

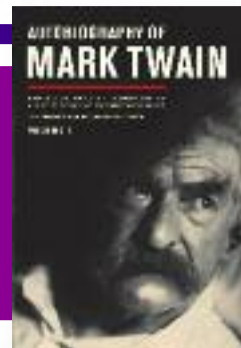
Defending the Church from attacks

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Parish of the Month from Jo'burg

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Was author Mark Twain anti-Christian?

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SA bishops declare May 'Family Month'

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

THE bishops of Southern Africa have declared May the focus month on family and life issues.

Toni Rowland, director of the Family Life Desk of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), said the bishops have called dioceses, parishes, groups, sodalities and families to become proactive for the promotion of family life.

"The initiative first came from the Johannesburg Culture of Life group who requested an anti-abortion/pro-life Sunday", said Ms Rowland. The bishops approved the month of May as a month for family and for life where issues affecting the family and life can be included. The month will incorporate a focus on abortion and similar issues.

May was chosen as most suitable for the focus as it includes important days, including Workers day on May 1, Mothers' Day on May 8, International Day of Families on May 15 as well as a public holiday on May 2 which the archdiocese of Johannesburg will celebrate as "Family Fun Day" through a host of events.

The SACBC Family Life Desk has offered some suggestions for days of action, prayer and celebration and is working with role-players around the country.

"At least one Sunday during the month can focus on life issues, for example culture of life, pro-life, natural family planning,

Theology of the Body and local initiatives," Mrs Rowland said.

She said Mothers' Day is an opportunity for mothers to be recognised for their worth. "Pray for and bless all mothers at home and in the parish. Fathers and children: love her and spoil her. Mothers: reflect on your important role in family life," Mrs Rowland said.

This year's theme for International Day of Families focuses on poverty. Mrs Rowland said families and prayer groups can take the opportunity to reflect, share, give and teach one another helping to "make poverty history", referring to the name of the international campaign answering the global call to end poverty.

"The commemoration is not only for those active in marriage and family support but is for the whole Church and also to celebrate the image of Church as Family and each family a domestic church, a sanctuary of life," Mrs Rowland said.

May will also see voters take to the polls in the local government elections on May 18. Mrs Rowland identified this as an opportunity for family members to be proactive in the governance of the area in which their families reside.

The Family and Life Desk is encouraging parishes and families to get involved. For more information visit www.marfam.org.za/blog or contact Johannesburg Culture of Life at 011 648 5860.

Pope Benedict a comic hero

AN American producer of manga comics has prepared a special edition comic featuring the story of Pope Benedict for World Youth Day, according to the WYD 2011 website.

Jonathan Lin and Manga Hero, a manga comic producer based in San Rafael, California, previously produced two biblical themed Manga comics, one on St Paul and another on Judith.

"The point of [this comic], titled *Habemus Papam*, is to introduce Pope Benedict XVI to those who may not know much about him, except that he is the leader of the Catholic Church," Mr Lin said.

"We are aiming to distribute the manga throughout Madrid to attendees of WYD and



the general public at locations such as churches, schools, hotels or hostels, metro stations, the airport, information kiosks, tourist attractions, and other event locations.

More than 300 000 copies are set to be printed in Spanish and English.—cathnews



Members of the Move The World expedition and the specially equipped vehicles that will take them to all of the world's inhabited continents. The team is led by philanthropist Joachim Franz (far left), a German Catholic. Also taking part is Fr Stefan Hippler (third from right and inset) of the anti-Aids project HOPE Cape Town. The expedition will set off from Vancouver, Canada, on April 19 and conclude in Australia 100 days and 65 000km later. It will come to South Africa in June. The initiative is designed to raise awareness and raise funds for five charities in five continents.

Priest goes on world tour

STAFF REPORTER

CAPE Town-based priest will set off on an expedition to raise awareness and funds for Aids project in five continents—among them the organisation he co-founded in South Africa.

Fr Stefan Hippler, who helped found HOPE Cape Town as a project of the local German-speaking Catholic Community, will be part of the "Move The World-Aids Awareness Expedition" which will kick off in Vancouver, Canada, on April 19, and travel through the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia before concluding some 100 days later in Australia.

The aim of the expedition is to promote Aids awareness, raise funds for Aids projects in five continents, and foster closer international cooperation and networking between organisations and activists in the field.

For Fr Hippler, the latest aspect is particularly important. "We don't tend to look beyond our own narrow circles to learn about what others are doing and experiencing," he said, adding that with greater international cooperation at an earlier stage, South Africa "would have been much further in the fight against HIV/Aids".

The organisers of the Move The World expedition have identified HOPE Cape Town as a "best practice" initiative, and adopted it as a reference organisation for the tour. This, said Fr Hippler, is an opportunity to "sensibly use resources" of experience and knowledge with other organisations in the field.

The most public component of the expedition is the fundraising. The organisers hope that 5 million people will donate one euro (or R10) each to support the five projects, including HOPE, in five continents.

Such fundraising is becoming increasingly necessary, said Fr Hippler, because governments are cutting their funding budgets. "We have to set a counterpoint to that."

Fr Hippler stressed that every cent raised will go to the charities. All the costs of the expedition are covered by sponsorship. Volks-wagen Nutzfahrzeuge, for example, made available five specially equipped Amorak vehicles.

"We will live in these cars," Fr Hippler said. "We will drive 16 hours a day, taking turns every two hours, and sleep for six hours."

He said the expedition is planned to the minute. "If we lose time somewhere, we'll

have to make that up from our sleeping schedule".

Members of the expedition will live on rehydrated foods and wash under makeshift outdoor showers.

"It will be a physical and mental challenge," the 50-year-old priest said.

Fr Hippler expects the experience to be life-changing, even if he has to leave the expedition when it comes to South Africa on June 16. That evening there will be a public encounter, probably in a Cape township.

As in other cities, there will be a round-table discussion (in Cape Town hosted by the German embassy) at which roleplayers will exchange ideas and experiences.

For Fr Hippler, a German who serves in South Africa as a *fidei donum* priest, the expedition is a form of mission.

"I find it encouraging that the Catholic Church is being asked to be involved in such a project. Today such a thing is no longer routine. It shows that we, as a Church, can be part of a project that talks about the things that concern us all. That's how I understand 'mission'."

Organiser Mr Franz is celebrating the tenth anniversary of his involvement in fundraising activities for projects and orphanages around the world—coincidentally, this year also marks HOPE's tenth birthday.

An extreme sports practitioner, Mr Franz has raised funds and awareness by climbing the highest mountains in 20 countries on a group expedition that stretched from Norway to Cape Town, cycling the Pan-American Highway's 23 000km in 36 days and crossing the Sahara on a mountain bike.

While on tour, Fr Hippler will keep a daily diary on his blog (stefanhippler.wordpress.com), which will include pictures and videos.

The Move the World initiative took three years to prepare, and it will go on for at least three years, Fr Hippler said. "There will be follow-up events, such as lectures and galas and so on."

The expedition will visit 53 countries, including 23 in Africa. In Southern Africa, it will reach South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola.

■ For more information, visit www.waae.de. South Africans can donate R10 to Move The World through HOPE Cape Town: Account number 07061551, Standard Bank (Cape Town branch). Mark donations "Move the World".

Subscribing has just become easier

STAFF REPORTER

THE *Southern Cross* can now accept Mastercard/Visa credit card payments from anywhere in the world to start or renew annual subscriptions for the print or digital edition of the newspaper, or to pay for classified advertisements, circulation and advertising accounts.

The system is absolutely secure, said business manager Pamela Davids.

"E-mail us your contact details—not the credit card number—and we will create what is called a PayBill," she explained. "The system then sends you an e-mail with a payment reference number and link that you can click in order to make payment to us. The URL opens up a secure payment page where you can enter your credit card details."

Once the payment is complete, *The*

Southern Cross will automatically receive an e-mail confirmation.

Those without e-mail access may phone *The Southern Cross* at 021 465 5007 or direct fax 086 515 2045 with their card details (number, plus 3 check digits—the last 3 numbers on the card's reverse—and expiry date).

"Please do not send credit card details by e-mail, because it is not secure," Ms Davids reiterated.

She said the new service would be particularly helpful for Catholics living outside South Africa who would like to subscribe to the digital edition of *The Southern Cross*, which looks exactly like the print edition, and becomes available every Wednesday morning.

■ For further information please contact Ms Davids on 021-465 5007 or admin@scross.co.za



Kayleigh Armstrong, Jody Tate, Grace Hammond and Alexa Msakiwe—all from Grade 4 at Springfield Convent, competed at the Inter-Catholic athletics meeting for primary schools at Bellville Velodrome in Cape Town in March. (Photo: Alan Hammond)

Inspiring those who truly serve the poor

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

CONGREGATION of the Mission Father Richard Benson visited the country during March where he addressed the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) and Southern Gauteng Central Council District in the archdiocese of Johannesburg.

Also known as a Vincentian, after St Vincent de Paul, Fr Benson spoke at several gatherings on Vincentian spirituality and how it could be put in place in the 21st century. He said it was a way to "encounter Christ in all our brothers and sisters".

Sue Glanville, the council's chairwoman, said it was a unique opportunity to meet one of the very few Vincentian Fathers worldwide. She said his trip would serve to "fan the flame of our special works in serving the poor".

Fr Benson spends his time working with groups working with the poor, such as those in Johannesburg. He also teaches. He was recently appointed first superior of his order's mission in Kenya.

Fr Benson spoke at workshops across the city, met with Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, appeared on Radio Veritas and addressed parishes, including Bryanston and St Joseph's and St Pius X in Soweto.

Fr Benson said the Vincentian vision aims to bring the Good News to the poor through joy and hope and said it was necessary to always see God in everyone and treat them with respect. "Let us love God but with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brow and let us live more simply so that others can simply live."

Ms Glanville said Fr Benson's message was "tremendously uplifting, inspirational and informa-



Members of the Southern Gauteng Central Council stand with Fr Richard Benson, a US Vincentian who visited South Africa to discuss Vincentian spirituality.

For more information on the SVP visit www.stvincentdepaul.co.za or request information from your parish.

Abortifacient birth control: Destroying new human life

BY STAF REPORTER

IN a talk given at a rally held in Johannesburg, pro-life activist Damien McLeish said that abortifacient birth control, the method most commonly used, can destroy new human life, and is thus a form of chemical abortion.

The retired attorney said: "As a result of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, most Catholics know that all forms of artificial birth control are forbidden by the Catholic Church, which includes both contraceptive and abortifacient birth controls.

"Contraceptive birth control prevents new life being formed and includes sterilisation, the use of condoms, diaphragms and cervical caps.

"Abortifacient birth control causes early abortion preventing continued existence within the

womb and includes use of the pill, intra-uterine device (IUD), Norplant, Depo Provera (an injection) and RU 486 drugs."

"The Pill," he said, "is probably the most insidious abortifacient as users usually intend contraception only, and are unaware of its abortive potential".

"Thus, while contraceptives prevent the actual creation of new human life in the womb, abortifacients in fact destroy this new life after its creation, and very few forms of artificial birth control are only contraceptive, and not also abortifacients in nature."

Mr McLeish said that he hoped to illustrate "especially to those persons using abortifacients in ignorance of their tragic results, the extremely serious consequences of abortifacient birth control generally".

Vatican documentary on TV

STAFF REPORTER

NEW documentary on the inner workings of the Vatican will premier on DSTV's National Geographic channel (260) on April 17 at 21:00.

In *Vatican: Life Within*, eight people who work within the confines of the Catholic Church's headquarters speak about their experiences. These include Cardi-

nal Angelo Comastri, archpriest of St Peter's basilica, one of the basilica's 16 altar boys, the head of the Vatican's Secret Archives, the Vatican's official photographer, and the man responsible for the pope's security.

Along the way, several myths and misconceptions are addressed. For example, Bishop Sergio Pagano explains that the term Secret Archives is an old-fashioned term

for "personal", not an indicator of concealment.

David Giuletti, the pope's security man, explains how he scans crowds for potential attackers, and official photographer Francesco Sforza shows how he prepares for the weekly papal audience on Wednesdays.

The documentary follows up National Geographic's 2002 documentary *Inside The Vatican*.

Catholic Holy Land Pilgrimage 18th - 29th August 2011 - with Fr Noel Rucastle



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Interfaith Easter service for Durban

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

THE Diakonia Council of Churches, of which the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference is a member, will host their traditional early morning Easter Good Friday Service on April 22 at the Durban Exhibition Centre from 5:15am.

The annual event is in its 26th year and will carry the theme "The Cross of Transformation".

According to publicist Illa Thompson, this year the Good Friday service will focus on grappling with the issue of transformation in South Africa.

The interfaith service will examine the state of transformation through the sermon, prayers, hymns, testimonials and liturgy, Ms Thompson said, adding that the sermon will be given by Rev Sue Britton from the Anglican parish of Pinetown.

The service is set to begin with an hour of meditative singing to begin at 5:15am at the Durban Exhibition Centre where the first part of the service will take place at 6:15am.

Ms Thompson said the congregation will then proceed through the streets of Durban in reflective silent witness. The service will conclude at approximately 8:15am on the steps of the City Hall with a flowered Cross—"an act of commitment by all present to work for improved environmental justice, proclaiming our belief as Christians that, no

matter how deep the suffering—through the Cross of Christ we will overcome".

Ms Thompson said arrangements had been made for transport back to the exhibition centre from the City Hall for the elderly and the infirm.

"Entry to the Good Friday service is free and all are most welcome to participate in this significant, multi-lingual Christian Easter event."

■ For more information contact the Diakonia Council of Churches on 031 310 3500



Executive director of the Diakonia Council of Churches, Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala, holds a cross representing the theme of this annual Good Friday service: The Cross of Transformation. (Photo: Val Adamson)

Head of Lebanese diaspora to visit SA

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

THE president of the World Lebanese Cultural Union, Eid Chedrawi, and his wife Haifa will visit the Lebanese Community in South Africa in May.

Mr Chedrawi represents the 12 million Lebanese around the world, the vast majority of whom are Christian. In South Africa, of the estimated 50 000 immigrants, about 90% are Maronite Catholics.

According to Ken Hanna, honorary project coordinator for the "People of the Cedars", which serves the Lebanese community in the country, the main purpose of the president's visit is to mobilise the community in South Africa towards interfaith cooperation.

The president is elected by a world body and serves a two-year term.

According to Mr Hanna, "there is a strong bond between the Greek Orthodox and Maronite Catholics, via blood ties, marriage, culture and tradition and culinary delights". Mr Hanna added the Lebanese community is made up predominantly of Maronite and Latin Rite Catholics as well as Greek Orthodox, Charismatic Christians and Islamic members.

"The Muslim, Christian cooperation in Lebanon has to be strong. Like two hands, they cannot clap with one hand. This, I believe, is the main purpose of Mr Chedrawi's visit: to mobilise the community in South Africa," said

Mr Hanna of the visiting president's intentions.

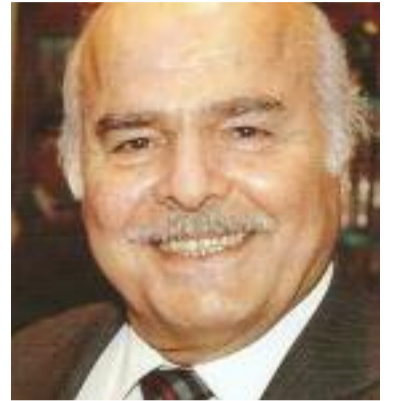
"His theme will be to stress the significance of the role of the Lebanese diaspora in securing a democratic, stable Lebanon," Mr Hanna said. He recalled Pope John Paul II's visit to Lebanon in 1998, where the pontiff said Lebanon was more than just a country but a message of hope in light of the close relations between the various faiths.

Mr Chedrawi will visit areas with a large concentration of Lebanese in South Africa. The largest Lebanese community is in Johannesburg where suburbs such as Victory Park have 200 registered families alone. He will also be visiting the small community in Cape Town and Klerksdorp where members of his extended family reside.

"He is a resident of Ghana, so the African continent is very pleased to have Mr Chedrawi as our president," said Mr Hanna.

The community continues to grow in South Africa and the local Catholic Church is served by a large number of priests, nuns, deacons, brothers and principals of Catholic schools who are members of the tight-knit community. The oldest Lebanese cleric in South Africa is Mgr Anthony Seba, who is in his 90s and lives at Nazareth House in Cape Town.

Mr Hanna said it was particularly important to the community to maintain ties with their home country. While many Lebanese in



Eid Chedrawi, president of the World Lebanese Cultural Union, will visit in May. An estimated 50 000 Lebanese live in South Africa, of whom 90% are Maronite Catholics.

the country do not have the infrastructure of schools, parishes and Lebanese missions like those in Johannesburg, visits such as that of Mr Chedrawi help keep this community in touch with their home country to uphold cultural and faith traditions.

"Lebanon must remain united by its two wings, that of the motherland and that of migration," said Mr Hanna.

Mr Chedrawi will be in the country from May 2-12 during which he will meet organisations and members of the Lebanese community.

■ For more information contact Ken Hanna 084 783 0726.

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Durban Exhibition Centre

Now to nab minister's killers

BY SARA ANGLE

CHRISTIANS in Pakistan expressed gratitude after interior minister Rehman Malik announced that the government has identified those responsible for the 2007 murder of Benazir Bhutto, political leader and former prime minister of Pakistan.

Christians now insist that the government also continue searching for the murderers of the former minister for minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti, who was killed on March 2.

Ms Bhutto advocated minorities' rights and recognised the Christian community as equals. Mr Bhatti, the first Catholic to serve as minister for minorities, publicly spoke out against Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws, which, experts have said, are being used to persecute religious minorities.

Mr Bhatti's brother, Paul Bhatti,

also a Catholic, has been named the new "special adviser" for religious minorities by the prime minister of Pakistan.

"Now, it is important to make the same commitment to not let the murderers of Minister Shahbaz Bhatti go unpunished," Mr Bhatti told the Catholic news agency Fides.

As special adviser, Mr Bhatti will have the same executive powers as a minister. He most recently served as director of the All Pakistan Minorities, a network created by Shahbaz Bhatti in 2002 to promote the defence of religious minorities.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Pakistan met in Multan, where they decided to make a formal request to the pope to declare Shahbaz Bhatti a martyr.

Bishop Andrew Francis of Multan presented the request to the other bishops, who unanimously approved it.—CNS



Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk is installed as the new head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church at the cathedral of the Holy Resurrection of Christ in Kiev, Ukraine. Archbishop Shevchuk, 40, succeeded retired Cardinal Lubomyr Husar. The archbishop had been apostolic administrator of the Ukrainian Catholic diocese in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A moral theologian, Archbishop Shevchuk was elected during a five-day synod of bishops in Lviv, and his election was confirmed by Pope Benedict. (Photo: Konstantin Chernichkin, Reuters/CNS)

300 000 expected for JP2 ceremony

BY CINDY WOODEN

CHURCH and local government organisers are planning to accommodate at least 300 000 people in St Peter's Square and the surrounding area for Pope John Paul II's beatification Mass on May 1.

Mgr Liberio Andreatta, head of Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, the Vatican-related pilgrimage agency, told reporters: "Rome is ready to welcome every pilgrim who wants to come. Earlier, newspapers published megalithic numbers and said every hotel is booked. That's not true."

Fr Cesare Atoire of Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi said as soon as Pope Benedict announced the beatification date, travel agents and others booked large blocks of hotel rooms. Now that the beatification is just a month away, they have a more precise idea of how many rooms they will need and so they are freeing up the extras.

In addition, he said, two campgrounds outside of Rome will be reserved for pilgrims who want to keep their costs to a minimum. The commuter trains, which usually do not run on weekends, will be on a special schedule to get them to the prayer vigil on April 30 in Rome's Circus Maximus and to the Mass the next morning.

Because the pope is the bishop of Rome and the pilgrims will spend most of their time in Rome, not at the Vatican, the diocese of Rome is responsible for much of the cost of the event, Mgr Andreatta said.

The diocese is passing the collection basket to large Italian companies to come up with at least \$1.7 million to cover the costs of handling 300 000 pilgrims for the beatification, he said.

Although the city of Rome and its hotels, restaurants and shops will benefit financially from the pilgrims, Mgr Andreatta said the financial crisis still weighing on Italy made the diocese look to donors instead of the local government for funding.

The money will cover building a stage and installing a sound system and lighting at the Circus Maximus, running extra buses, covering the cost of the bus and subway tickets, renting and erecting crowd-control barriers and renting dozens of large video screens.—CNS

New patriarch pledges to work with Muslims

BY DOREEN ABI RAAD

THE new patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church has pledged to work with Muslims, noting that Lebanon is a country of partnership between Muslims and Christians.

Patriarch Bechara Rai said that, for the sake of communion and love, he would work "to establish a sincere and complete dialogue" with Muslims "and build together a future in common life and cooperation".

Thousands of people, accepting the open invitation from Bkerke, the patriarchal seat of the Maronite church, flocked to witness the patriarch's enthronement.

They came from all over Lebanon, many arriving in convoys of buses decorated with pictures of the new patriarch, papal flags waving from windows. The patriarchate said people filled all 16 000 seats outside the domed church on the sprawling grounds.

Patriarch Rai succeeded 90-year-old Cardinal Nasrallah P Sfeir, who resigned in February because of his age.—CNS

Visiting mass grave, pope draws lessons from Nazi evil

BY CINDY WOODEN

THE "most horrendous evil" of crimes perpetrated by the Nazis are reminders that recognising one another as brothers and sisters created by the same God is a choice and not necessarily something instinctual, Pope Benedict said at a memorial for victims of Nazis.

"Everywhere, on every continent, to whatever people one belongs, a human being is a child of that Father who is in heaven and is a brother or sister of everyone else," the pope said during a morning visit to the Ardeatine Caves, now a memorial to 335 Italians, mostly civilians, who were executed there in retaliation for an attack on Nazi soldiers.

The victims—all males—included some Italian military, but also political prisoners and men rounded up in the Jewish neighbourhood. They were all shot in the back of the head on March 24, 1944. The Nazis threw the bodies into the caves and used explosives to seal off access. After the war, a memorial was built on the site.

One of the Italian military killed at the caves was Col Giuseppe Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, father of retired Cardinal Andrea

Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, who was 18 years old at the time.

The cardinal, who went to the caves with the pope, told Vatican Radio: "I am grateful to the pope for this gesture, recognising that he, being German, can't but help but have special feelings."

The families of the victims often meet for commemorations of the anniversary of their loved ones' deaths, the cardinal said.

The lesson of the Ardeatine Caves, he said, is that even a violent atrocity can "bring together people of different faiths who have sacrificed their lives", perhaps for different reasons, "but always with faith".

Although the executions took place 67 years ago, "to lose a father isn't just a wound; it's an amputation. A wound can heal, but an amputation remains", he said.

In his remarks to those gathered outside the memorial, Pope Benedict said that people don't always and instinctively recognise each other as children of God or as brothers and sisters; "unfortunately, the Ardeatine Caves demonstrate that".

Each individual must make the choice to "say 'yes' to good and 'no' to evil", he said. "One must believe in the God of love and life

and reject every false divine image that betrays his holy name and, consequently, betrays man made in his image."

Recognising God as father and, therefore, recognising one another as brothers and sisters is "the sure guarantee of hope, the possibility of a different future, freed from hatred and vengeance, a future of freedom and brotherhood", the pope said.

Pope Benedict, who spoke with family members of the Nazis' victims buried in the caves, said: "In this place, a painful reminder of the most horrendous evil, the best response is to take each other by the hand as brothers and sisters and say: Our Father, we believe in you, and with the strength of your love we want to walk together in peace."

Like Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, who also had visited the cave, Pope Benedict said he wanted to pray at the site and keep alive the memory of what happened there.

"I came to invoke divine mercy, which is the only thing that can fill the void, the abyss opened by human beings when, pushed by blind violence, they deny their own dignity as children of God and brothers of one another," the pope said.—CNS

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THE PARISH OF OUR LADY OF LORETO



The Parish of Our Lady of Loreto is hosting a concelebrated Holy Mass for the whole Eastern Deanery of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg for the feast of the Divine Mercy and the Beatification of his Holiness John Paul II.

Confessions will be heard from 13:30 prior to Holy Mass at 15:00. A procession honouring Jesus Our Divine Mercy, St Faustina and Blessed John Paul II will follow the Mass.

An open invitation is extended to all to join in this celebration which takes place on May 1 at the Parish situated on the corner of Miller and Kweper streets in Kempton Park.

Enquiries may be addressed to the secretary Ms Michelle Burt on 011 970 1985.

Pilgrimage to Italy & France, led by Archbishop William Slattery



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How to answer attacks on the Catholic Church

BY BETH GRIFFIN

THE most effective response to veiled attacks against the Church is one that exposes misrepresentations, states the verifiable truth, explains genuine Catholic doctrine and provides examples from the lives of Catholic saints and martyrs.

This is according to speakers at a programme titled "Suspicion and Conspiracy: Defending the Reputation of Noble Individuals" and presented by Fordham University in New York.

Fr Joseph Koterski SJ, a philosophy professor at Fordham, said Pope Benedict thought very deeply about how to respond, or how not to respond, to indirect accusations against the Church.

He said the pope's 2006 encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love) is a model for Catholics to answer charges made using innuendo and suspicion, instead of those developed through traditional forms of scholarly argument that present actual evidence for the position taken.

Fr Koterski described psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, socialist Karl Marx and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche as "masters of suspicion", because they attacked the Church and its motives with innuendo and insinuation, rather than straightforward argument. He said

Pope Benedict is "our German shepherd standing resolutely in the face of three German wolves".

"The distinctive feature of arguments preferred by the masters of suspicion, and of postmodern and deconstructionist thinkers in their wake, is to proceed by raising suspicions about the motives of their opponents," Fr Koterski said. When charges are based on resentment or envy, rather than evidence or argument, the target is put on the defensive.

"A modest response can make it seem that the accused is really guilty and incapable of mounting any more of a defence, while a vigorous response can easily suggest one is trying to hide something under the very energy of the reply," he said.

Fr Koterski said in *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict steers a middle course by combining an extremely clear but rhetorically modest explanation of genuine Catholic doctrine with an exposure of the main misrepresentations that are part of the smokescreen laid down by the masters of suspicion.

The pope then provides stories of Catholic saints and martyrs whose sacrifices are above suspicion, Fr Koterski said.

Pope Benedict counters "attacks by Freud and Nietzsche on Christianity's alleged fear of eros by explaining the authentic Christian

view of sexuality and love," the Jesuit priest said. Likewise, the encyclical addresses the Marxist use of resentment, as illustrated in the famous phrase "religion is the opium of the people", by first admitting where Marx's social critique is right and then noting where Marx went wrong.

Fr Koterski said the pope's stories about such saintly figures as Bl Teresa of Kolkata, St Don Bosco and St Vincent de Paul add a human touch and an unanswerable set of examples to illustrate that the charges levelled against Christianity are groundless.

Ronald Rychlak, associate dean at the University of Mississippi School of Law, engaged the audience with a spirited defence of actions by Pope Pius XII before and during the Second World War. He used examples from his book, *Hitler, the War and the Pope*, to rebut modern allegations that Pope Pius did not do enough to rescue Jews from Nazi persecution.

Dr Rychlak displayed headlines and quotes published in *The New York Times* during World War II to show contemporary acknowledgment that the pope condemned dictators, racism and treaty violators, spoke out forcefully against arrests of Jews in France and offered "sanctuary for all". Mr Rychlak said the pope's efforts



Miners hold a statue of St Barbara, patron saint of miners, as fireworks explode after a giant drill machine broke through the rock at the final section of Sedrun-Faido, at the construction site of the NEAT Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland. Crossing the Alps, the world's longest train tunnel should become operational at the end of 2016. The project consists of two parallel single track tunnels, each 50km long. (Photo: Arnd Wiegmann, Reuters/CNS)

were so rigorous that the Nazis called him "the evident mouthpiece of the Jews".

After the war, Jewish leaders in Rome, what was known as Palestine and the United States publicly thanked Pope Pius for saving the lives of their people.

Dr Rychlak said: "During the war, at the end of the war and at his death in 1958, no one doubted where Pius XII stood."

Then, Dr Rychlak said, the Soviet Union began an effort to discredit Pope Pius, the papacy, the Catholic Church, religion and Western values as part of an effort to drive Catholics and Jews apart, advance anti-Semitism and foment

discord in the Arab world. He said the Soviets used slander, untruths and false histories to portray the pope and the Church in a negative light.

Dr Rychlak cited authors, commentators and a filmmaker in the post-Soviet era who he said used academic fraud and mistranslations to perpetuate their inaccurate version of the heroic efforts of Pope Pius XII. "People are misusing the history of the Holocaust to drive their own agenda," he said.

The programme was sponsored by Fordham University, the Holy See Mission to the United Nations and the Path to Peace Foundation.—CNS

Nun has written pope's Stations

BY SARAH DELANEY

POPE Benedict has chosen an Augustinian nun to author the texts for this year's Way of the Cross procession on Good Friday.

Mother Maria Rita Piccione, a Rome-based encloistered, contemplative nun who leads the Federation of Augustinian Nuns, wrote the texts that will be read at each of the 14 stations.

Each year, the pope selects a different person to author the

texts that mark the steps in the solemn, candlelight ceremony that begins at Rome's Colosseum and leads towards the nearby Forum and Palatine Hill.

Mother Piccione is the third living woman to be chosen to write the meditations. The previous two were chosen by Pope John Paul II, in 1993 and 1995.

During the ceremony, the pope carries a cross and stops at the stations where a few chosen people read the texts.—CNS

Compromise ends row over Bible numbers

THE Malaysian government has called off plans to put serial numbers on Bibles printed in the Malay language following a threatened protest by Christians throughout the country.

Sudhagan Standley, a Christian based in Penang, had initiated plans for people to file charges against the government on the basis that Bibles already imprinted had been defaced. He called off the protest after the government backed down on its plans, reported

the Asian Church news agency UCA News.

In return for releasing some 35 100 Bibles that the government had impounded when they were imported from Indonesia about two years ago, the interior ministry wanted to stamp each one with a serial number to control its circulation and with a message saying it was for Christian use only.

A compromise decision after discussions with Christian leaders will see the Bibles stamped with the words "For Christianity", but no

other words or serial numbers would be included. In addition, the government has said that future Bibles published in Malay can be imported and released with the words "For Christianity".

Standley said the latest development comes in light of state elections to be held soon in Sarawak, a Christian-majority state, where most of the Bibles were impounded.

Christians make up about 9% of Malaysia's population of 28 million.

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The Southern Cross

Editor: Günther Simmermacher

Guarding the Church

FOR Catholics it is becoming an increasingly frequent experience to face attacks on their Church and faith.

These attacks can take many forms. The most obvious would be gratuitous blasphemy or aggressive sectarianism. Other attacks, as a report in this week's edition notes, are much more difficult to pinpoint.

Jesuit Father Joseph Koterski of New York's Fordham University makes the point that innuendo and suspicion, instead of traditional forms of scholarly argument, have been employed as a strategy to attack the Catholic Church.

In the same report, author Ronald Rychlak outlines how the strategy of innuendo, suspicion and rumour has been effective in inverting the reputation of Pope Pius XII, turning in the popular mind a publicly acclaimed opponent of Nazism into "Hitler's pope".

The strategy of insinuation can be accompanied and mutually reinforced by ignorance, willful or not. By repetitively misreading a document issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Pope Benedict could be presented as having presided over the cover-up of clerical abuse of minors. It mattered little that the document—which was in the public domain and therefore open to examination—did not encourage cover-ups at all. By selectively misinterpreting and decontextualising the document, the narrative was bent to accommodate it as a supposed smoking gun.

Stunts such as the attempt to have Pope Benedict arrested on his visit to Britain entrenches the suspicion in the public mind, to the point where those who explain the facts of the case risk being labelled defenders of the indefensible.

Pope Benedict's advice, as Fr Koterski points out, is to persevere with the truth and to attempt to reshape the narrative.

For example, when the Church's critics accuse the Vatican of sitting on untold wealth instead of feeding the poor, Catholics might respond

by referring to the immense charitable and developmental work of the Church worldwide (and perhaps ask their interrogators why they don't likewise liquidate their own assets to give to the poor—perhaps through a Catholic project).

This is a wise strategy, especially when such discourse takes place in the public forum, for we are unlikely to persuade our interlocutors as they are to convince us. Those who are yet undecided will not be persuaded by a belligerent or defensive reaction.

However, Catholics will be unable to stand up for their Church if they are not well informed about its structures, teachings and methods, and ignorant of successes, failings and debates. It is fair to say that most Catholics are not as well equipped and motivated to defend their faith as the adherents of most other creeds.

Some years ago, this newspaper, like many other Catholic media, received much criticism for even reporting on the abuse scandal in the Church. Our response was that Catholics would not receive the whole story from the secular press, which has not always been innocent of manipulating its coverage.

It was the duty of the Catholic media to provide the faithful with the facts and with answers so as to enable them to formulate a reasonable response when confronted by family, friends or colleagues (or, indeed, their own conscience).

It is one of the primary roles of the Catholic media to equip the faithful with knowledge of their Church so as to help enable them to respond to criticism or attacks, or at least to withstand them. In that way, the Catholic media—through news and feature articles, reflections and the exchange of perspectives—are a necessary but sadly underutilised component in the formation of Catholics.

The Church can be strengthened only when it strengthens its media. The failure to disseminate the Catholic media more widely plays into the hands of those who seek to attack and undermine the Church.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right to shorten or edit published letters. Letters below 300 words receive preference. Pseudonyms are acceptable only under special circumstances and at the Editor's discretion. Name and address of the writer must be supplied. No anonymous letter will be considered.

Work of man or work of God?

FATHER Anthony Esposito's letter "The New order of the Mass—a work of Man" (March 16), was sad.

Fr Esposito feels Vatican II was defective partly because the input of observers from other Christian bodies—who had no vote—was considered.

However, one of the reasons for convoking the Council of Trent was to heal the developing rift between Rome and the Reformation; Protestants were invited as full participants and did take part in several sessions, although they, like many bishops, particularly from France, were often prevented from attending by wars and political pressures. The Council held 25 sessions, in three short periods at intervals between 1545 and 1563.

Also, Fr Esposito feels that Vatican II in its liturgical reforms puts a work of man in place of the work of God. He quotes St John Vianney:

"All good works taken together do not equal the Sacrifice of the Mass, since they are the work of man while the holy Mass is the work of God." The curé's comparison is between "good works" and "the Sacrifice"; the one and only sacrifice is, thank God, God's work, but the rite making it present is surely a good work of man. Both are there.

Trent first dealt with the Mass in session 13. One of its declared intentions: #1 was "to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change. The council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy." Further: (#7) "every liturgical celebration...is an action of Christ the priest and of his body which is the Church". "[T]he whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members", or, in other words, a work of God and also

a work of man. Also (#22), "the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed..." (see #1 above). Did Vatican II do anything different?

In session 22 Trent reaffirmed that the sacrifice of the Mass is offered for all, living and dead. The decisions on the Mass relating to the rite, like those of Vatican II, dealt with the manner of celebration, not the core theological or dogmatic truth which was, and always remains the universality of the sacrifice of the cross.

In the Tridentine Mass as in the Vatican II version, what the priest and the people do is a work of man; the work of God is unchangingly present, just as in the simple "breaking of bread" in Acts.

It is easy to verify these things. Wikipedia helps and the website of the Holy See provides the documents.

Denis Barrett, Johannesburg

Distracted from the truth

ON the feast day of St Scholastica, we read about Jesus Christ's visit to the family of Martha and Mary. Martha welcomed him and Mary decided to sit at his feet and listen to him speak while Martha took it upon her shoulders to do the serving alone.

She requested Jesus to ask her sister Mary to assist her, but Jesus, who had noticed the distractions Martha was going through, told her that Mary had chosen the better part which could not be taken away from her (Lk 10:42). Mary had taken the better choice of listening which many people find hard to do.

We are caught up and are bombarded with a lot of world issues: social, political, business, corruption, murder, divorce, hijacking, robbery and abuse. It's hard to imagine that human beings are doing some of these terrible things.

Not in the distant past, the government wished that the Church could take part in strengthening the campaign of condom distribution. The government took advantage of our grassroots presence to persuade each responsible person to be part of that very odd duty. The Church's moral refusal to have a hand in the distribution of condoms was interpreted as lack of knowledge or being inconsiderate about the rampant spread of HIV/Aids.

Morally speaking, such activities would not help to combat the spread of HIV/Aids in a world

where morals are already being compromised.

The government has its own commitments which are far removed from the Gospel. Government offices and the media houses have turned into headquarters of political gossips, corruption, nepotism, poor service delivery planning and misappropriation of public funds.

Because of these underground activities, many willing and committed people's good intentions to deliver have been distracted or derailed by some negative or bad intentions. Even those who started to deliver good services have been discouraged, all enthusiasm and zeal decimated completely.

It is not surprising that many people have lost hope in the leadership of this country because there is no commitment to do the right thing that one is employed and capable of.

Mary's choice to listen to Jesus Christ, the bearer of the Good News, without being distracted is a sign of what it actually meant for her to devote her attention wholeheartedly to Christ's message.

Fr Philemon Thobela, Tzaneen

Need for Christian influence

IN your February 9 edition there was a rather sweet picture of a young couple holding hands to illustrate the article "Wanted: Single Catholics—Can you find them?"

This highlighted a serious weakness in Catholic parishes. For the most part Catholics tend to be Sunday Catholics.

In our world, so depraved and violent, the need for Christian influence is so desperate that we should all be working to help the population be more Christ-like and peaceful.

As individuals meeting briefly once a week our influence is minimal and we are inclined to feel isolated and a little fearful when among a more or less pagan society.

Each parish should strive to become a Christian community and this will not happen without regular social contact in which families can meet each other and enjoy themselves among Christian people. Youngsters can also find friendships and possible marriage partners in this setting.

Interfaith marriages do not make for strong Catholic families and children of those marriages often leave the Church as they are less inclined to accept Catholic doctrines and disciplines, though they might be good and kind people.

To create a parish community requires firm leadership, regular communication and direction from parish councils and people prepared to work for it.

R Auret, Thornville, KZN

Fiddling while Rome burns

BISHOP Barry Wood (March 16) hits the nail on the head with his question: "Are we fiddling while Rome—South Africa—burns?"

Yes, we Catholics are "fiddling", due to our self-absorption with becoming saints and getting to heaven, when all around us in South Africa thousands of vulnerable women, children, refugees and others do not have a life, and are being abused and murdered as I write. I do not see Catholics staging marches and vigils for this type of victim.

Bishop Wood asks: "How do we awaken the spiritual energy to confront these issues?" The answer is: by releasing Catholics from the bonds of guilt and of fear of damnation, and by encouraging us to listen to our inner voices and individual consciences. Then we will be able to experience the fullness of God's love, and will respond with "energy" to the Spirit moving us to love God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Brian Robertson, We Are Church SA, Cape Town

Abortions on human rights day

ON March 21, Human Rights Day, I began a 40-night prayer vigil for Lent, from midnight to 9:00am outside the Marie Stopes Clinic in Cape Town, where abortions are carried out.

On this Human Rights Day, I was shocked to see the administrative staff arrive for work at 8:00. I pointed out to some of the staff that it was Human Rights Day and asked how could they possibly come to work and plot to kill defenceless, unborn babies.

At short notice, my wife and I were able to gather eight caring Christians to join in prayer outside the "clinic", holding pro-life placards from 10:00 to 12:00.

The secular world is insensitive and oblivious to Almighty God when it actually callously plots the death of human beings on Human Rights Day.

Shame on all—not only the misguided killers, but also an inactive Christian body of Christ. The Church is failing Our Lord.

Terry Throp, Cape Town



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Forming my newborn daughter

SINCE the birth of my daughter just over a week ago, I've been consciously aware the role my character, beliefs, habits, and so on, will play in influencing the calibre of a person she will turn up to be.

There's nothing like a death or a birth to send one deep into introspection.

When the people around us think a certain way, their thinking and judgment will invariably influence our own. Most of us do not like to be in open conflict with the company we keep, and children directly copy the methods of the environment and society they grow up in.

Our natural tendency is to align our opinions with those of our companions, especially when it is important to us to be looked upon favourably by them. Virtually under all circumstances we unconsciously move towards a cognitive harmony with our parents, siblings, brethren, friends and associates. It's a process by which our individual minds are fused imperceptibly into a group mind.

Of course, since time immemorial individuals have struck out on their own to find a different path more suited to their lights or maturing spirit. We have Abram leaving Ur to become Abraham and a father of believers in one God. But even that usually is a process of long personal deliberation with one's self.

When I think about my children I get worried about how the worldly values might easily take a permanent hold on their persons, especially today under the guise of fashion. To me fashion is a creature of man's mediocrity. But try telling that to the young.

Mediocrity betrays a lack of emotional insight, a gradual sanding away of self, and lack of self-control (emotionally and otherwise). Mediocrity is mortgaging one's unique individual character for the vulgar taste of the mob.

I take comfort in what the scientists tell us, that human beings are not born into this world with minds like blank pages, waiting to be written on by others—family, church, politicians, advertising executives, and so on.

Homo sapiens emerged as a species a half-million years ago, during the Pleistocene period, and ever since have followed what is called the "epigenetic rules". These are defined as "innate operations in the sensory system of the brain". These are rules of thumb that allow organisms to find rapid solutions to problems encountered in the environment. They predispose individuals to view the world in a particular innate way and automatically to make certain choices based on their genetic code.

This is not to say that our genes explain every bit of human behaviour. In many species, evolution can be cultural as well as biological. Cultural beliefs and ideas—or what some call "memes", the cultural counterpart to genes—pass from individual to individual or from group to group or are selected for survival.

Particularly in the case of homo sapiens, the processes of cultural evolution deserves at least an equal place alongside those of biological evolution.

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz has defined culture "as a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers

Mphuthumi Ntabeni

Pushing Boundaries



call "programmes")—for the governing of behaviour."

Those control mechanisms can be a powerful means of survival—more rapid and flexible in their response to environmental change than genetic variation alone.

Human evolutionary theory thus rests on the concept of a "dual inheritance", in which genes and cultures both are powerful determinants and each co-evolves with the other. And culture, to a large extent, is co-determined by upbringing—and that is where I come in as a parent.

The false glamour of the world is the one thing most dangerous to our children now. How then do we transmit true values to our children? How do I make sure my children take the path of magnificence, as opposed to glamour.

Magnificence produces awe; in contrast, glamour stokes desire. Glamour not only makes things look better than they really are, but also tends to edit out human complexity and the clash of values, preferring the satisfaction of diverse wants for immediate tradeoffs that do not always follow a good moral path.

As parents, we can do only so much; the rest is up to the individual and the grace of God.

Meantime, my spirit doth rejoices for the Lord has taken favour on us by choosing to make us the guardians of Umtha until she can decide for herself.

Mgr Paul Nadal

Priesthood and Ministry



Knowing how the Church sees herself

THE vision of the Church, with its profound respect for all human values, is a rediscovery to her self-understanding. This means that renewal goes much deeper than some of the changes have led us to believe.

In looking afresh at the ministerial priesthood, it is necessary to realise the importance of the Church's rediscovered understanding of herself. This deeper self-understanding will inevitably affect the ministerial priesthood which is an essential and integral part of the Church's structure. Just as there is a change in the Church's approach to, and presence, in the world, so too there will be a change in the priest's approach to and presence in the world.

If this call for a better understanding of the priest's role, function and presence in the world is true, then priestly and pastoral renewal goes

much deeper than preaching more relevant sermons, celebrating the liturgy and sacraments more meaningfully, updating our catechism classes, more home visiting and all the other traditional and worthy pastoral duties.

What it does mean is that priests need to take a hard look at themselves and ask what at times can be

painful questions on the role and function of the ministerial priesthood. Some of those questions are:

1. Have I ever asked myself why I am a priest?
2. Do I really understand and accept that to be a priest calls for *servant leadership*, or do I expect service from the people in my parish?
3. Do I accept that this is not a job like any other, but rather the living out of a calling to service and holiness?
4. Am I open to the formation of my parishioners so that they may truly be disciples of Jesus and continue his mission, or do I see this as threatening to my position?
5. Does my attitude, behaviour and lifestyle witness to the Gospel values preached by Jesus?

The theological perspective of the priesthood is clearly set out by John Paul II in his first Synodal Exhortation in April 1992: "The priest's identity...like every other Christian identity has its source in the Blessed Trinity... It is within the Church's mystery that every Christian identity is revealed and likewise the specific identity of the priest and his ministry by virtue of his consecration which he receives in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The priest is configured to Christ in a special way as head and shepherd of his people in order to live and work by the power of the Holy Spirit in the service of the Church and the salvation of the world."

How this task is actually done is not always that clear. In *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, John Paul II wrote: "The complex situation of the present day...needs not only to be known, but also interpreted. The interpretation must always be rooted in gospel discernment. This is echoing the teaching of Vatican II: 'The Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel... We must therefore recognise and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings and its often dramatic expectations.'"

It is somewhere between the theological concept of the ministerial priesthood and the present historical situation that the identity, function and role of the priest must be worked out.

Just as the Church is seen as the sacrament of the unity of mankind, at the service of the whole human family, so too the ministerial priesthood is seen as leadership service in the Church and the world.

This idea of priesthood is rooted in the leadership of the Lord himself: "Here I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22: 27). "The Son of Man himself came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10: 44). "You call me master and Lord, and rightly, so I am. If I then, the Lord and master have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet" (Jn 13: 4).

We cannot move forward into new forms of ministry unless we come with a fresh understanding of the ministerial priesthood in the light of the Church's own new understanding of herself as the "sacrament of the unity of mankind".

■ This is the fifth instalment of Mgr Nadal's six-part series on the priesthood.

Jesus and the family way

THE gospels make it clear: there is no question that Jesus came from a fairly large family.

The longest single list of his family members is found in Matthew 13:54-56. "He came to his native place and taught the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, 'Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Are not his sisters all with us?'"

Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians have always believed that Mary, the mother of Jesus, remained a virgin throughout her life, and so discovering that all the gospels mention Jesus having brothers can be a source of puzzlement (Luke and John never refer to any sisters of Jesus). It is significant that the tradition of Mary's perpetual virginity was never seen as conflicting with Scripture in the early Church, though there were two different traditions used to explain the nature of Jesus' and Mary's kinship to those identified as his brothers and sisters.

In the Greek-speaking Church (the Eastern Orthodox) it was most often claimed that Joseph was a widower when he was betrothed to Mary and that he had children from his previous wife. In a legal sense, this would make these children Jesus' half brothers or sisters.

In the Latin-speaking Church, the so-called brothers and sisters of Jesus were understood as actually being his cousins. It is said to have been common in the Jewish culture of the time and place to refer to a cousin as a brother or sister. It is not

unheard of today in cultures with a strong clan or patriarchal structure.

While the matter of Jesus' siblings is often the first concern of Catholics just discovering the references to them in the Bible, the most valuable message we can take from the passages referring to Mary's and Jesus' immediate family is one concerning our own call to discipleship. When any of our gospels characterise Jesus' relationship to his family, they convey a common message concerning the primary importance of discipleship. Matthew and Mark are the most closely aligned in their treatment of Jesus and his family.

Both Matthew (12:46-50) and Mark (3:31-35) record an incident where Jesus is speaking indoors to a crowd when his family comes to get him, but can't make their way inside to Jesus because of the crowd. When Jesus is told that his mother and his family are calling for him, he seemingly disavows his relationship to them. As recorded in Mark, Jesus says: "Who are my mother and [my] brothers?" And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. [For] whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

The message, however, is not that Jesus has rejected his family; it is that the kinship most important to him is the one of spiritual affinity. Those who are obedient to God are Jesus' brothers and sisters. Luke also records this incident (8:19-21), but Luke, in his infancy narrative (1:26-2:52), has previously devoted a very significant amount of his gospel to Mary

Clifford M Yeary

Hearing the Good News



and her obedient response to all that God asks of her. Mary's response to the angel Gabriel's announcement that she is to bear a child who is to be called the Son of God is one of humble acceptance.

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Mary may well not understand Jesus' behaviour later in life. When Joseph and Mary return to the temple after discovering the adolescent Jesus missing from among their fellow pilgrims returning to Nazareth, it is clear that Mary does not understand why Jesus acts as he does. But her response is a disciple's response.

Mary "kept all these things in her heart." (Lk 2:51) In John's gospel Mary appears in two key episodes. She is with Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, at the wedding at Cana (2:1-12), and at the cross when he dies (19:25-27). It is at the cross, immediately preceding his death, that Jesus gives his mother to his most faithful disciple for them to share a new mother/child relationship.

Again, the message seems clear. Jesus' family is composed of those who are truly his disciples. But not by coincidence, Jesus' mother is our mother in this new family.

■ Clifford M Yeary is an associate director of Little Rock Scripture Study in Arkansas. This article was originally published in the Arkansas Catholic, newspaper of the diocese of Little Rock. It is the 11th part of a series of 13 articles exploring the four gospels.

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Dominican Fathers Gregory Brooke (left) and Albert Nolan celebrated their golden jubilee of ordination in the presence of their Dominican brothers and sisters. Fr Nolan is the novice master at Mondeor, Johannesburg, while Fr Brooke is chaplain to the Dominican sisters at St Mary's, Hyde Park, Johannesburg.



A group of 28 visited the Holy Land while on pilgrimage, under the spiritual guidance of Fr Job Kaleekaparampil MSFA and Deacon John Sheraton of Grassy Park, Cape Town. They are seen outside the church of The Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. (Submitted by Elwilma Fisher)

**FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY
SUNDAY 1st MAY**

His Grace the
Archbishop Stephen Brislin
and visiting priests will celebrate Holy Mass
at the Mimosa Chapel, Saasveld Road,
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Archbishop William Slattery, educators and learners of St Mary's school, a new independent Catholic school in Kokstad, Kwa-Zulu Natal. (Submitted by Samantha Napier)

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Fr Graham Bouwer and his newly commissioned altar servers at Regina Pacis parish in Ladysmith, Dundee diocese. (Submitted by Lynn Wood)

**IN
FOCUS**

edited by
Lara Moses



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Parish of the Month

St John Bosco, Robertsham, Johannesburg

Jo'burg parish does it again

Since the parish of St John Bosco in Robertsham, Johannesburg, was featured in this series in November 2009, parishioner numbers, outreach and Southern Cross sales have increased, as CLAIRE MATHIESON reports.

THE parish of St John Bosco in Robertsham, in the rapidly expanding south-west of Johannesburg, and *The Southern*

Cross have a great relationship. Not only is the newspaper the favoured Catholic reading material of the parishioners, this is also the second time they have been Parish of the Month (which is determined by increases in sales figures). And at this rate, it might not be the last time.

Named after the Italian founder of the Salesians of Don Bosco, the parish had "humble beginnings", parishioner Pierre de Villiers said. The first Mass was celebrated 54 years ago in a simple hall. "Although a new church was envisaged all those years back, it was not until the Jubilee Year 2000

that the simple chapel was renovated and enlarged into what is our beautiful church today," Mr de Villiers recalled.

"Fr Jeffrey Johnson is the present parish priest, assisted by Fr Larry McDonnell who recently transferred from Swaziland. We are blessed with two deacons, Dave Lavers and Mike Nolan, and a third, Victor Ho, will be ordained on April 30," Mr de Villiers said.

Salesian Fathers have served the parish since those early days. The provincial office of the Salesians is also based within the parish's outstations. The Salesian community of brothers, priests and sisters manage youth development activities in the area. These range from youth activities and schooling to skills-training programmes and HIV/Aids interventions.

Education is a big part of parish life. "There is an active presence of a community of Salesian Sisters—known as the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians—who run the Mary Help of Christians Pre-School and a Junior Primary School in Booyens and the Lerato Crèche and Primary School in Jacksonsdrift, Eikenhof," Mr de Villiers said. A large portion of the property has also been let to the Catholic Institute of Education to use as their headquarters for almost 25 years.

Mr de Villiers described his parish as being a "community serving humanity". The parish has



St John Bosco in Robertsham, is a young and active church in a fast developing area, south west of the city of Johannesburg.

particularly active groups including the League of Margherita (which is dedicated to helping the poor), the Care Group, Justice and Peace, Family Ministry, Youth Group, Catechetics and RCIA and a music group for each of the five Sunday Masses. "It is wonderful to see the cooperation between the members of our multicultural congregation which continues to grow week by week," he said.

Four Masses are celebrated each weekend to accommodate parishioners from the surrounding suburbs of Chrisville, Gillview, Mondeor, Meredale, Kibler Park, Evans Park and Ormonde. The area has been expanding and the parish has had to expand its service. "A fifth Mass is celebrated at the parish's chapel of ease in Booyens, just 2km to the east of our Robertsham church," Mr de Villiers explained, adding that the chapel serves parishioners from Southdale and West Turffontein.

Along with the growth of the parish, sales of *The Southern Cross* have steadily increased over the years. "We have a well-stocked

repository, but *The Southern Cross* is our most favoured merchandise and many parishioners enjoy reading the interesting and informative articles," Mr de Villiers said. Copies of *The Southern Cross* are also taken to the sick and elderly, at home or in hospital.

The newspaper is marketed and sold by an enthusiastic group of ushers and youth who ensure *The Southern Cross* is available to parishioners at all Masses. Mr de Villiers said the same enthusiasm is present in all areas of parish life, including the pastoral council, finance committee and the various ministries and sodalities.

St John Bosco parish is comparatively young in the archdiocese of Johannesburg, but with the growing numbers populating the south west of the city, the parish has needed to expand and react to the needs of the area. The enthusiasm with which their service is delivered has answered that very call.

To increase orders of *The Southern Cross*, contact Avril Hanslo on 021 465 5007 or subscriptions@cross.co.za.



A parishioner buys her copy of *The Southern Cross* the most popular Catholic reading material at the parish.

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Jesus promised St. Faustina, "...From her (Poland) will come forth the 'spark' that will prepare the world for My final coming" (Diary 1732).

THE LORD is clearly shining HIS BRIGHT LIGHT on MERCY SUNDAY...

even as the darkness increases...are we taking note?

- Pope John Paul II, canonized St. Faustina on 30 April, 2000 and
- Decreed the Feast of Divine Mercy as an official feast of the Church
- Issued an Apostolic Decree attaching a Plenary Indulgence to the Feast. (usual conditions)
- Died on the Vigil of the Feast of Divine Mercy
- Pope Benedict XVI will beatify John Paul II in Rome on Divine Mercy Sunday

Celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday and Pope John Paul II's Beatification - May 1st, 2011

Jesus promises: "The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and all punishment." On that Day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened." (Diary 699)

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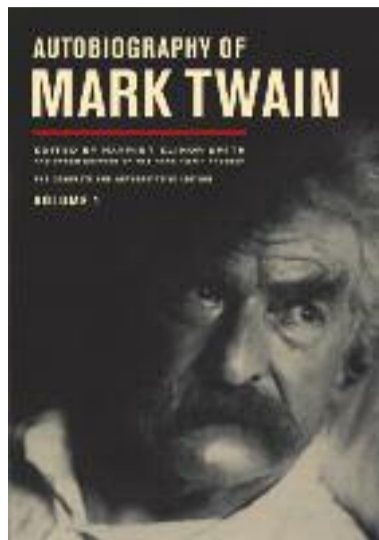


"Jesus, I Trust in You!"

"The Second Sunday of Easter from now on throughout the Church will be called Divine Mercy Sunday."
Pope John Paul II (April 30, 2000)

Was Mark Twain anti-Christian?

Mark Twain is one of the most beloved authors of the past couple of centuries. His newly published autobiography sheds light on a man who liked the Christian message, but was critical of organised religion, as MIKE LATOINA explains.



‘THERE is one notable thing about our Christianity: bad, bloody, merciless, money-grabbing and predatory...ours is a terrible religion.’

As this quote from his recently released autobiography illustrates, Samuel Langhorne Clemens was not one to sugarcoat his views about organised religion.

Sprinkled among his novels, essays, speeches and personal memoirs are numerous remarks by Clemens—better known by his pen name of Mark Twain—that would be distressing to devout Christians. In fact, Twain quotes are often featured on atheistic websites.

Even so, Twain is among the most celebrated US authors of all time.

He maintained a summer residence in Elmira, New York, for two decades following his 1870 marriage to Olivia Langdon, penning some of his most famous works there. Twain is buried in Elmira alongside his wife and children at Woodlawn cemetery.

Twain was in the news quite a

bit during 2010. *Autobiography of Mark Twain* (University of California Press) went on sale late last year, in line with his instruction not to release such a work before the 100th anniversary of his death. That milestone occurred last April 21, followed by his 175th birthday on November 30.

The autobiography received substantial media coverage and quickly become a best-seller.

Should Catholics and other Christians share in the widespread admiration for Twain? One person who believes so is Anthony Pucci, who leads the English department at Elmira Notre Dame High School.

Mr Pucci said he feels Twain's

biggest beef with Christianity was not about its core teachings, but with the failure of humans to practise what they preach.

Indeed, Twain seemed at his angriest when people misused religion to justify violence, personal gain and mistreatment of the poor and oppressed. “If Christ were here, there is one thing he would not be—a Christian,” he wrote in *Mark Twain's Notebook*.

Mr Pucci also noted Twain's depiction of religious hypocrisy in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in which the feuding Grangerford and Shepherdson families attend church services and then go right back to engaging in bloodshed.

“They come out of church but don't act very Christian,” Mr Pucci said. “That's the basis of Huck's repudiation of religion—you're not a better Christian because of your religion.”

Among Twain's many controversial stances on religion, he did not believe in the existence of heaven and hell, the immortality of the soul nor the divinity of Jesus Christ. He was highly sceptical of the Bible's contents, and although he professed belief in God, he frequently questioned God's motives.

Representative of his views are such novels as *The Mysterious Stranger*, in which conventional religion is attacked, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, which takes Catholicism to task.

Nonetheless, Mr Pucci said he teaches *Adventures of Huckleberry*



Students walk past a statue of Mark Twain on the campus of Elmira College in New York. The statue is inscribed with the titles of books he wrote while at Elmira. Twain's wife, Olivia Langdon Clemens, graduated from the college in 1864. (Photo: Mike Crupi, Catholic Courier)

Finn at his Catholic school as “a great book to illustrate a Christian message, regardless of what Twain might have written about organised religion”, because Huck stands up to corruption, opting to protect Jim the slave even if it means in his mind that he might be damned to hell.

On the other hand, Twain scholar Michael Kiskis said an aunt of his who was a woman religious refused to read *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* because she knew it contained disparaging remarks about the Catholic faith.

It's doubtful, then, that the aunt would have enjoyed Twain's current autobiography or two additional volumes that have yet to be released. According to Dr Kiskis, these works contain Twain's most cutting remarks yet known on the subject of religion. A large part of this commentary is aimed at God himself, especially a running complaint that God has the power to alleviate human suffering and elects not to do so.

“The notion of compassion is one [Twain] wants to believe in, and the problem he has is sometimes the works of God are not entirely compassionate, not upfront—why do bad things happen to good people?” said Dr Kiskis,

who edited *Mark Twain's Own Autobiography: The Chapters of the North American Review* (1990, University of Wisconsin Press), an anthology of 25 Twain writings that were first published in 1906 and 1907.

Dr Kiskis observed that Twain knew his harshest views on religion might taint his image; thus he didn't want them to become public in his own lifetime.

“Twain didn't want his debate with or interrogation of God to diminish his sales,” said Dr Kiskis, who teaches at Elmira College, home of the Center for Mark Twain Studies, which includes many Twain-related exhibits and artifacts.

His writings notwithstanding, several aspects of Twain's life actually paint a picture of a religious man. Twain makes frequent uncritical references in his memoirs to his Presbyterian upbringing; his funeral was in a Presbyterian church (the Brick church in New York); and he counted several clergy among his close friends.

In addition, Twain considered his best work to be *Joan of Arc*, a reverential biographical account of a Catholic saint who exhibited all the human ideals Twain found so lacking in the rest of mankind.—CNS

“OPEN YOUR HEARTS TO GOD'S MERCY AND HE WILL GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED” (Gospa's message Nov 25, 2010)



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Sr M Flannan Minogue HC

SISTER Flannan Minogue, who died on February 13, at 94, was born on January 24, 1917, in Ballyvannon, County Clare, in the far west of Ireland. The fourth of nine children, she is survived by two sisters and a brother who is a priest.

At the age of 20, Sr Flannan felt the calling to religious and missionary life and entered the Holy Cross Sisters in Belfast where all the candidates were destined for mission life in Southern Africa. Sr Flannan arrived in South Africa and was received into the novitiate in Aliwal North on January 5, 1939.

After her first profession on January 6, 1940, Sr Flannan was sent to Sichili, a remote mission in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), where she taught in a primary school for five years.

In her many years of service in education, Sr Flannan taught in Holy Cross primary schools in both South Africa and Zambia. She loved children and enjoyed teaching them about God and Jesus.

In January 1984 she was assigned as a staff member to Holy Cross Fatima retirement home in Aliwal North. She helped with the daily chores and took responsibility for the therapeutic handwork for the frail and elderly sisters.

Sr Flannan kept in regular contact with her family members and when age and frailty stopped her going to Ireland in later years, her family kept her informed and sent her the weekly, *The Irish Catholic*, which she enjoyed passing on to the community.

Latterly, Sr Flannan suffered a fracture of her left leg, her movements became very restricted and she gradually weakened and grew increasingly quieter. The letters she wrote became fewer and finally ceased altogether.

She died on February 13, after receiving the Sacraments. Fr Donal Cashman of Port Elizabeth who comes from a neighbouring village in Ireland, sent his condolences since he was unable to attend the funeral.

Sr Maureen Rooney HC

Community Calendar

To place your event, call Claire Allen at 021 465 5007 or e-mail c.allen@scross.co.za, (publication subject to space)

BETHLEHEM:

Shrine of Our Lady of Bethlehem at Tsheseng, Maluti mountains; Thursdays 09:30, Mass, then exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. 058 721 0532.

CAPE TOWN:

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Day of Prayer held at Springfield Convent starting at 10:00 ending 15:30 last Saturday of every month—all welcome. For more information contact Jane Hulley 021 790 1668 or 082 783 0331.

DURBAN:

St Anthony's, Durban

Central:

Tuesday 09:00 Mass with novena to St Anthony. First Friday 17:30 Mass—Divine Mercy novena prayers. Tel: 031 309 3496.

JOHANNESBURG:

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: first Friday of the month at 09:20 followed by Holy Mass at 10:30. Holy Hour: first Saturday of each month at 15:00. At Our Lady of the Angels, Little Eden, Edenvale. Tel: 011 609 7246.

First Saturday of each month rosary prayed 10:30-12:00 outside Marie Stopes abortion clinic, Peter Place, Bryanston. Joan Beyrooti, 011 782 4331.

PRETORIA:

First Saturday: Devotion to Divine Mercy. St Martin de Porres, Sunnyside, 16:30. Tel Shirley-Anne 012 361 4545.

Liturgical Calendar

Year A, Week 1

Sunday April 10, Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ez 37:12-14, Ps 130:1-8, Rom 8:8-11, Jn 11:1-45

Monday, April 11, St Stanislaus

Dan 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or Daniel 13:41-62, Ps 23:1-6, Jn 8:1-11

Tuesday, April 12, feria

Num 21:4-9, Ps 102: 2-3, 16-21, Jn 8:21-30

Wednesday, April 13, feria

Dan 3:14-20, 91-92, 95, Psalm: Dan 3:52-56, John 8:31-42

Thursday, April 14, feria

Gen 17:3-9, Ps 105:4-9, Jn 8:51-59

Friday, April 15, feria

Jer 20:10-13, Ps 18:2-7, Jn 10:31-42

Saturday, April 16, feria

Ez 37:21-28, Jer 31:10-13, Jn 11:45-56

Sunday, April 17, Palm Sunday

Is 50:4-7, Ps 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24, Phil 2:6-11, Mt 26:14 - 27:66 or Mt 27:11-54

Word of the Week

Ecclesiastical: Of or relating to the Christian Church, especially as an established institution or its clergy.

Application: Ecclesiastical laws have been in force for centuries

Southern CrossWord solutions

SOLUTIONS TO #439.

ACROSS: 3 Churchman, 8 Beat, 9 Carpenter, 10 Aight, 11 Myrrh, 14 Infer, 15 Your, 16 Mecca, 18 Need, 20 Dream, 21 Death, 24 Breast, 25 Campanile, 25 Hero, 27 Connected.

DOWN: 1 Oblations, 2 Satisfied, 4 Heat, 5 Repay, 6 Hungry, 7 Abet, 9 Charm, 11 Micah, 12 Home-based, 13 Cremation, 17 Adore, 19 Deepen, 22 Tonic, 23 Iago, 24 Blue

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WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

DICKENS—Morran and Gail. Happy Anniversary. May God bless you and may you see many more years. "If you make my word your home, you will indeed be my disciples; you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free." Jn 8:31-32. From Mom and Dad.

PERSONAL

ABORTION WARNING: 'The Pill' can abort, undetected, soon after conception (a medical fact). See website: www.humanlife.org/abortion_does_the_pill.php

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PRAYERS

HOLY St Jude, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke you, special patron in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg you to come to my assistance. Help me now in my urgent need and grant my petitions. In return I promise to make your name known and publish this prayer. Amen. EM.

HOLY St Jude, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke you, special patron in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg you to come to my assistance. Help me now in my urgent need and grant my petitions. In return I promise to make your name known and publish this prayer. Amen. Thank you for prayers answered. Karen.

HOLY SPIRIT you who



make me see everything. You showed me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget all that is done to me and you are in all the instincts of my life with me. I want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great the desires may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. This prayer should be said on 3 consecutive days, after the 3rd day, the request will be granted, no matter how difficult it may be. Promise to publish the entire dialogue with the condition of having your request granted. Karen

THANKS

Thanks to St Jude and St Martin de Porres for prayers answered. EM

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Palm Sunday—April 17

Readings: Matthew 21:1-11, Isaiah 50:4-7
 Psalm 22: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24, Philippians 2:6-11, Matthew 26:14-27:66

The greatest story ever told

NEXT Sunday we enter the solemn drama of Holy Week. The readings for the day are immensely rich, and you will do well to read reflectively through them all: Matthew's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (and you might count how many animals he is riding); then the first of the Songs of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah; next, the psalm, one that has coloured the gospel narratives of Jesus' passion, and then the second reading, an ancient Christian hymn stressing how Christ "emptied himself", and how God in response "gave him the name which is above all other names".

The *gospel* for next Sunday, however, is the immensely long account in the First Gospel of Jesus' Passion; and this year it seems good to go through that sombre and powerful story, pointing out to you a few landmarks that may assist your praying as you hear it read out next week.

You will notice that the story begins and ends with the religious establishment. At the beginning, they are visited by Judas Iscariot, who asks for a bribe to hand Jesus over; at the end they are consulting with Pilate about making the tomb secure, "to prevent any of that Resurrection-nonsense". In the meantime, it is Jesus who very largely runs the show; his disciples, rather belatedly, given

Nicholas King SJ

Sunday Reflections



how crowded Jerusalem is for Passover, ask about where he is proposing to eat the Passover meal, only to discover that Jesus has it all arranged. Then we are present at the meal, overshadowed by sadness, because "one of you is going to betray me". Judas asks: "It's not me, is it, Rabbi?" Now in Matthew's gospel "Rabbi" is a forbidden form of address for Jesus' followers, and Judas is the only person who uses it; Jesus simply replies to him, as he will later to the High Priest, and to Pilate, "you said it".

The sadness continues as Jesus, in the gesture that Christians have imitated ever since, breaks the bread, and blesses the cup: "This is my body", "this is my blood". Then after supper, and singing the appropriate psalms, they go out to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus predicts that "you are all going to be scandalised by me tonight". Peter stoutly denies it, "even if I have to die with you", and we just wish he would hold his peace.

Next we watch Jesus at his prayer. Here Matthew follows Mark, except that he does not include the word "Abba" in his prayer. What he does, however, is to describe Jesus' posture, "falling on his face" and then includes a petition from his own version of the Lord's Prayer, "thy will be done". He also adds one or two characteristic Matthew-touche: he tidies up Jesus' words to the disciples at the end of the period of prayer, for example, and he emphasises, as he did at the very beginning of the gospel, the fulfilment of the Scriptures, an idea of immense importance to Matthew. He omits Mark's mysterious story of the "young man" who ran away naked and when it comes to the trial before the Sanhedrin, he emphasises that the council were looking for "false" witnesses.

For the most part, Jesus is silent here, until the High Priest puts him on oath "by the Living God", to speak out; then he utters, powerfully, "...from now on, you are going to see the Son of Man sitting on the right side of power and coming on the clouds of heaven". There are other small additions that Matthew makes (although he omits the detail about Peter "warming himself" at the fire). For example he adds to the soldiers' insulting demands to "prophecy" the demand to know, "Who struck you, Christ?", perhaps just making things a bit clearer. It is only Matthew

who indicates that the reason they knew Peter was a Galilean was his funny accent and only Matthew has Judas repenting and returning the blood-money to the Temple, before he goes off and hangs himself.

Only in Matthew do we have Mrs Pilate's dream, which leads her to want Jesus to be acquitted; and it is Matthew alone who has Pilate publicly wash his hands, in a gesture taken from the Book of Deuteronomy. And only in Matthew do the crowds shout, "His blood be on ourselves and on our children", which has had dire consequences for the relations between Christians and Jews ever since.

Matthew particularly emphasises Jesus being the Son of God, in terms that remind us of his account of the Temptation in the Wilderness. It is Matthew who changes Mark's "Elohi" to "Eli", which is a different language, but possibly it sounds more like Elijah. Only in Matthew do we find the earthquake that shakes Jerusalem and the resurrection of the bodies of the saints.

Only Matthew has the mother of the sons of Zebedee at the cross; and only in Matthew is there an armed guard sealing the tomb.

This powerful and solemn story has a right to be named "The greatest story ever told", and you will do well to read slowly and prayerfully through it in the course of the coming week.

Are you ready for kids?

BRINGING up children isn't easy. In fact, one of the most remarkable feats of human nature is to be able to raise a child without going insane. And one of the most miraculous feats of human nature is to bring up six, seven or sometimes ten children without going insane.

It was the late Sam Levenson, American humourist, writer, television host and journalist, who came up with the wisecrack: "Insanity is hereditary—you get it from your children."

It was also Levenson, incidentally, who claimed that it was easy to be wise: "Just think of something really stupid to say. Then don't."

But, getting back to children, there have been many words of wisdom written on the subject of preparing young couples for parenthood. Few of these are able to aptly illustrate the emotional, energy draining, impact of the arrival of a 3,4kg bundle of disarming smiles and happy little gurgles all too frequently interspersed with myriad leaking orifices and extremely noisy lungs.

This also creates a dilemma for ageing parents desperately wanting their children to produce grandchildren by the bushel while at the same time being very much aware that this process is inevitably accompanied by a certain amount of pain on the part of the new mother and father. Pain that persists like a violently throbbing toothache

Chris Moerdyk

The Last Word



until the babies have reached at least 25 years of age and have MBAs and well-paid jobs.

Just wildly encouraging anyone to leap into parenthood is a bit like seriously suggesting that they have a leg amputated to get rid of athlete's foot.

So one has to resort to a mixture of humour and cold-hard facts to do the job properly. Such as this simple test I found on a Catholic website.

The parenthood test—How to know whether or not you are ready to have children.

Mess test: Smear peanut butter on the lounge sofa and curtains. Place a fish stick behind the couch and leave it there for a year.

Toy test: Buy a really big box of Lego. If this is not available, you may substitute drawing pins. Have a friend spread them all over the house. Put on a blindfold. Now try to walk barefoot to the bathroom or kitchen. Do not scream because this could wake a child at night.

Supermarket test: Borrow one or two small animals—goats are best—and take them with you as you shop. Always

keep them in sight and pay for anything they eat or damage.

Afternoon nap test: Lie down on your bed after a big Sunday lunch and ask a friend to sit with you and as soon as you nod off, to pour yoghurt in your ear.

The car test: Break a ripe watermelon into a mush and throw it all over your dashboard, gear lever, steering wheel and new leather upholstery.

Dressing test: Go to the fish shop and buy a large, unhappy, live octopus. Try to stuff it into a small net bag making sure that all its arms stay inside.

Feeding test: Take a large plastic milk jug. Fill halfway with water. Suspend from the ceiling with a stout cord. Start the jug swinging. Try to insert spoonfuls of soggy porridge into the mouth of the jug, while pretending to be an aeroplane. Now dump the contents of the jug onto the floor.

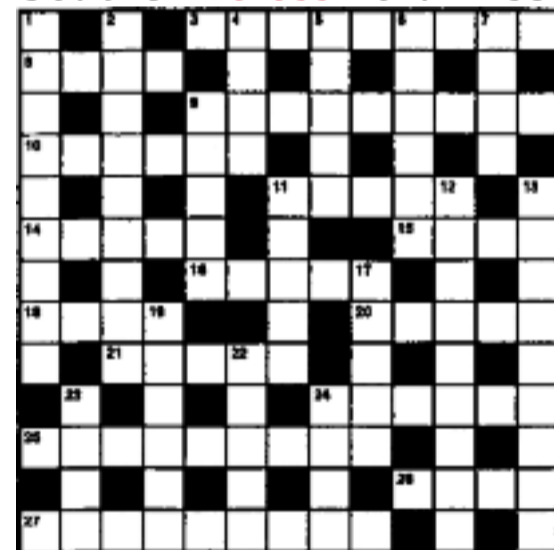
Night test: Prepare by obtaining a small cloth bag and fill it with 4-6kg of sand. Soak it thoroughly in water. At 20:00 begin to waltz and hum with the bag until 21:00. Put the bag down and set your alarm for midnight. Wake up, pick up your bag, and sing every song you have ever heard. Make up about a dozen more and sing these until 4:00. Set alarm for 5:00. Get up and make breakfast. Keep this up for five years. Look cheerful.

Physical test (women): Take one large beanbag chair and attach it to the front of your clothes. Leave it there for nine months. Now remove ten of the beans.

Physical test (men): Go to the nearest chemist. Put your wallet on the counter and say "help yourself". Now go to the nearest supermarket. Arrange for your entire salary to be directly deposited to the store. Purchase a newspaper. Go home and read it quietly for the last time.

Final assignment: Find a couple who already have a small child. Lecture them on how they can improve their discipline, patience, tolerance, toilet training and child's table manners. Suggest many ways they can improve. Emphasise that they should never allow their children to run wild. Enjoy this experience. It will be the last time you will have all the answers.

Southern Crossword #439



ACROSS

3. He's an ecclesiastic (9)
- 8, 15, 24. How you demonstrate sorrow for sin (4,4,6)
9. Trade of St Joseph (9)
10. Get off what's on fire? (6)
11. One of the Nativity gifts (5)
14. Deduce (5)
15. See 8
16. Sacred place in Islam (5)
18. Necessity (4)
20. Angel appeared to Joseph in it (Mt 2) (5)
21. This is the end (5)
24. See 8
25. The bell tower (9)
26. Ache Roman conceals for a celebrity (4)
27. Linked on the telephone? (9)

DOWN

1. Lo, bastion holds things offered to God (9)
2. Contented (9)
4. Broth eaten within hot weather (4)
5. Vengeance is mine. I will ... (Rm 12) (5)
6. How Jesus felt after fasting in the desert (Mt 4) (6)
7. Beat about to encourage crime (4)
9. Ornament with magical power? (5)
11. Minor prophet of More-sheth (5)
12. Kind of business in your house (4-5)
13. The burning issue of the disposal (9)
17. Worship (5)
19. Make faith more profound (6)
22. Pick-me-up medicine (5)
23. Othello's evil officer (4)
24. Colour of depression (4)

Answers on page 11

Conrad



It's no wonder we at Robertsham have been "Parish of the Month" twice!

CHURCH CHUCKLE

A man walked up to a Franciscan and Jesuit and asked: "How many novenas must you say to get a Mercedes Benz?" The Franciscan asked: "What's a Mercedes Benz?" The Jesuit asked: "What's a novena?"

Send us your favourite Catholic joke, preferably clean and brief, to The Southern Cross, Church Chuckle, PO Box 2372, Cape Town, 8000.