

# North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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**DEDICATION OF BASILICA CHAPEL** — A girl participates in the dedication of Our Lady of La Vang Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Oct. 21. The chapel was a gift from Vietnamese-Americans. See story p. 15 (CNS photo/Matthew Barrick, courtesy of the National Shrine)

## SIM grants help parishes, schools with limited resources make necessary repairs

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

Charlene Hymel might be the only person thankful for the ongoing drought in North Texas. Cloudless skies mean one thing to the St. Rita School principal: There won't be any rain leaking through the roof and into classrooms.

"When it starts to rain, my husband and I come to the school to set out buckets," the dedicated administrator explains. "In one hallway, the water trickles down the wall and makes a puddle."

During the last downpour, a leak in the roof soaked comput-



ers in the fifth grade classroom. Fortunately, the school was able to salvage the units.

"I've been principal [for] four years, and I've been fighting this

problem the whole time I've been here," she says in frustration.

Thanks to Sharing in Ministry, the Annual Diocesan Appeal, relief is on the way. St. Rita is one of a dozen schools and parishes slated to receive a capital grant to help with costly repair work or building projects. The SIM campaign is currently underway in the Diocese of Fort Worth with a goal to raise \$2,600,000 for a variety of critical and immediate needs of the local church here in the 28 counties of the diocese. To date, \$1.7 million is committed toward the goal.

SEE SIM HELPS..., P. 8

## Speakers at Canon Law convention say there's room for improvement in church consultation

FORT WORTH (CNS) — There's room for improvement in church consultation, said speakers at the annual convention of the Canon Law Society of America.

The Code of Canon Law prescribes various structures for church consultation, but they are not always effective in practice, the speakers said during the Oct. 9-12 meeting in Fort Worth.

The theme of the convention, "Consultation in the Life of the Church: In Service of Communion," was inspired by Pope John

Paul II's 2001 apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium). In it the late pope called for strengthening a "spirituality of communion" by effectively using the structures of participation and consultation provided for in church law.

In an Oct. 9 keynote address, Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, identified consultative bodies on all church levels, from the Synod of Bishops and College of Cardinals assisting the pope, to

various lay and priests' councils helping diocesan bishops, and finance and pastoral councils aiding pastors.

"Truly, the Code of Canon Law proposes perfect structures for consultation," Cardinal Rodriguez said. However, they will be effective only if those who request and offer advice have the ability to listen, especially to "listen wisely," he added.

Msr. John Strykowski, former executive director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Doctrine  
SEE CONSULTATION..., P. 13

## Pope says Christians can be missionaries to those near and far

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — All Christians are called to be missionaries, sharing the good news of God's love in their families, workplaces, or in far-off lands, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Mission starts from the heart," the pope said during his midday Angelus address Oct. 22, which was World Mission Sunday.

"The love that moved the Father to send his Son into the world and [moved] the Son to offer himself for us to the point of dying on the cross, that same love was poured by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of believers," he said.

Converted and saved by love, every Christian is called to proclaim "the good news that God is love and, in this way, save the world," the pope said.

Because mission is a matter of sharing the love of God, every Christian can and must be a missionary, he said.

Missionary work is not limited to traveling far away to proclaim the Gospel to people who have not heard the message, he said. Missionary work also can be striving to make one's family life holy, living one's professional life "with a Christian spirit," or dedicating one's life to God in the priesthood or religious life.

## Bishops from Americas discuss threats to life, U.S. border fence

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The breakdown of families and threats to human life, from abortion to the death penalty, are challenges that Catholics in the Americas must confront, said a group of bishops meeting at the Vatican.

The council of bishops charged with monitoring and promoting follow-up to the 1997 Synod of Bishops for America and to Pope John Paul II's 1999 post-synodal document, *The Church in America*, met at the Vatican in

early October.

In addition to denouncing threats to human life, council members — from North and South America as well as from the Vatican — also offered a harsh assessment of plans to construct a fence along the U.S.-Mexican border.

On Oct. 23, Congress sent the bill authorizing construction of 700 miles of fencing to President George W. Bush, who signed it Oct. 26.

"The wall along the United States-Mexican border...  
SEE BORDER FENCE..., P. 16



**VATICAN NEWSPAPER** — Pope Benedict XVI reads the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, in this 2005 photo. The newspaper's editorial views correspond to Catholic teaching and positions taken by the pope. An exhibit on the 145-year history of the Vatican newspaper is currently on display in Rome. See story, p. 24 (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO)

# SIM helps get much-needed projects off the ground

FROM PAGE 1

"During this, our 24th campaign, the generosity of our Catholic families in the diocese continues to inspire me," says John Honaman, director of Stewardship and Development. "Through the continued prayers of all of us, I am hopeful donations will set an all-time record this year."

For Hymel and the 229 students who attend St. Rita School, assistance can't come soon enough. The school's flat roof enables rainwater to pool for several days before the sun dries it up.

"Parent volunteers have patched the roof many times, but some of the leaks are hard to find," the principal explains. "Moisture gets beneath the shingles and moves."

Estimates to repair or replace the roof range from \$3,000 to \$90,000. The school community is appreciative for any help from Sharing in Ministry it can receive.

"Money is always an issue in Catholic schools. We operate on a very tight budget," the educator points out. "Tuition wouldn't begin to cover the cost of fixing the roof. Without help from the diocese, we would just keep patching the problem."

Although the Annual Diocesan Appeal supports a myriad of causes — from Catholic Charities to faith formation programs — one-third of the money do-



Parishioners of San Mateo Mission in Fort Worth are working hard to raise \$100,000 in order to receive a matching grant from Sharing in Ministry. Plans are to tear down these two older structures to make way for a new religious education building. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

nated is given directly to parishes or schools for specific projects. Catholic families in the diocese are generous when the collection basket is passed each Sunday, but "for many communities, the support is not enough to meet their needs, and that's exactly where funds from Sharing in Ministry come in," Honaman explains.

The Sunday offering, supplemented with money donated to the diocesan appeal by families throughout the diocese, can make a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of people. In past years, Sharing in Ministry helped repair a rural church severely damaged by a spring storm and provided another country parish with a much-needed paved parking lot. Most recently, Catholics living in Morgan, a small town at the southern tip of the diocese, were grateful for the assistance given in building a \$282,000 parish hall for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann joined parishioners in celebrating the new religious education space during dedication ceremonies Oct. 5. The new building is the culmination of five years of planning and sacrifice by the struggling rural community of 68 families that manages to collect \$485 in offerings each week.

"Everyone in Morgan was so thankful to their 'angels' in the Diocese of Fort Worth who contributed to the

project through Sharing in Ministry," Honaman says. "They want everyone to know how grateful they are."

Parishioners of San Mateo Mission in Fort Worth are hoping for similar support as they try to raise money for a religious education building. The predominantly Hispanic, center-city parish has outgrown the small, worn-out church building where classes are currently held three evenings a week because of the lack of space.

"We just don't have enough room for the children we have in our religious instruction program," says Father Robert Strittmatter, the priest in charge of the parish, a mission of St. Patrick Cathedral. "Some new classrooms and office space would help."

Two hundred youngsters are currently enrolled in classes, and parish leader Simon Sanchez expects those numbers to climb.

"Our numbers have increased 200 percent in the past two years, and we anticipate that trend continuing," says the building committee member. "Adult education in Spanish and English is growing as well, so that's a factor."

Organizers are hoping that a \$50,000 matching grant from Sharing in Ministry will generate support for a new parish building to house five classrooms and two offices.

The mission received assistance from the Annual Diocesan Appeal once before, remembers Ernie Barbosa.

"Without help from the diocese, we couldn't have built our new church. Sharing in Ministry was the impetus to get that going," explains the fundraising chairman.

Before starting another major construction project, members of San Mateo must raise \$100,000 to receive the matching grant. Barbosa believes placing a stipulation on the gift is a good idea.



Father Robert Strittmatter baptizes an infant at San Mateo Mission. The mission has witnessed tremendous growth in its religious education program — a 200 percent increase in two years. An SIM matching grant will help the burgeoning community create more room for its growing needs. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

"We have to take pride in our parish, get involved, and show the diocese we can raise the money," he says. SIM money is an incentive to "get people pumped up and give them the drive to accomplish this."

Plans are in the early stages, but Barbosa is confident the 200 families registered at San Mateo will work to make a religious education building a reality.

"We're going to do it," he promises, adding he just isn't sure of the timing at this point.

Raising thousands of dollars is a monumental task, but "the needs are there," admits Msgr. Hubert Neu, St. Patrick pastor.

Two buildings currently used by San Mateo for meeting and administrative purposes — an old house and an old church building — should be torn down because of age, space, and design considerations.

"Without help from Sharing in Ministry, places like San Mateo would never [be able to] afford the buildings they need," Msgr. Neu explains. "I'm encouraging the people to work toward it."

Making necessary improvements or adding staff is always a struggle for small parishes. Nobody knows that better than Father Steve Berg, who has juggled the demands of four rural churches for the past four years. On a typical weekend, the priest travels 80 miles to say Mass and hear confessions at St. William in Montague, St. Joseph in Nocona, St. Jerome in Bowie, and St. Mary in Henrietta. Add sick and bereavement calls, administrative tasks, and counseling to his list of appointments, and the schedule is exhausting.

Help finally arrived last spring in the form of Russ Detwiler. Ordained a permanent deacon in the diocese 11 years ago, Detwiler moved back to Michigan in 2001 to be closer to

relatives. He and his wife, Cecilia returned to the Metroplex last spring and agreed to settle in Henrietta. Sharing in Ministry will cover a portion of the expenses incurred by the deacon as he assists the rural pastor with his cluster of parishes.

"For the past four years, I've relied on volunteer help almost exclusively," Fr. Berg explains. "When I came here, the only paid employee was the priest."

Since his arrival, Deacon Detwiler has spent time visiting the sick, helping with religious formation, and cataloging inventory at each parish for insurance purposes.

"Having him here is a real blessing," the pastor says. "He's somebody I respect, who shares my concerns. We have a similar outlook toward people, and the parishes are benefiting from his good management experience."

This extra pair of helping hands provides a sense of balance to the rural ministry that serves 450 households, three hospitals, seven nursing homes, and two jails.

"I can be more proactive than reactive now," Fr. Berg notes. "There's more time to plan, and we're planning farther ahead."

The Sharing in Ministry grant, which will pay the deacon's travel expenditures, is a gift appreciated by the rural Catholics.

"Sharing in Ministry is the connection between the diocese and these outlying parishes," Fr. Berg adds. "The people feel included and less isolated."

Detwiler, who served Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls before moving away, is enjoying the country lifestyle.

"It's busy, but not fast-paced," he says. "They're beautiful little parishes, and the people are wonderful. A deacon is supposed to serve, so I'm here to do whatever they need."



Olivia Wilson (left) and Cassandra Reyes, students at St. Rita School in East Fort Worth, exit a pew after a school Mass. Despite recent drought conditions in North Texas, St. Rita Principal Charlene Hymel gets nervous when she sees rain clouds develop because of the major leaks present throughout the school facility. A Sharing in Ministry grant will help the school to pay for these much-needed repairs. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)