaning in our lives, strengthening our relationship with Christ, the need for strong families and supportive relationships, and the importance of belonging to a community.

One of the special beauties of RENEW is the fact that it is conducted and directed by the people of our parishes. Over the past few months, leaders from the parishes

who have adopted RENEW have been prepared and trained to lead this spiritual process.

RENEW is designed to allow Catholics to strengthen their individual relationship to God, to increase Mass attendance, and to instill a greater desire among Catholics to volunteer within their parishes. RENEW coordinators form the parishioners into small groups, forming a community. During sharing sessions, groups examine five themes through prayer, readings and reflections.

The themes reflect suggestions by Pope John Paul II, including "God: A Community of love", "Conversion", "Reaching out", "Reconciliation" and "Renewing for the 21st Century." To carry out the RENEW experience, parish leaders receive training to implement the process into their individual parishes. The Holy Spirit is the guiding light and inspiration

and brings about renewal in other parishioners through selected leaders of the parish.

According to RENEW INTERNATIONAL, over the past 25 years, more than 150 U. S. dioceses and 22 countries have experienced a rich faith and a stronger sense of community in their parishes by implementing the RENEW process. RENEW literally renews the faith of people, and inspires them to launch out as evangelizers to the wider community.

Fifty-one per cent of the parishes of our diocese have entered into the RENEW process. I strongly support this experience, and would encourage other parishes to take part in this beautiful renewal process that deepens the faith of our people, and puts them on fire with love for one another, and inspires them to give witness and service to other people of the community.

World Marriage Day

("Love One Another")

by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

World Marriage Day (WMD), sponsored by World Wide Marriage Encounter, is to celebrate this year on February 8, 2004. World Marriage Day honors husbands and wives as head of the family, the basic unit of society. It salutes the beauty of their faithfulness, sacrifice and joy in daily married life.

The idea of celebrating marriage began in Baton Rouge, La., in 1981, when couples encouraged the mayor, the governor and the Bishop to proclaim St. Valentines Day as "We Believe in Marriage Day". The event was so successful, the idea was presented to and adopted by Worldwide Marriage Encounter's national leadership.

By 1982, 43 Governors officially proclaimed the day and celebrations spread to U.S. military

bases in several foreign countries. In 1983, the name was changed to "World Marriage Day", designated to be celebrated each year on the second Sunday in February. In 1993, his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, imparted his Apostolic Blessings on World Marriage Day. WMD celebrations continue to grow and spread to more countries and faith expressions every year.

The Theme for WMD has been permanently adopted as "Love One Another". This phrase is the commandment given us by Jesus in John 14. It speaks to us in a simple but challenging way of how our Father wishes us to live. Loving one another is a daily decision simple, but challenging.

The symbol of World Marriage Day speaks readily of the role and values of marriage as intended by

God. Husband and wife are symbolically seen as two candlelike figures, reminding us that married love calls us to help enlighten the world. The couple is joined by a heart, focusing on love as the power that fosters unity within the couple and generates the capacity to be life-giving and inspire others to fruitfulness and unity.

As we celebrate World Marriage Day, I encourage that special prayers be offered for married people and for family life, and that we include a special intention in the prayer of intercession at our Masses. I thank all of our married people for the beautiful example they give of living their commitment, and ask God's abundant blessings upon them.

A Prayer for Priests

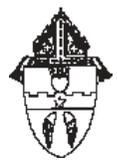
by Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

My Sisters and Brothers of the Diocese of San Angelo: Below is a prayer that I ask you to pray each day for our priests. These are difficult times for our priests, and more than ever we need to pray for them and support them. And, we need to pray for our seminarians and for more vocations to priesthood, religious life, the diaconate, as we support our generous lay ministers.

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

*Keep them, I pray Thee, dearest Lord,
 Keep them, for they are Thine -
 Thy priests whose lives burn out before
 Thy consecrated shrine.
 Keep them for they are in the world
 Though from the world apart,
 When earthly pleasures tempt, allure,
 Shelter them in Thy heart.
 Keep them, and comfort them in hours
 Of loneliness and pain
 When all their life of sacrifice
 For souls seems but in vain.
 Keep them, and O remember Lord
 They have no one but Thee
 Yet they have only human hearts,
 With human frailty.
 Keep them as spotless as the Host,
 That daily, they caress -
 Their every thought and word and deed,
 Deign, dearest Lord to bless.*

Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel



Diocese of San Angelo
 www.san-angelo-diocese.org

Report concerns or questions to Victim Assistance Coordinator:
 Confidential: 325-651-7500 FAX: 325-651-6688
 mikedosa@aol.com
 Report abuse of minors to: State of Texas 800-252-5400



Diocesan Conference Day

February 21, 2004

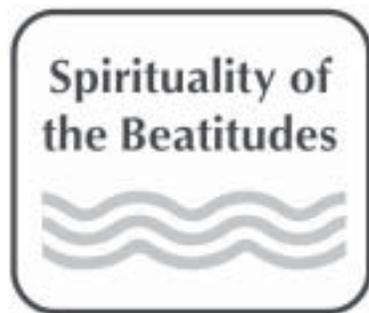
by Office of Education and Formation

Theme: Spirituality of the Beatitudes

Utilizing a prayerful commingling of Scripture, reflection, story, activity, sharing and song, participants will be led on a journey through the Beatitudes contained in Matthew 5: 1-12.

The Beatitudes go hand in hand with the Commandments as rules for life. They reiterate the essence of who we are and to whom we belong illustrate how we are to "love the Lord our God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, our whole strength and our whole being;" underscore and highlight how we are to "love our neighbor as ourselves."

Using the Beatitudes as our compass, may we successfully navigate the river of life, traveling to-



gether as sons and daughters of God.

Speakers: Bonnie & Maurice Abadie

Bonnie is currently serving her eleventh year as the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Center in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, her eighteenth as member of the staff of this agency. A native San Antonian with Louisiana roots, Bonnie is a graduate of Our Lady of the Lake University and Oblate School of Theology.

Maurice is currently in his thirtieth year of service to St. Gerard Catholic High School in San Antonio. He is in his fourth year as President having completed fourteen years as Principal and twelve as teacher. A native of New Orleans, Maurice was educated by the Redemptorist Fathers from high school through graduate school. Maurice and Bonnie have been married for sixteen years and enjoy sharing their gifts with the community of faith.

For further information, contact Vivian Book at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, (325) 651-7500.

The Challenges and Joys of Diaconate Training

by Chano Sotelo, Candidate for Diaconate

In the beginning of my diaconate journey, I could not begin to image the many challenges and joys that I would be facing in discerning God's movement in my life. Some of these challenges are, driving to San Angelo monthly and leaving my young boys with family. During my time in the diaconate, two of our deaconate leaders have had cancer. We lost one of them to his treatment for the disease. Our studies and daily prayers will help us in coming to an understanding of God's movement in our lives with Christ.

Driving to San Angelo to study basic formation for two years and during that time 4 years of deaconal training does take a toll on a vehicle by the time I finished my studies we will have put approximately 7,200 miles on a 1988 Honda Ac-

cord with 200,000 miles on it already. This little car has made a commitment just as our leaders in our deaconal studies; even through their own hardships even two of our deaconal leaders have had cancer. Deacon Odie Saldivar has been called to our Lord's side and Fr. Tom Kelley who has struggled with his bone cancer, but is doing well. Deacon Tim Graham who has an injured shoulder also presses on in maintaining a structured weekend for studies.

Our studies consist of studies of the beginning of our faith to the end of our last rites among other things. My favorite studies are the four gospels, Matthew, Mark Luke, and John. The parables bring God into daily life of a Christian in search of Christ. Christian Prayer: Liturgy of the hours helps us to focus on a structured prayer life. Knowledge of our faith is impor-



Chano Sotelo, a candidate for Diaconate at Our Lady of San Juan, Midland.

tant so we can come to an understanding of God's movement in our lives. We will always have struggles in our lives but God has given us the choice to turn away or to face forward and be strengthened by them. God has given me a very used car and the knowledge to keep it in good working order to carry us in our deaconal Journey. The leaders, one in heaven to be our intercessor (Deacon Odie Saldivar) and Father Kelley and Deacon Tim Graham for shaping us with the potters hands with grace and knowledge of God's love for us.

Ethics and Integrity Workshop Dates

Deanery	Place	Date	Time
Abilene	Holy Family, Abilene	Jan. 24, 2004	10:00am-1:00pm (Eng)
	Holy Family, Sweetwater	Jan 29, 2004	7:00-10:00pm (Eng/Span)
	Holy Family, Sweetwater	Feb 19, 2004	7:00-10:00pm (Eng)
	Holy Family, Abilene	Feb 23, 2004	7:00-10:00pm (Eng/Span)
	Holy Family, Sweetwater	Mar 18, 2004	7:00-10:00pm (Eng)
	Holy Family, Abilene	Mar 27, 2004	9:00am-12:00pm (Eng/Span)
Midland/Odessa	St. Mary, Odessa	Jan. 10, 2004	10:00am-1:00pm (Eng/Span)
San Angelo	St. Ann, Sonora	Jan 12, 2004	7:00-10:00pm (Eng)
	Holy Angels, San Angelo	Feb. 16, 2004	6:30-9:30pm (Eng/Span)
	Sacred Heart, San Angelo	Mar. 8, 2004	6:30-9:30pm (Eng/Span)

SUSPENSION from page one

person who is sick with the flu can spread viruses - that means they are contagious. Adults may be contagious from 1 day before developing symptoms to up to 7 days after getting sick. Children can be contagious for longer than 7 days."

5. How can the spread of the influenza virus be prevented? While the single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each fall, the CDC recommends these other ways to prevent the flu: "Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too; stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness; cover your mouth and nose. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick; clean your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs; avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. What has the Church done in localities where the outbreak of influenza is most significant? In those localities where the outbreak of the disease has been the most significant, Bishops have introduced several liturgical adaptations in regard to such practices as the distribution of Holy Communion and the exchange of the Sign of Peace in order to limit the spread

of contagion.

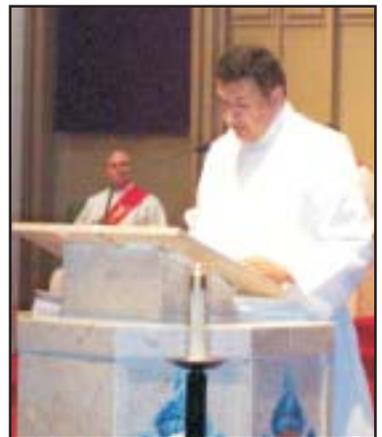
7. What measures should be taken in Roman Catholic liturgies in the United States of America? Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be especially reminded of the need to practice good hygiene. Ministers of Holy Communion should be encouraged to wash their hands before Mass begins, or even to use an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before distributing Holy Communion.

8. What about further adaptations or the restriction of options at Mass? The Diocesan Bishop should always be consulted regarding any changes or restriction of options in the celebration of Roman Catholic Liturgy. While in some heavily affected locales, Bishops have introduced extraordinary measures after seeking the advice of local medical experts, the need for the introduction of widespread liturgical adaptations for the prevention of the transmission of influenza in the dioceses of the United States of America has not been indicated by the CDC at this time.

9. What is the Secretariat for the Liturgy doing to address this question? The Secretariat will continue to closely monitor the situation and provide the best advice possible to Diocesan Bishops and their Offices for Worship. The Secretariat likewise appreciates whatever information Diocesan Offices for Worship are able to provide concerning local conditions and the pastoral responses developed by Diocesan Bishops. Continuously updated information is available from the Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.



Bishop Appoints New Lectors and Acolytes



Diaconal Candidate Alex Sosa proclaims the First Reading.



(Above) Diaconal Candidate Harry Peltó receives his copy of Holy Scripture as he receives the ministry of Lector.

On Saturday, December 13 Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI advanced 27 Diaconal Candidates into the formal ministries of Lector and Acolyte. The celebration was held at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart. Here the Bishop concelebrates the Mass with many priests of the Diocese on the Altar with the Diaconal Candidates (in white on front two rows) looking on. (Photos by Stephen Talley.)



(Left) Diaconal Candidate Victor Belman assisting with Eucharistic Distribution.



(Right) At the beginning of the celebration the Diaconal Candidates are called before the Bishop.

(Below) After Mass family and friends congratulate the new Lectors and Acolytes.

(Below) At the end of the celebration, Bishop Pfeifer prays for the intercession and help of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast was the previous day.





Odessa's Catholic School Hosts Special December Events

by Rev. Mark Woodruff

ODESSA – Students of St. Mary's School participated in two special events in December. The first, on December 9, was the annual Christmas Dinner Concert showcasing St. Mary's Strings, the school's 32-piece violin and cello orchestra. The concert was under the direction of Mrs. Muriel Hohstadt, who teaches music to the 4th through 6th graders.

The entire orchestra began the evening's program with "Immaculate Mary" and "Angels from the Realm of Glory." Soloists for the evening presented Christmas music: violinists Brian Scott, Rene Fierro, Kevin Orona, Justin Sanchez, Katie Keith, Laila Dar, Joshua Cortez, Joshua Reyes, David Bustillos, and Steven Ruiz and cellists Coraima Granado,

Samantha Marvin, Allie Matta, and Eddy Bello III.

The concert concluded with "The Whole World is Waiting for Love" by the Ensemble. The final selection was "Alleluia: to God be the Glory."

On Friday, Dec. 12 an all-grade Mass was held on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Father Mark Woodruff was the main celebrant, and Father Thomas Vempela, CMI, concelebrated.

Jerimie L. Hernandez of Odessa's Mariachi Armonia presented authentic mariachi music. Hernandez led the children in singing many of the traditional Guadalupana hymns in Spanish as well as Mass parts in English. An especially beautifully decorated image of the Virgin of Guadalupe stood near the altar during the Mass.

Students of St. Mary's Strings take a bow at this annual Christmas concert. Thirty-two students play violin or cello under the direction of Mrs. Muriel Hohstadt. (Photo by Fr. Mark Woodruff.)



Jerimie Hernandez of Mariachi Armonia (center) and some of the children who attended a Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe honor "la Virgin Morena" with Fr. Mark, celebrant of the Mass. (Photo by Karen Price.)

Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration Held at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart



On the evening of December 12 a celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe was held at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart. (Left) The celebration started with an outdoor procession of the faithful, led by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus honor guard and the Guadalupana Indian Dancers. (Right) Before Mass the Indian Dancers gave a highly percussive and energetic dance demonstration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. (Photos by Stephen Talley.)



It Still Matters

by Msgr. Jim Lisante, *The Christophers*

National holidays are hard to dislike. But some of my friends have a difficulty with the one we celebrate this year on January 19th. That's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, set aside to remember the nonviolent contributions that the Baptist minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner made to the battle for civil rights. My friends acknowledge that he was a great man who made a difference for the good. They are not callous to Dr. King's sacrifices, including his death at the hands of an avowed racist. They simply don't want to rehash history. They see the battle for civil rights as settled and Martin Luther King Day as superfluous. Said one fellow: "That's stuff from the 1960s with no particular meaning any more. Everyone enjoys equal rights today."

I know a man who begs to differ. His name is Gregory Allen Howard. He's a screenwriter and an African American. After winning a Christopher Award for his powerful movie *Remember the Titans*, he

agreed to be interviewed for our television series, *Christopher Closeup*. I mentioned the scenes in the movie that highlighted racial bigotry and asked about his experiences. Howard said that he had personally known the sting of prejudice many times. In particular, he recounted the humiliating incidents of being stopped while driving his car in Los Angeles. He'd done nothing wrong. Wasn't speeding. Hadn't rolled past a stop sign. But he was a black man driving through a wealthy white neighborhood. And that was enough for him to be interrogated. It's the reason he left L.A. and moved to Alexandria, Virginia, a city he sees as both integrated and harmonious.

It's important to mention that Gregory Allen Howard didn't experience this racial harassment back in the 60's. The incidents are recent. Truth told, I had never, until that interview, imagined what it would be like to be stopped for having a different skin color. I've been stopped by police while driving, but it's usually for mistakes I made. Being singled out by race

should be beyond imagining. Except that it isn't. It happens every day.

Yet few of us readily admit prejudices. One of my parishioners told me as much. Her name is Edna. She's eighty-five years old and is white. She was coming out of church recently and looked troubled. I asked her why. "I saw your show with Gregory Allen Howard the other night." "That's good," I answered. "Well, it bothered me," she continued. "That story he told about the many times he was stopped by police officers. It made me uncomfortable and angry." She went on to admit something she'd avoided saying for the first eighty-five years of her life: "I'd hate to be given a hard time for no good reason. And someone's color is just no good reason. For the first time I tried to put myself in that man's place. And, Father Jim, it made me so mad to think that any person could be treated that way. It's just not worthy of us as Americans. It's just not something I imagine God would ever want." I thanked her for her thoughts and I smiled as I watched her make her way down the church stairs.

This woman had finally understood that we are all entitled to be treated fairly and equally. And she found in her anger that she didn't like an America that wasn't able to realize that. It's an anger she shared with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gregory Allen Howard. It's an anger that is filled with justice. And it's the reason we need to set aside the third Monday in January, if only to remind us that we have not, as yet, truly overcome our bias, our prejudices, our bigotry and our fear of people just because they're different.

This year, let's ask ourselves: Am I a person who sees those of a different color as less significant? Or do I really see every person, equally, as a child of the Creator? Am I willing to uphold God's sense of justice?

Let's follow Edna's footsteps and place ourselves in the shoes of someone who has felt bigotry. That's the first step to purging our hearts of this sin which keeps us from being whole and holy.

News Briefs

by Catholic News Service

World News

Celebrating Christmas, Pope Leads Prayers for Peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Presiding over Christmas celebrations at the Vatican, Pope John Paul II pleaded against war and terrorism and urged the world to accept Jesus' message of peace. At his annual midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica early on Dec. 25, the pope lamented that "too much blood is still being shed" across the globe. In a Christmas Day blessing some 12 hours later, he invoked Christ's help in overcoming wars and "the scourge of terrorism" at the start of the third millennium. The 83-year-old pontiff looked alert and spoke in a relatively strong voice during the Christmas ceremonies, which were attended by thousands of people in Rome and broadcast to millions of others in some 50 countries. The Vatican's Internet office opened a Christmas page on the Vatican Web site, www.vatican.va, making it possible for computer users to watch midnight Mass live or e-mail the pope a Christmas greeting at: john_paul_ii@vatican.va. Despite reported terrorist alarms in Rome, the papal events went off without a hitch under somewhat tighter security.

Pope Prays for Iranian Quake Victims, Asks Catholic Agencies to Help

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II prayed for victims of a deadly earthquake in southeastern Iran and urged Catholic agencies to join in the humanitarian relief effort. Authorities said that at least 30,000 people were confirmed dead and thousands more injured in the quake, which struck an area around the ancient city of Bam on Dec. 26, burying many people in their mud-brick homes. The pope sent his own contribution to the relief operations through the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum," the Vatican's umbrella charity organization. The Vatican did not specify the amount of the papal donation. Speaking at a noon blessing on Dec. 28, the pope asked for prayers for all the inhabitants of the area. "We entrust to the merciful God the thousands of people who have lost their lives, as well as the wounded and the homeless survivors in need of help," he said.

Vatican Ambassador Dies After Being Shot in The Head in Burundi

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — "With deepest sadness and dismay," the Vatican confirmed the death of its ambassador to Burundi, Irish Archbishop Michael A. Courtney, who was shot while on the road to the nation's capital. The nuncio had been hospitalized in serious condition after being hit by three bullets during a Dec. 29 ambush, the Rome-based MISNA news agency said. Upon learning of the archbishop's death, Pope John Paul II immediately went to pray, "entrusting to Christ, the good shepherd, the soul of this faithful and generous servant of the church and the Holy See who died in the exercise of the difficult mission entrusted to him," according to a Vatican statement. The pope sent his condolences to Archbishop Courtney's family, the Vatican said. One of the bullets hit the 58-year-old archbishop in the head, said MISNA, an agency sponsored by Catholic missionary orders. He died later in the day in the operating room of a hospital where doctors were trying to stop a hemorrhage.

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Bishops Call Massachusetts Same-Sex Decision A 'National Tragedy'

by Catholic News Service

BOSTON (CNS)—A recent Massachusetts court decision clearing the way for same-sex marriages is a "national tragedy" that will violate the rights of "generations to come" unless it is reversed, the Catholic bishops of Massachusetts said in a joint statement.

"Changing the definition of marriage in the long run will seriously harm family life," said the statement read at all Masses celebrated in the four dioceses of Massachusetts Nov. 29 and 30.

The bishops said the justices who voted with the majority in the 4-3 decision "have set the stage to erode even further the institution of marriage as a human reality which the state should protect and strengthen for the good of society."

Signing the statement were Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley of Boston and Bishops Daniel P. Reilly of Worcester, Thomas L. Dupre of

Springfield and George W. Coleman of Fall River.

In its Nov. 18 ruling in the case of Goodridge vs. Department of Public Health, Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court said that "barring an individual from the protections, benefits and obligations of civil marriage solely because that person would marry a person of the same sex violates the Massachusetts Constitution."

The court stayed the opinion for 180 days "to permit the Legislature to take such action as it may deem appropriate in light of this opinion."

But the Massachusetts bishops called that time frame "a sure formula for chaos."

"It denies the citizens of Massachusetts any real opportunity to respond reasonably," they said. "Every effort must be made to extend the stay beyond the 180 days mandated by the court."

The bishops said the ultimate solution is "a constitutional amendment that reaffirms marriage as the union between one man and one woman," as has already been enacted in 37 other states.

The statement called on Catholics to contact the governor and state legislators "to urge them to find a way to give our citizens more time to deal with this issue."

The bishops rejected moves "to promote divisions in society by villainizing as bigotry the legitimate defense of thousands of years of tradition."

"It is not the intention of the Catholic community to infringe on the civil rights of homosexuals or anyone else," they said. "Our opposition to a redefinition of marriage is to safeguard the institution of marriage for future generations. . . . The generations to come are the ones whose rights are being violated by the court."

Vermont Medical Society Praised for Opposition to Laws on Euthanasia

BURLINGTON, Vt. (CNS) — Burlington Bishop Kenneth A. Angell expressed "relief, approval and gratitude" after the council of the Vermont Medical Society voted to oppose any laws concerning physician-assisted suicide in its future testimony before the Vermont Legislature. "I am indeed thankful for their ethical, moral and spiritual soundness which preserves the special bond of trust with their patients," the bishop said. Paul Harrington, executive vice president of the society, said the council's decision makes clear that the organization "continues to believe there should be no laws concerning physician-assisted suicide and that the society in no way endorses euthanasia." He added, "As a result of the action,

this policy supersedes any contradictory earlier VMS policy on physician-assisted suicide and settles any lingering confusion." The society maintains its position of opposing any law either banning or permitting physician-assisted suicide.

Former Anglican Priest Ordained Catholic Priest in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Archbishop William J. Levada of San Francisco ordained Father James Livingstone, a married former Anglican priest, to the Catholic priesthood Dec. 20. "He is the first such married man to be ordained a priest for the archdiocese," the archbishop said. Father Livingstone was ordained in the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1975, and has served in teaching, prison ministry and parish ministry. He was a

pastor of U.S. Episcopal congregations in New Hampshire and South Carolina before he moved to San Mateo, Calif., in 1990. He headed an Episcopal congregation there until he made his profession of faith as a Roman Catholic. "Since 1998, when he first petitioned me to consider him for Catholic ordination, he has been patiently pursuing a review of Catholic theology and practice with private tutors," Archbishop Levada wrote Dec. 5 in a column announcing the ordination in his archdiocesan newspaper, Catholic San Francisco.

POPE

from page one

world, save us!

3. Save us from the great evils which rend humanity in these first years of the third millennium. Save us from the wars and armed conflicts which lay waste whole areas of the world, from the scourge of

The VII Regional Catholic Charismatic Conference

will be held Feb. 21-22
at the Henry B. Gonzalez
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in San Antonio, TX.

Registration is \$25 for adults
and \$10 for youth
for 2 days of praise and worship.
For registration, call the Catholic Center for
Charismatic Renewal at (210) 226-7545.

E-mail: ccrsat@aol.com

Website: CCCRsa.org

... learn from me. (mt 11, 29)

Speakers

Rev. Richard M. Thomas

Ralph Martin

Pbro. Luis Alfonso Zepeda

Silvia Mertins

Youth Explosion

Journey and the Tribe of Judah

Cindy Erivez

terrorism and from the many forms of violence which assail the weak and the vulnerable. Save us from discouragement as we face the paths to peace, difficult paths indeed, yet possible and therefore necessary; paths which are always and everywhere urgent, especially in the land where you were born, the Prince of Peace.

4. And you, Mary, the virgin of expectation and fulfillment, who hold the secret of Christmas, make us able to recognize in the child whom you hold in your arms the heralded Savior, who brings hope and peace to all. With you we worship him and trustingly say: we need you, Redeemer of man, you who knows the hopes and fears of our hearts. Come and stay with us, Lord! May the joy of your Nativity reach to the farthest ends of the universe!

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Intentions Of The Holy Father For January

General – That all men and women may recognize that they are members of God's one family and end wars, injustice and discrimination among themselves.

Mission – That every mission Church may engage itself in the training of apostolic personnel.

EMBRIÓN from page two

todos nosotros, comenzó como un embrión. La primera venida de Jesús no fue en el pesebre sino en el seno de María. Por nueve meses antes de su nacimiento Jesús ya comenzó a cumplir el plan de salvación del Padre. María, al estar embarazada con el hijo de Dios, demuestra que el amor de Dios no comenzó en el nacimiento sino en la concepción de Cristo en el vientre de María.

Jesucristo el Hijo verdadero de Dios -el Dios hecho hombre- fue un tiempo un niño aun no nacido. Es por esta misma razón que proclamamos que cada niño aun no nacido está unida con Dios a través de Cristo. Este pensamiento y enseñanza está enfatizado en las palabras del Segundo Concilio Vaticano: "Por su encarnación, Jesús, el hijo de Dios se ha unido a si mismo con cada ser humano". Por esta razón cada niño no nacido, como Cristo, merece nuestro amor, nuestro respeto, y nuestra protección.

Al escuchar todas estas confirmaciones acerca de lo sagrado y de la dignidad de los aun no nacidos en las Sagradas Escrituras, nos preguntamos: ¿Cómo puede una Corte humana negar la personalidad de un no nacido, aun, y dar el derecho de matar a estos pequeños en cualquier etapa del embarazo? Y a la luz de la Palabra de Dios también nos preguntamos ¿Puede acaso cualquier cristiano aprobar la muerte de los inocentes preciosos de Dios en cualquier clínica abortiva? Gracias a Dios que recientemente nuestro Presidente ha aprobado la prohibición de la práctica brutal y bárbara del aborto parcial-nacimiento.

La vida humana es el primer don de Dios Padre, y la condición de todos los derechos y bienes terrenos. Sabemos que ningún gobierno o corte humana pueden legítimamente negar el derecho a la vida o restringirla a ciertas clases de seres humanos. Por consiguiente la

decisión de la Suprema Corte acerca del aborto merece ser solamente condenada, repudiada y revertida.

Los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos en su reunión en Noviembre, 2001, reafirmaron y aprobaron un "Plan Pastoral de Actividades en Favor de la Vida: Una Campaña en apoyo a la vida". En este documento espléndido los obispos, como pastores maestros, proclaman que la vida humana, en cualquier estado de vida, es un don precioso de Dios, y que cada persona que recibe este don tiene responsabilidades con Dios, con uno mismo, y con los demás. Los obispos enfatizan que la sociedad, a través de las leyes y las instituciones sociales, debe proteger y alimentar la vida humana en cualquier estado de su existencia. En esto documento, los obispos enseñan que nosotros debemos de tener una Ética de vida consistente, que explique las enseñanzas de la Iglesia en el nivel del principio moral que se aplica a toda la vida humana en todos sus etapas. Los obispos dicen que "la oposición al aborto y a la eutanasia no disculpan la indiferencia de aquellos que sufren de la pobreza, la violencia o la injusticia. Cualquier política de la vida humana debe de trabajar para resistir la violencia de la guerra y el escándalo de la pena capital. Cualquier política de la dignidad humana debe de confrontar seriamente el racismo, la pobreza, el hambre, el empleo, la educación, la vivienda y la salud.

Fue de gran ánimo, para todos aquellos que están a favor de la vida, el recibir hace unos meses la decisión de la Suprema Corte de que a los retardados mentales no se les debe aplicar la pena de muerte. También nos anima el oír que solo los jurados, no los jueces, pueden imponer la pena de muerte.

Entre todas las cuestiones de la vida, el aborto es la cuestión más prominente de los derechos humanos. Esto lo decimos porque el derecho de la vida es el más fundamental de todos los derechos. Y cualquier candidato a la política, o cualquier institución pública

debe ser evaluada sobre todo en el impacto que ese candidato o institución pública tiene hacia la vida humana y la dignidad de la persona humana, desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural, como está determinado por Dios.

Comparto aquí con ustedes algunas palabras de Norma McCorvey que fue la anterior JANE ROE de la decisión de la Corte Suprema, ROE VS. WADE. Norma fue la que postuló-niño por elección y presentó la legislación del aborto antes de su conversión al cristianismo. Norma dijo: "Yo confío, como ustedes saben, y soy ahora pro-vida, a favor de la vida, y trabajo a tiempo completo para extinguir el aborto. Mi ministerio es llamado propiamente "No Más Roe". Muchos me preguntan que si es difícil de llevar día al día la carga de haber sido la demandante del caso ROE VS. WADE. De hecho la carga era más pesada cuando yo era Pro-elección. En aquel entonces yo estaba contrarecida, dividida, derprimida y consciente de que ROE VS. WADE no me había ayudado a mí ni estaba ayudando a nadie más. Ahora, sin embargo, el Señor Jesucristo no solamente me ha dado el perdón, sino también el gozo y la paz que vienen del conocer y luchar por lo que es bueno".

En 1995, Norma fue bautizada y entregó su vida a Dios. El camino de Fe de Norma eventualmente la llevó a su casa, como lo describe ella, a la Iglesia Católica Romana en la que fue recibida en 1998. Norma ha comentado recientemente que en lugar de apoyar organizaciones tales como la Planned Parenthood con dinero de contribuyentes, debemos de apoyar Centros locales de crisis de embarazo que proveen a las mujeres con opciones diferentes a las de matar a los niños.

La decisión de la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos de 1973 quita toda protección legal para los seres humanos antes de su nacimiento. El legado desolador de "ROE VS. WADE" ha dejado muerte, dolor y confusión. Desde la decisión ROE VS. WADE más de 40 millones de bebés han sido destruidos antes de su nacimiento, e incluso durante su proceso de nacimiento-llamado Aborto Parcial-Nacimiento.

Y mientras enfrentamos la cuestión crítica del aborto nos encontramos ahora con otro semejante Mal, el de la "clonación reproductiva" y la "clonación terapéutica". Nunca es permitido matar a una vida humana inocente, incluso aunque esta sea hecha por la causa noble de curar la enferme-

This is the watch Stephen Hollingshead, Jr. was wearing when he encountered a drunk driver. Time of death 6:55 pm.

Este es el reloj que llevaba puesto Stephen Hollingshead, Jr. cuando se encontró con un chofer borracho. Murió a las 6:55 pm.

Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk.

Amigos No Dejan Que Amigos Manejen Borrachos.



dad de otra persona. La distinción entre estos dos tipos de clonación es una distinción biotécnica sin una diferencia moral; los dos son una manipulación crasa de la dignidad intrínseca de la vida humana, mientras que la segunda es más repulsiva.

- Ayudar a los padres de familia a ejercitar su derecho de educar a sus hijos con un amor casto y fiel en la familia;

Nosotros como cristianos, como seguidores de Jesús, debemos siempre de proclamar que somos pro-vida, a favor de la vida, en cada etapa de la vida. Debemos de dar especial énfasis al comienzo de la vida humana. Nuestra respuesta a la tragedia terrible y espantosa del aborto debe ser múltiple:

- Proveer una mayor apoyo a la gente joven en sus actividades a favor de la vida y proyectos educadores.

- Enseñar la verdad acerca de la persona humana y la dignidad innata y los derechos de todos los seres humanos;

- Orar con perseverancia y oración confiada. Orar como familia para que se acabe el mal del aborto que destruye a los más débiles de entre los débiles, los más pobres de entre los pobres. Sin la ayuda de Dios nunca podremos acabar con el mal de aborto.

- Promover los esfuerzos para restaurar en todas partes una protección legal fuerte y vigorosa por el derecho de la vida de los no nacidos, personas deshabilitadas, y de los ancianos;

En la hermosa escena evangélica de la visitación de María a su pariente Isabel, no solamente escuchamos la fe y la alegría de estas dos grandes mujeres, sino también escuchamos la acción recíproca de los dos bebés aun no nacidos en el seno de sus madres -"En el momento en el que tu saludo llegó a mis oídos el niño salto de gozo en mi seno". Isabel proclamó "Bendito el fruto del vientre, María." El fruto solamente tenía unos cuantos días. Como toda la vida humana proviene de Dios, nosotros proclamamos con Isabel que el fruto del vientre de cada mujer - que es ya una persona humana - es Bendito y precioso porque esa vida aun no nacida es hecha en la verdadera imagen y semejanza de Dios.

- Formar una solidaridad mayor - en una manera moral, emocional, médica, sana - con las mujeres que están con la presión de tener un aborto, apoyar los servicios para mujeres embarazadas y proveer un cuidado compasivo para los mujeres que han tenido abortos;

- Educar a los padres a asumir su responsabilidad apoyando a las madres que llevan consigo una nueva vida;



**EMBRYO****from page two**

and we recall that Jesus did not come into our world as a fully formed baby. Like all of us, he began as an embryo. The first coming of Jesus did not begin in a manger, but in the womb of Mary. For nine months prior to his birth, Jesus was already carrying out his Father's plan of salvation. Mary, being pregnant with the Son of God, shows that God's love did not begin at birth, but at the conception of Christ in the womb of Mary.

Jesus Christ, the very Son of God - the Man-God - was once an unborn child. It is for this reason that we state that every unborn child is united through Christ with God. This thought and teaching is stressed in the words of the second Vatican Council: "By his incarnation - that Jesus - the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being: for this reason, every unborn child, like the unborn Christ, deserves our love, our respect, and our protection."

As we hear these confirmations from sacred scripture about the sacredness and dignity of the unborn, we ask ourselves: how could a human court deny the personhood of the unborn, and give the right to kill these little ones at any stage of pregnancy? In light of God's word, we also ask: can any Christian approve of the killing of God's precious innocents at any abortion clinic? Thank God that recently our president has approved the ban of the brutal and barbaric practice of partial-birth abortions.

Human life is our first gift from God the Father, and the condition for all earthly goods and rights. We know that no human government, or court, can legitimately deny the right to life or restrict it to certain classes of human beings. Therefore, the Supreme Court's abortion decision deserves only to be condemned, repudiated, and ultimately reversed.

At their meeting in November, 2001, the U.S. Catholic bishops reaffirmed and approved a "pastoral plan for pro-life activities: a campaign in support of life. In this splendid document, the bishops, as pastors and teachers, proclaim that human life, at every stage of life, is a precious gift from God, and that

each person who receives this gift has responsibilities toward God, self, and others. The bishops stress that society, through its laws and social institutions, must protect and nurture human life at every stage of its existence. In this document, the bishops teach that we must have a consistent ethic of life, which explains the church's teaching at the level of moral principle that applies to all human life in all of its stages. The bishops state that "opposing abortion and euthanasia does not excuse indifference to those who suffer from poverty, violence, and injustice. Any politics of human life must work to resist the violence of war and the scandal of capital punishment. Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing, and health care".

For pro-lifers it was very encouraging to receive a few months ago the decision of our Supreme Court that the mentally retarded not be given the death penalty. And, we were also encouraged to hear that only juries, not judges, could impose the death penalty.

Among life issues, abortion is the preeminent human rights issue. We say this, because the right to life is the most fundamental of all rights. And, any candidate for political office, or any public policy, is to be evaluated above all on how that candidate or public policy impacts human life and the dignity of the human person from conception until natural death, as determined by God.

I share with you here some words from Norma McCorvey who was the former Jane Roe of the Supreme Court's decision, Roe vs. Wade. Norma was the poster-child for choice and filed for the legislation of abortion before her conversion to Christianity. Norma says: "As I trust you know, I am now pro-life and work full-time to end abortion. My ministry is called, appropriately, 'Roe no more'. Many ask me whether the burden of having been the plaintiff in the Roe vs. Wade case is a heavy one to carry day by day. Actually, it was more of a burden when I was "pro-choice" than it is now. Back then, I was conflicted, torn apart, depressed, and aware that Roe vs. Wade had not helped me and wasn't helping any-

one else. Now, however, the Lord Jesus has given me not only forgiveness, but the joy and peace that comes from knowing and striving to do what is right."

In 1995, Norma was baptized and gave her life to God. Norma's faith journey eventually led her home, as she describes it, to the Roman Catholic Church into which she was received in 1998. Norma commented recently that instead of supporting organizations such as planned parenthood with taxpayer money, we should support local crisis pregnancy centers who provide women with options other than killing their children.

The 1973 Supreme Court decision of the United States removed every legal protection for human beings prior to birth. The bleak legacy of Roe vs. Wade, is one that has left in its wake death, sorrow, and turmoil. Since the Roe vs. Wade decision, more than 40 million babies have been destroyed before birth, and even during the very process of being born - called partial-birth abortion.

As we deal with the critical issue of abortion, now we are faced with another similar evil in human cloning. Presently, some scientists are talking about the distinction between "reproductive cloning" and "therapeutic cloning." It is never permissible to kill an innocent human life, even if this is done for the very noble cause of trying to cure the illness of someone else. The distinction between these two types of cloning is a biotechnical distinction without a moral difference; both are a

crass manipulation of the intrinsic dignity of human life, while the second is more repulsive.

As Christians, as followers of Christ, we must constantly proclaim that we are pro-life at every stage of life. We must give special emphasis to the beginning of human life, because without this respect, we lose respect for all other

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stages of human life. Our response to the terrible, shocking tragedy of abortion must be manifold:

—To teach the truth about the human person and the innate dignity and rights of all human beings;

—To promote efforts to restore everywhere strong and vigorous legal protection for the right to life of the unborn, disabled persons, and the elderly;

—To form greater solidarity - in a moral, emotional, medical health manner - with women who are under pressure to have an abortion, to support services for pregnant women and to provide compassionate care for women who have had abortions;

—To educate fathers to assume their responsibilities to support mothers who are the bearers of new life;

—To help parents to exercise their right to educate their children in chaste and faithful love in the family;

—To provide greater support for

young people in their pro-life activities and education projects;

—To pray, with persevering and trusting prayer. Pray as a family for an end to the evil of abortion that destroys the weakest of the weak, the poorest of the poor. Without god's help, we can never overcome the evil of abortion.

In the beautiful Gospel scene of Mary's visitation to her relative, Elizabeth, we not only hear about the joy and faith of these two great women, but we hear about the interaction of the two unborn in their mother's wombs "the moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby stirred in my womb for joy." Elizabeth proclaimed blessed be the fruit of Mary's womb. That fruit was only a few days old. As all human life comes from God, we proclaim with Elizabeth that the fruit of every woman's womb - who is a human person - is blessed and precious because that unborn life is made in the true image and likeness of God.

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Bishop Celebrates Christmas Mass for Angelo Catholic Children



Santa Claus made a surprise visit to the Cathedral. The Bishop holds baby Michael Abraham of Lt. Peter and Nora Axt, at the end of Mass.



Angelo Catholic School children comprised the choir for this special Mass celebrated by the Bishop for the school on Friday, December 19.



Santa gives out candy canes to the school children after Mass. (Photos by Pete Micale.)

RENEW Program Held at Newman Center



Newman Center Students in RENEW Program. (L to R) Front: Diana Mandujano, Melissa Cantu, Amy Saiz, Victor Hernandez. Middle: Felicitee Vasquez, Louis Solis, Lydia Martinez, Carmen Acevedo, Luke Burnett. Back: Tony Ramsey, Missy Garza. (Photo courtesy Newman Center.)

by Lydia Martinez
The first two weeks of RENEW have been a great experience. Having the opportunity to come together with a group of your peers and develop a faith-sharing community is awesome. During the first week, it took a little time to open

up but now the community is interacting more. It is very comforting to know that others may be feeling the same way you do. Hearing your classmates helps you to learn and to grow.
It is beneficial to have RENEW at the Newman Center, a place

where all the members of the community feel comfortable. Being led by peers also helps us work together. RENEW is like a personal growth group, Bible study, and a college class all wrapped up in 90 minutes.



Diver Spencer Slate dressed in a Santa Claus suit passes the Christ of the Deep statue in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Dec. 23. The 9-foot-tall bronze statue has rested in the waters about four miles off Key Largo since the mid-1960s. (CNS photo from Reuters)