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ON THE INSIDE

Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family comes to a close

Dialogue about issues facing today's family has come to a close -- ending a historic two-week Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. More than 250 people from around the world, each appointed by Pope Francis, participated including cardinals, bishops, priests, religious order reps, and lay people. While no definitive conclusions were made, the dialogue will be used to set the agenda for the next meeting of bishops to be held at the Vatican in October 2015. Read more about the issues discussed on pgs. 2-3.

This year's All Saints Day is not a Holy Day of Obligation

Because this year's All Saints Day falls on a Saturday, the obligation to attend Mass has been abrogated (lifted). But All Souls Day is on Sunday, Nov. 2 -- a day when Catholics are obligated to pray for the dead. Find out more about All Souls Day and why it is important to pray for those who have passed on -- page 11.



Extraordinary Synod of Bishops comes to a close

**Agenda for next year's synod will
come from dialogue of this year's
Extraordinary Synod**

Historic Extraordinary Synod of Bishops comes to a close

Archbishop Kurtz hopes synod's final report will 'refine and clarify'

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, said he hoped the final report of the Synod of Bishops on the family would improve on the assembly's midterm report in celebrating exemplary families, encouraging missionary outreach and emphasizing that the church's pastoral efforts must be grounded in Scripture and Catholic teaching.

The archbishop, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke to reporters Oct. 15 about the process of recommending amendments to the midterm report, which Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo of Esztergom-Budapest delivered two days earlier.

Cardinal Erdo's address stirred controversy inside and outside the synod hall with its strikingly conciliatory language toward people in situations contrary to church teaching, including divorced and civilly remarried

Catholics, cohabitating couples and those in same-sex unions.

The initial report stated, "In regard to homosexuality, there was noted the need for welcoming, with the right degree of prudence, so as not to create the impression of a positive valuation of that orientation," the summary said. "It was hoped that the same care would be taken in regard to cohabitation."

Many members of the synod objected to that statement, saying it did not accurately reflect the assembly's views.

Another part of the first report that Bishops objected to was the report's scarce references to the concept of sin, and encouraged the assembly to emulate the "prophetic tone of Jesus, to avoid the risk of conforming to the mentality of today's world."

Some members of the synod made their objections public.

U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, prefect of the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Signature, told Catholic World Report that the midterm report "advances po-

Editor's Note -- The discussions on these two pages show only what was discussed during the family synod. Nothing on these two pages are definitive conclusions. Pope Francis used the synod to LISTEN to what people are saying. The Synod in October 2015 will generate proposals for the pope's approval.

sitions which many synod fathers do not accept and, I would say, as faithful shepherds of the flock cannot accept. Clearly, the response to the document in the discussion which immediately followed its presentation manifested that a great number of synod fathers found it objectionable."

Cardinal Burke accused leaders of the synod of giving the public a distorted image of the proceedings, almost all of which are closed to the press.

"All of the information regarding the synod is controlled by the General Secretariat of the synod, which clearly has favored from the beginning the positions expressed" in the midterm report,

the cardinal said. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see the approach at work, which is certainly not of the church."

Archbishop Stanislaw Gadecki of Poznan, Poland, president of the Polish bishops' conference, told Vatican Radio that Cardinal Erdo's speech was not acceptable to many synod fathers, because it departed from the theology of St. John Paul II and reflected an ideology hostile to marriage by seeming to approve of same-sex couples raising children, among other ways.

The midterm report "should be an incentive to fidelity, family values, but instead seems to accept everything as it is," the arch-

bishop said.

The controversy over the report prompted the synod's General Secretariat to issue a statement Oct. 14, lamenting that a "value has been attributed to the document that does not correspond to its nature" and emphasizing that it is a "working document, which summarizes the interventions and debate of the first week, and is now being offered for discussion by the members of the synod."

Following the cardinal's address, the 191 synod fathers split into 10 discussion groups organized by language. Archbishop Kurtz was one of 18 bishops in his English-speaking group, which also included Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, one of nine members assigned to draft the synod's final report.

The archbishop said his group completed its work that morning, a half-day ahead of schedule, and had arrived at its recommendations with "great unanimity."

Archbishop Kurtz said the

Continued on pg. 10



POPE FRANCIS POSES WITH AUDITORS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON THE FAMILY as he arrives for the afternoon session at the Vatican Oct. 10. Pictured next to the pope are Italian Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, general secretary of the Synod of Bishops, and Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family. (CNS photo)

What was the purpose of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops?

The purpose of the Extraordinary Synod **was not** to reach definitive conclusions, but to use the dialogue to set the agenda for the next meeting of bishops to be held at Vatican in October 2015. That meeting will generate proposals for the pope's approval.

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Synod fathers ask: Does the Church need to watch its language?

Emerging theme calls for more appropriate language for today's pastoral care

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- In official reports of the closed-door talks at the Synod (sin-id) of Bishops on the family, an emerging theme has been the call for a new kind of language more appropriate for pastoral care today.

"Language appeared many, many times," Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, the briefer for English-speaking journalists, told reporters Oct. 7, the assembly's second working day. "There's a great desire that our language has to change in order to meet the very complex situations the church faces."

One bishop, whom Father Rosica did not name in accordance with synod rules, reportedly told fellow participants that "language such as 'living in sin,' 'intrinsically disordered' or 'contraceptive mentality' are not necessarily words that invite people to draw closer to Christ and the church." ("Intrinsically disordered" is a term used by the Catechism of the Catholic Church to describe homosexual acts.)

Speaking to the synod Oct. 7, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin spoke of the need for new language with which to communicate with married couples.

"To many, the language of the church appears to be a disincarnated language of telling people what to do, a one-way dialogue," the archbishop said, according to excerpts of his remarks published by the Irish bishops' conference. "The lived experience and struggle of spouses can help find more effective ways of expression of the fundamental elements of church teaching."

Following the same session,



POPE FRANCIS LISTENS as Italian Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, general secretary of the Synod of Bishops, left, speaks during the morning session of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family at the Vatican Oct. 13. At right is Cardinal Peter Erdo of Esztergom-Budapest, Hungary, relator for the synod. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier of Durban, South Africa, told Catholic News Service that "language is something we've overlooked for a good while; we've used language that is out of touch with the way people speak today."

"In the past, it was sufficient to say to people, 'You are going to hell if you continue this way of life.' Hell was a reality and it was something they knew and they understood it. But if you talk about hell today, people don't know what you are talking about," Cardinal Napier said. "So I think the emphasis is shifting (toward), 'how can you be in a loving relationship with Jesus, and through Jesus with your brother and sister in the church, if you are living in this condition which separates and alienates you from Jesus?'"

German Cardinal Walter Kasper, whose controversial proposal to make it easier for divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to receive Communion has been a major topic of discussion at the synod, told CNS Oct. 1 that a traditional description of such couples as practicing "perpetual adultery" is not acceptable in a pastoral context.

"If you tell people who live in this way and they do it in a responsible way, tell them that adultery, permanent adultery, I think they would feel insulted and offended. We must be very careful also in our language," Cardinal Kasper said in English. "Permanent adultery? It seems to me too strong."

Bishop Johann Bonny of Antwerp, Belgium, is not a member

of the synod, but in September he published a widely read essay calling on the assembly to initiate a range of major changes in the church, including in its language, which he argued is often "offensive" and "humiliating."

Couples living together outside of marriage, using contraception or resorting to in vitro fertilization -- all activities prohibited by Catholic moral teaching -- "deserve more respect and a more nuanced evaluation than the language of certain church documents appears to prescribe. The mechanisms of accusation and exclusion they have the potential to activate can only block the way to evangelization," Bishop Bonny wrote.

The synod heard an example of newer language Oct. 6, when

two non-voting auditors told Pope Francis and the rest of the assembly that Catholic parishes should welcome same-sex couples.

In their remarks, Ron and Mavis Pirola used the word "gay," rather than "homosexual person," which has been the preferred term in official Vatican discourse. The Pirolas may have taken their cue from the pope, who famously used the word "gay" during an in-flight news conference in July 2013.

The Pirolas also said much of the church's teaching is expressed in language that seems to be from "another planet" and "not terribly relevant to our own experiences."

Not all synod fathers have the same idea of what language the church should adopt or discard.

In remarks to the assembly Oct. 9, Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois of Paris, one of three synod presidents appointed by the pope, denounced the "contraceptive mentality" he said leads many Catholics to think the use of artificial birth control is not a sin.

Later that day, Cardinal Vingt-Trois told CNS that, although the church must "find modes of expression and modes of communication that will allow it to announce the good news so that it may be heard," changing pastoral language does not mean changing the language in which theologians formulate church teaching.

"When a physician makes a diagnosis, he uses terms to designate precisely the disease in question, but these terms, if he tells them to the patient, he will not understand them. Therefore, he must explain the diagnosis with words that are not technical words. In theology, it is the same thing," Cardinal Vingt-Trois said.

"When one addresses people to announce the good news of Christ, one does not teach a theology course. One tells them the contents of the theology but with a vocabulary they can understand," the cardinal said. "I was a professor of theology. When I taught a theology course, I did not give a sermon; that is another literary genre."

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As we move ahead through the month of October it is good to take note of the two major observances traditionally associated with this month -- Respect Life month and the month of the Rosary.

This year we mark the 800th anniversary of the gift of the Rosary. I want to thank all of the pastors who held special events commemorating the Rosary month or the Rosary anniversary these past few weeks. It is important to pray the Rosary together as a community -- especially with our young people and families.

I just returned from Catholic Extension's biennial meeting of bishops who are shepherds of 'mission dioceses.' (A mission



ONE IN THE LORD

Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog
Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria

diocese refers to an area in which the church is not yet firmly established and therefore, needs outside assistance. Since our diocese fits that description, we are a mission diocese.)

Each year we receive significant grant money from this Chicago-based organization to assist

us with essential evangelization ministries here in the diocese -- one of which is the Church Today. We would have great difficulty without Catholic Extension's generous financial assistance in these areas.

The main focus of the gathering in Chicago was the mission

of the Church in the light of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation: *The Joy of the Gospel*. We were reminded that the core mission of the Church is evangelization, the sharing of the good news of salvation in Christ proclaimed to all people. The mission began with our baptism and should continue throughout our lives. Our Holy Father reminded us that we need to reach out in a special way to those on the fringes of society.

I want to offer my personal condolences and prayerful support on behalf of the entire diocesan family to Father Bruce Miller who recently experienced the death of his mother.

Continue to be vigilant in the area of religious freedom. With

elections just weeks away, we need to examine all candidates for all offices in the light of our faith. It is our responsibility as citizens to take active roles in pursuit of the public good.

Let me again add a personal comment. I have finally been cleared by my doctor to resume driving. That will simplify many things. I do appreciate your ongoing prayers and encouragement.

May the Lord bless all of you as we approach the celebrations of All Saints and All Souls in early November.

True 'reformation' seeks renewing of the heart and mind

Last year on Reformation Day (October 31) one of my cousins mentioned the Protestant "holiday" on Facebook. It was a celebratory post. "Happy Reformation Day!"

Reformation Day marks the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. It highlights the Protestant reformers who began new denominations rather than remaining within the Catholic Church. I mention it in this month's column because many fallen-away Catholics have basically done the same thing. Some fallen-away Catholics just stop practicing any kind of faith, but many go in search of something else. There is something they don't like, something they want to see changed, and they are tired of tapping their feet, waiting for the Church to see it the way they see it.

We are a people who want change, we want it now, and we'd really like it if the Catholic Church agreed with our point of view. When we realize that isn't likely to happen, we are out the door and on a mission to find the faith community that sees truth as we see it.

Truth is unchanging (Psalm 199:160). Sure, new things come up now and then, and Mother Church knows that a definitive

answer on the things the culture proposes must be weighed carefully. She consults Sacred Scripture and Church Tradition and faithful theologians. She gathers the input of bishops from all over the world. She ponders the entire deposit of wisdom given to her by the Holy Spirit.

The frustrated one doesn't have time for all that waiting, pondering, and praying.

I'm a preacher's daughter and a convert to the Catholic faith. It provides an interesting point of view. Christian division grieves me. I simply cannot celebrate the genesis of denominationalism. I affirm the good I see in those of other faith communities, of those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves outside the Church (CCC #818 and #848). But Reformation Day? No, I see nothing to celebrate in that.

Why celebrate Christian division? Why delight in the fact that

so many have gone a different way and left the Sacraments behind - the Eucharist behind?

We know that Christian division hurts. We know Our Lord prayed for Christian unity for His apostles and for those who would come to believe through their words (John 17:20). So, what do we do when we see posts about Reformation Day or we hear that someone else has left the Catholic Church for another faith community?

When we are tempted to get irritated, frustrated or discouraged, let's remake it into a day in which we reform the inner man. We do a deep and thorough examination of conscience. We do our own gut check. What do I need to change? What is out of sorts in me?

When we are frustrated by Christian division and a culture that still holds on to anti-Catholic bias, let's call for a day in which

we make acts of true reformation and reparation. Let us reform our attitudes toward the poor, the unborn, the immigrant, those who can do absolutely nothing for us. Let's figure out what we can do for them.

Let us reform our dreams and goals. Let's put Christ and His Church at the top of our list. Let's reform our silent acceptance of another's rejection of the faith. Let's determine to seek that one out and share the joy we have

in our Catholic faith. Let's pray with Our Lord, "Father, make us one."

For you see, the faith does not need to be reformed. We need it. The teachings do not need to be refabricated, recalibrated. We need it.

Let's have a little more renewing of the heart and mind. Reformation of the inner man. That is the true reformation that leads to Christian unity.



CATHOLIC BY GRACE

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All Saints Day -- Saturday, Nov. 1
Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed Souls
(All Souls Day) -- Sunday, Nov. 2

A Novena (means 'nine') is nine days of prayer

Nine reasons you may want to consider praying a novena

catholicdoors.com offers a list of 226

Novenas

- Advent Novena
- All Souls Novena
- Novena Before Christmas
- Novena for Impossible Requests
- Novena for Priests
- Novena for the Dead
- Novena for the Holy Souls in Purgatory
- Novena for Marriage and the Family
- Novena for the Needs of Pope Francis
- Novena for the Protection of the Unborn
- Novena for the Salvation of Souls and Conversion of Sinners
- Novena, Miraculous 54 Days Rosary
- Novena to Our Lady of Good Success
- Novena to Our Lady of Hope
- Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes
- Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- Novena to Our Lady of Prompt Succor
- Novena to Our Lady of the Rosary
- Novena to Our Lady Undoer of Knots
- Novena to St. Anthony of Padua
- Novena to St. Francis
- Novena to St. Joseph
- Novena to St. Jude
- Novena to The Holy Angels
- Novena to The Holy Spirit
- Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Caitlin Bootsma
Consultant to
the VIRTUS® Programs

Many people are not familiar with novena prayers, but it is a devotion that has a long history in the Church.

The practice derives from the tradition that Mary and the Apostles waited nine days in the Upper Room until the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost. This was undoubtedly a time of intense prayer, leading to the many graces received at the first Pentecost.

Today, novenas are considered to be a set of prayers that are said over a period of nine days. Sometimes, like the novena to the Holy Spirit, novenas are said directly to God. Other novenas are said asking for the intercession of Mary or the saints.

While novenas can be prayed individually, many Catholics around the world will begin to pray a novena on the nine days leading up to a saint's feast day. These prayers are often said with a particular intention in mind, but, of course, you can pray them even without praying for anything specific!

Novenas can be a great way of praying for those to whom that you minister. Additionally, if you teach children (or adults!), you may consider sharing this time-

For more novenas,

go to:

www.praymorenovenas.com

www.catholicdoors.com

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honored tradition of the Church with them.

In honor of the nine days that novenas are prayed, I offer nine reasons you may want to consider praying a novena.

• **Revive your prayer life:** Praying a set of prayers for a set length of time may just be the reminder you need to start praying daily again.

• **Practice spiritual discipline:** You might not think it is difficult to pray for nine days in a row, but it can be. Remembering to keep the prayers with you and to pray them consistently will strengthen you in the virtue of perseverance.

• **Become familiar with new saints:** There are many novenas out there. Often the prayers include details about the saints and their path to holiness. By praying for their intercession, you may just find a new friend in heaven.

• **Live out the liturgical year:** Praying novenas in anticipation of Feast Days is a great way to enrich your participation in the liturgical year. How much richer will your celebration of the Nativity be if you are praying for the nine days leading up to Christmas?

• **Share the faith with others:** Novenas are a great way to pray with your family; students or those to whom you minister. By praying novenas together, you can unite as a group for a single intention that is important to all of you.

• **Spend time discerning:** If you are in the midst of making an important decision, a novena can be the perfect way to ask God to make His will known for your life. People have prayed novenas about job offers, marriage proposals and where to move.

• **Grow closer to the Church:** The practice of novenas is universal. When you pray a novena, you are joining with men and women around the world.

• **Receive graces:** The Lord wants to shower us with graces. When we dedicate time to praying novenas, we ask humbly for those gifts that God has in store for us.

• **Increase in holiness:** If our ultimate goal in life is to reach heaven, then what could be more important than growing in a relationship with God? Praying novenas signals your openness to spending time with Him.

Interested in finding out about different kind of novenas? You can find a very comprehensive list here.

Or, if you are really ready to start praying more novenas, you can sign up for www.praymorenovenas.com, a website that delivers novena prayers right to your email account.

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ST. ANTHONY CHURCH (Natchitoches) BANK NOTE BURNING. St. Anthony of Padua Church in Natchitoches held a “bank note burning” celebration Sept. 21 after the 11 a.m. Mass. The congregation watched as Father John O’Brien, pastor, and Gerry Hooper, head of the Holy Name Society men’s group, torched the bank note for the Activity Hall, built in 2006. After the bank note disintegrated into ashes, the parishioners celebrated with a potluck dinner in the Activity Hall. “Thanks to the hard work and generosity of St. Anthony’s parishioners, the men’s group, the Altar Rosary/Christian Mother’s group, and bingo committee, the hall note was paid in full, two years earlier than anticipated,” said Father O’Brien.



OLPS LIVING ROSARY. Fr. Dan O’Connor,

and Fr. Bill Gearheard lead the Living Rosary on Oct. 7. The student body and faculty/staff began at the steps of OLPS school on 21st Street and walked to the OLPS church while saying the Rosary, where a special Adoration service took place. Each year, OLPS School takes part in this wonderful tradition. Prayer is an important part of the daily life at OLPS School, so to be able to go outside on a beautiful day and truly experience and enjoy God’s gifts as the Rosary is prayed is a blessing.

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Contributions to any of the burses or to establish a new burse should be sent to the
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CLERGY RETREAT. Approximately 30 priests from around the diocese gathered Sept. 29 - Oct. 3 at Maryhill Renewal Center for the annual Priest Retreat. Priests are required to attend at least one retreat a year, (either in the diocese or away). Father Tom Boyer was the guest speaker.



ST. RITA CHURCH (Alexandria) VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR. Florence Sanders received the St. Rita Volunteer of the Year award presented during the annual volunteer luncheon held Sept. 28. Florence has been a volunteer for many years serving in many different ministries. Congratulations Flo!



ROSARY RALLY. Madeline White, from OLPS parish in Alexandria, hosted an "America Needs Fatima" Rosary Rally on Oct. 11. Neighborhood friends and family joined her in praying the Rosary outside.



CONFIRMATION AT ST. MARY'S TRAINING FACILITY. Bishop Ronald Herzog administered the sacrament of Confirmation to four residents at St. Mary's Training Facility on Oct. 12. Pictured are (l-r) Andrew, Cole, Daniel, and Cole with their sponsors. Sister Linda Norsworthy, OLS is St. Mary's director of Religious Education and Mrs. Vel Wallet is the catechist/confirmation teacher. Sister Mavis Champagne, administrator of St. Mary's and Deacon E.J. Barre also participated in the Confirmation Mass.

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Construction of N.O. Planned Parenthood abortion facility brought to a standstill

Since June 26, 2014, the Planned Parenthood in progress sitting on Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans has remained untouched. That's because protests and pesky violations have brought construction to a standstill.

The planned 8,000 square-foot facility could perform up to 30 abortions a day and Benjamin Clapper, the executive director of Louisiana Right to Life, said Louisianans are rejecting Planned Parenthood's agenda.

Even though the organization has tried to use misleading wording to describe the purpose of their new multimillion dollar building, companies aren't being fooled. Clapper told Townhall:

"Planned Parenthood has appealed to contractors across south Louisiana to build what they describe only as a "medical office building." They never mention abortion, and rarely do you see the words "Planned Parenthood" on proposals, plans, or other documents. But even with this deception, people have learned who Planned Parenthood is and what they truly want to do on Claiborne Avenue: sell more abortions. Louisiana is a pro-life state, and people want little to do with facilities that sell abortion."

Of the contractors Planned Parenthood did manage to hire, two of them have been cited for violations. Documents provided



NO WORKERS on the construction site of the Planned Parenthood abortion facility in New Orleans have delayed the project.

by Clapper revealed that one contractor, Barre McNeely, used an unlicensed name; and a sub-contractor, Quality Diamond Products, LLC, wasn't licensed for work in Louisiana. As a result, these companies received thousands of dollars in fines.

As if construction violations weren't enough, the New Orleans Planned Parenthood is also dealing with a lack of enthusiasm. Take, for instance, the organization's scarcely attended job fair:

"Planned Parenthood invited over 500 companies to a job fair to recruit them to help the construction of their abortion facil-

ity. At most, 40 people showed up."

Forty too many. In fact, it seems most people who have shown up to the site have done so to protest. Louisiana has been named the "most pro-life state" in the nation for the past five years by Americans United for Life. Is it any wonder residents are distancing themselves from Planned Parenthood's doors?

Here's hoping construction is delayed – forever.

LifeNews Note: Cortney O'Brien is a Townhall web editor, where this was originally published.

Martha Neil Anthony



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FOR LIFE

The 2014 Fall 40 Days for Life campaign (Sept. 24- Nov. 2) is more than halfway finished and results, so far, are super impressive!

The campaign is simple. For 40 days, prayer groups stand outside an abortion facility and pray and have pregnancy information and resources available nearby.

"Saves" (babies that were not aborted when a mother went to an abortion facility and then changed her mind) have been reported in many of the campaign cities so far. Since 2007, when the campaign first started, the organization claims their efforts have prevented 8,973 abortions, leading to the closure of 54 abortion clinics.

The latest report came from Shreveport, Louisiana:

"What a day!" said Chris, the 40 Days for Life coordinator in Shreveport. "We had two women who said they were going to have their babies," he excitedly explained. "Yeah that's right – two saves!"

There was another woman who arrived for a pregnancy test, but she never entered the abortion facility. She instead visited the pregnancy resource center nearby.

"So all in all, that's three turnaways!" Chris said. "Thanks to all who are praying from home and on the sidewalk."

Other "40 Days of Life" campaigns were also conducted in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The campaign ends on Nov. 2.

The name refers to a pattern of several events lasting for 40 days repeated in the Bible, such as in Noah's Ark, Moses' 40 days on Mount Sinai, and Jesus's 40 days in the desert.

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Jeannie Petrus, Editor

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October is Respect Life Month

Pope: Greed, throwaway culture fuel 'hidden euthanasia' of elderly

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis warned against the abandonment and neglect of the elderly, calling it a "hidden euthanasia" rooted in today's "poisonous" culture of disposal and an economic system of greed.

In the presence of his predecessor, Pope Francis also thanked retired Pope Benedict XVI for staying to live at the Vatican and being like "a wise grandfather at home."

"A people who don't take care of their grandparents and don't treat them well is a people with no future. Why no future? Because they lose the memory (of the past) and they sever their own roots," he said.

The pope's comments came during a special encounter and Mass for older people in St. Peter's Square Sept. 28. Some 40,000 grandparents, retired men and women, and their families attended "The Blessing for a Long Life" event, organized by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

Pope Francis specifically invited Pope Benedict to attend the event, making it the third time since his retirement in 2013 that the German pontiff has made a rare appearance in public with his successor.



WOMAN EATS LUNCH AT HOME FOR ELDERLY. An 89-year-old lady, eats her lunch by a window at a home for the elderly. Pope Francis warned against the abandonment and neglect of the elderly, calling it a "hidden euthanasia." (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

Carrying a cane and looking strong, the 87-year-old pope arrived about one hour into the event, which featured music and testimonies from families. About 10 minutes later, while the famed Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli sang "Con te partiro" ("I'll Go With You"), Pope Francis made his entrance with a small group of families. He immediately went to greet and embrace Pope Benedict,

who only stayed for the next hour, leaving before the start of Mass.

Addressing him as "Your Holiness," Pope Francis thanked the retired pontiff for his presence, telling the crowd, "I really like having him living here in the Vatican, because it's like having a wise grandfather at home."

The wisdom and love of older people are instrumental for building the future, and they can

even cheer up grumpy teenagers, the pope said.

"It's very good for you to go visit an older person. Look at our kids. Sometimes we see them being listless and sad; (if) they go visit an older person, they become happy," he said.

"Older people, grandparents have an ability to understand very difficult situations, a great talent. And when they pray about these

situations, their prayers are strong and powerful."

But there are many who instead prey on their fragilities, and the pope warned against the "inhuman" violence being waged against the elderly and children in areas of conflict.

Harm can also be waged quietly, he said, through many forms of neglect and abandonment, which "are a real and true hidden euthanasia."

People need to fight against "this poisonous throwaway culture," which targets children, young people and the elderly, on "the pretext of keeping the economic system 'balanced,' where the focus is not on the human being but on the god of money."

While residential care facilities are important for those who don't have a family who can care for them, it's important these institutes be "truly like homes, not prisons," the pope said, and that their placement there is in the best interest of the older person, "not someone else."

These retirement homes should be like "sanctuaries" that breathe life into a community whose members are drawn to visit and look after the residents like they would an older sibling, he said.

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Synod _____ Synod couple calls for 'robust, creative' family programs

Continued from pg. 2

group's proposed changes had three basic purposes: "to highlight the importance of the witness of sacrificial, loving families today," to encourage a missionary spirit of "reaching out and accompanying people, starting where people are," and "to locate clearly our pastoral avenues and pastoral outreach ... within the beauty of sacred Scripture and our church teaching."

Asked about the midterm report's call for the church to recognize the "positive reality" of non-marital unions when they reflect "authentic family values," the archbishop said his group had sought to "refine and clarify what that means."

When the church reaches out to someone, he said, it begins by "pointing to positive elements that are already in that person's life or that person's relationship that will accompany them. It's not a way of denying but rather it's a way of amplifying the beauty of our church teaching."

Archbishop Kurtz said his group agreed that "we have to do a better job" in proclaiming "Humanae Vitae," the 1968 encyclical by Pope Paul VI that affirmed the prohibition of contraception, as a "'yes' to the gift of faithful love that's open to life."

In response to a question about particular challenges facing American families, the archbishop said "our biggest problem is that individuals in the United States are tempted to feel that they are the mercy of statistics." Americans need a "sense of inspiration," he said. "We need that to live full lives, to live loving lives with others."

VIRTUS Training Sessions

- Oct. 23 (Thursday) -- 5:45 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, Pineville (Youth Center on Sanders St.)
 - Nov. 18 (Tuesday) -- 6 p.m., St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria
- To pre-register, go to virtus.org
For more information, call 318-445-6424 x 213.

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

(CNS) -- Existing diocesan programs and Catholic organizations aimed at helping Catholic families fulfill their vocation clearly are not strong enough to meet modern needs, a Wisconsin couple told the Synod of Bishops.

"We must develop more robust and creative methods to share the fundamental truth that marriage is a divine gift from God, rather than merely a man-made institution," Alice Heinzen told the synod, reading a speech she and her husband, Jeff, wrote.

The Heinzens, from the Diocese of La Crosse, were named synod auditors by Pope Francis and were chosen to introduce the work of the synod's afternoon discussion on pastoral programs designed to meet the challenges facing families. Alice is director of the diocesan Office for Marriage and Family Life; Jeff is president of McDonell Catholic Schools in Chippewa Falls.

The Catholic Church, its parishes and organization need to review "the methods by which we teach our children about the nature of human sexuality and the vocation of marriage," Heinzen said.

In addition, when Catholics talk about vocations and God's call to each of the baptized to serve the church and humanity, they cannot speak only of priesthood and religious life. "Marriage should be included in all programs designed to explore vocations."

Presenting marriage as a vocation and the immediate preparation of couples for marriage are not enough, she said. The church also needs to review "how we provide for the aftercare of marriage that can help couples deepen their relationship."

The Heinzens said they recognize that their parents' example and their family life growing up were major factors in their continuing to be active today; Alice said she remembers seeing her father leave early to go to Mass before work, praying the rosary together during the month of May and attending Sunday Mass as a family.

"To all this we can add our mothers who reminded us to always love our siblings, to use our best manners with others, and to save our pennies to help those less fortunate," she said. "Our homes were schools of love and virtue and our parents were the primary educators."



ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH E. KURTZ of Louisville, Ky., and USCCB president, talks with Jeff and Alice Heinzen of Menomonie, Wis., as they leave the morning session of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Oct. 24-25 RETROUVAILLE (For Troubled Marriages)

Retrouvaille (announced retro-vi) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information about or to register for the program to be held on Oct. 24-26 at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit: www.HelpOurMarriage.com

Nov. 2 MARRIAGE PREP PROGRAM (For Engaged Couples)

Strong Foundations: A Marriage Preparation Program for Catholic Couples will be offered three times during the upcoming year. All workshops are held on a Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Nov. 2 -- St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport
- Feb. 1 -- Sacred Heart, Pineville

- May 3 -- OLPS, Alexandria
- The presenters for this workshop are Mandi Chapman and Holly Carbo. To register visit www.comprehensivetherapygroup.com or call 318.445.1651.

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE For Widowed, Separated, Divorced

Widowed, separated or divorced? Don't know where to turn? Struggling with grief or loss?

Beginning Experience is a weekend away toward a lifetime of change held 2-3 times a year at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville. Program helps grieving single-again persons emerge from the darkness of grief into the light of a new beginning, and move into the future with renewed hope. Cost is \$185, which includes two nights' lodging and meals.

For more information, about when the next Beginning Experience will be held, call Martha at 985-226-6458 or Anna at 318-452-2678.

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All Souls Day is Sunday, Nov. 2

Why do we pray for the dead on All Souls Day?

Often overshadowed by the two days preceding it, Halloween (October 31) and All Saints Day (November 1), All Souls Day is a solemn feast in the Roman Catholic Church. It commemorates all of those who have died and are now in Purgatory, being cleansed of their venial sins and the temporal punishments for the mortal sins that they had confessed and are atoning for before entering fully into Heaven.

On All Souls Day, we not only remember the dead, but we apply our efforts, through prayer, almsgiving, and the Mass, to their release from Purgatory.

Historically, the Western tradition identifies the general custom of praying for the dead dating as far back as 2 Maccabees 12:42-46.

The custom of setting apart a special day for intercession for certain of the faithful on November 2 was first established by St. Odilo of Cluny (d. 1048) at his abbey of Cluny in 998. From Cluny the custom spread to the other houses of the Cluniac order, which became the largest and most extensive network of monasteries in Europe.

The celebration was soon adopted in several dioceses in France, and spread throughout the Western Church. It was accepted in Rome only in the fourteenth century. While Nov. 2 remained



PRIESTS PRAYING FOR PRIESTS. The priests of the diocese gathered Oct. 2 for the annual visit to the Clergy Cemetery located at Maryhill. The priests pray the rosary and place a rose on the tomb of all the priests layed to rest there. All of the names of the former priests of the diocese are prayed for and mentioned by name.

the liturgical celebration, in time the entire month of November became associated in the Western Catholic tradition with prayer for the departed; lists of names of those to be remembered being placed in the proximity of the altar on which the sacrifice of the mass is offered.

There are two plenary indulgences attached to All Souls Day,

one for visiting a church and another for visiting a cemetery. (The plenary indulgence for visiting a cemetery can also be obtained every day from Nov. 1-8, and, as a partial indulgence, on any day of the year.) While the actions are performed by the living, the merits of the indulgences are applicable only to the souls in Purgatory.

Praying for the dead is a

Christian obligation. In the modern world, when many have come to doubt the Church's teaching on Purgatory, the need for such prayers has only increased. The Church devotes the month of November to prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and participation in the Mass of All Souls Day is a good way to begin the month.

How can I celebrate All Souls Day?

- Go to Mass
- Pray for the faithful departed
- Visit a church
- Visit a cemetery

Plenary Indulgence for All Souls Day

Requirements for Obtaining a Plenary Indulgence for a soul in Purgatory on All Souls Day (Nov. 2nd)

- Piously visit a church to pray for the faithful departed on Nov. 2

- Say one "Our Father" and the "Creed" in the visit to the church

- Say one "Our Father" and one "Hail Mary" for the intentions of the Pope

- Worthily receive Holy Communion (ideally on the same day)

- Make a Sacramental Confession within a week of (before or after) All Souls Day

- that one be free from all attachment to sin, even venial sin.

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THE ST. MARY'S (Natchitoches) JUNIOR HIGH CHEERLEADERS were invited to perform at halftime of the LSU game on Sept. 27. The cheerleaders spent the day with the LSU Tiger Girls practicing for their halftime routine. The SMJH cheerleaders met cheerleaders from all over the state and shared the field with them in an unforgettable performance in Death Valley. Pictured from left to right are: _____, Tiger Girl Jenna, _____, and cheer coach Micah Elliott. We are proud of these girls for representing St. Mary's.



ST. MARY'S (Natchitoches) STUDENTS ELECTED TO STATE 4-H BOARD POSITIONS. Three students from St. Mary's School in Natchitoches were recently elected to positions on the State 4-H Board. Pictured are _____, Food & Fitness Board; _____, Fashion Board; and _____, Science, Engineering & Technology Board. Congratulations!

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"Citizens cannot be indifferent to politics:

None of us can say, 'I have nothing to do with this, they govern.'

No, no, I am responsible for their governance I have to do the best so that they govern well, I have to do my best by participating in politics according to my ability. I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!"

- Pope Francis

Pope Francis: Homily at Mass, September 16, 2013



SACRED HEART SCHOOL (Moreauville) ARCHERY CLUB. Sacred Heart School in Moreauville recently teamed up with the Archery in Louisiana Schools (ALAS) program to begin offering an Archery Club for students in grades 4-8. ALAS, the state's version of the National Archery in School Program (NASP), was developed several years ago to help educators looking for a way to improve student motivation, attention, behavior, attendance, and focus. The program develops micro and macro motor skills as well as listening and observation skills. Sacred Heart

School is the first school in Avoyelles Parish to offer the club. Pictured above (right) are the students currently participating in the program and (left) practices "the pull" as coach Joshua Lemoine uses bow strings to teach the students beginners archery skills in coordination and balance. ALAS participants are eligible to compete in state, national and world tournaments. Joshua and Raquel Lemoine will serve as coaches for the club. In addition, Sacred Heart School recently from the ALAS for equipment for the program.



ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECT. Todd Whatley and Frances Boudreaux, from the Food Bank's Good Food Project, let get their hands dirty while planting carrot seeds in a raised garden on the the grounds of St. Anthony School in Bunkie. Mrs. Dorothy Juneau's (far right) 3rd grade class are participating in the school's garden project.



ST. MARY'S (Natchitoches) BALLOON RELEASE. 1st graders at St. Mary's honored the Blessed Mother on her birthday, (Sept. 8) with a balloon release. After the kids sang songs and prayed for their loved ones, intentions were written on blue balloons which were released. After the service, they enjoyed blue sugar cookies and blue punch.



OLPS TSHIRT DESIGN WINNERS: Winners of the OLPS Fall Festival t-shirt design contest are (l-r) . The final design is at right.





Fall Festivals

- Oct. 25-26 St. Rita Catholic Church, Alexandria**
 Saturday: 4 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. -- gumbo, Halloween costume contest, bingo, games
 Sunday: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. -- Dinners for sale, games, white elephant sale

- Nov. 1-2 St. Frances Cabrini Church Cabrini Fest, Alexandria**
 Saturday: 9 a.m - 6 p.m.
 Xtreme Obstacle course run, pancake breakfast, games, food, bingo, silent auction
 Sunday: 10:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m. BBQ chicken dinner

- Nov. 8-9 Sts. Francis & Anne Church Autumn Fest, Kolin**
 Saturday: starts at 8 a.m.
 5K run/walk, games, crafts, plants, train for kids, lots of fair food, cooking contests, bingo
 Sunday: starts after 10:30 a.m. Mass



ST. JOSEPH PARISH (Marksville) FAMILY PICNIC was held on the Church Hall grounds Sept. 27 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Activities included musical entertainment, bingo, youth Jupiter Jump and obstacle course with slide, face painting, duck pond, games, and prizes. BBQ hamburgers & hot dogs, cold drinks, chips, and cookies were served. Approximately 400 people attended this fun and free event.



The Church Today is planning to feature the choirs in our diocese in the January 2015 issue. If your choir(s) would like to be pictured in this special section of the Church Today, please send a good clear (high resolution) picture of your choir(s) to jpetrus@diocesealex.org or mail to Church Today, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria, LA 71303. The deadline to submit a picture is **Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2015.**

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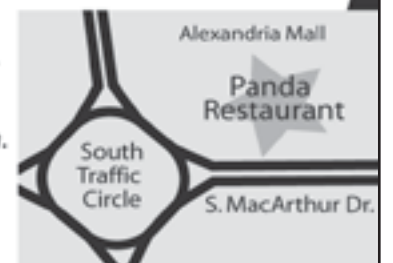
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COMMUNION. OLPS parishioners line up to receive Communion during the outdoor Mass held on the OLPS playground at the end of the school's annual Fall Festival.



OUTDOOR MASS: Fr. Dan O'Connor celebrates Mass outdoors with Deacon Todd Marye to close the Fall Festival at OLPS.



DINO DIG. The younger kids enjoyed the Dino Dig, one of the many games sponsored by the classes.



CLASH OF CLANS. perform to Clash of Clans in the OLPS Talent Show.

perform to Clash



KIDS ON STAGE. OLPS students play a balloon game on-stage with Stephanie Laborde, a parent and entertainment chair for the festival.



BUCKING BULL. An OLPS student gets tossed from the bucking bull.

CARA reports takes closer look at women religious orders

Story of 'why' members have declined in past 50 years takes some 'disentangling'

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A longtime trend of declining numbers of women in religious orders is unpacked a bit in a new study by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

In the report released Oct. 13, the social science researchers of CARA observed that the demographical story of women religious in the United States takes some disentangling.

Although past studies have talked about the rapid decline in the number of nuns in the country starting after the Second Vatican Council, "such studies did not provide the more nuanced narrative of what decline meant for the individual religious institutes," the report said. "How, for example, did religious institutes respond to declining membership?"

From a peak in 1965 of 181,000, the number of women religious in the U.S. has steadily declined to the current 50,000. That's about how many sisters there were in the United States 100 years ago, said the report: "Population Trends Among Religious Institutes of Women," by CARA staffers Mary L. Gautier and Mark M. Gray, and Erick Berrelleza, a Jesuit scholastic at Boston College.

CARA found that as their numbers declined, some religious orders reorganized their internal structures, while others merged with other religious institutes.



Some have been bolstered by sisters from other countries or women who joined a religious order later in life. Others simply stopped serving in the United States.

"In the face of diminishment," it said, "women religious have innovated by responding with new models when old models proved ineffective."

That's partly why the report refers to disentangling, Gautier said. Some whole institutes disappeared from the Official Catholic

Directory, a reference book published annually, whether by being folded into another organization, by leaving the United States or adapting in another way.

The report pointed to a flaw in assumptions about the growth in women's religious vocations coming primarily in orders that are "traditionalist" -- meaning for example, those whose members wear a full religious habit -- while institutes whose members do not wear a traditional habit are declining.

"One of the most striking findings regarding new entrants is that almost equal numbers of women have been attracted" to both kinds of religious orders, the CARA report quoted. Gautier's book categorized the two types of religious orders according to whether the organizations belong to one or the other of two leadership organizations, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Council of Major Superiors of Women.

The LCWR's member organizations, which account for about 80 percent of the country's women religious, had among them 73 postulants, 117 novices and 317 women who had taken temporary vows in 2009.

Although its member organizations account for a much smaller percentage of the nuns in the U.S., CMSWR organizations had about the same number of women in formation as did LCWR institutes, said Gautier -- 73 postulants, 158 novices and 304 who had taken temporary vows.

Among other items in the report, CARA pointed to several institutes that stood out in the data for having a "slowing rate of decline" in number of members. When the authors dug a bit, they found that such slowing sometimes was the result of one community absorbing another.

It cited the merger of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, Massachusetts, in the mid-1970s with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Fall River, Massachusetts.

"It is not that the Sisters of

St. Joseph of Springfield exhibited a sudden increase in new vocations, but rather these two mergers account for the upswing," the CARA report said. "In such cases, the apparent slowing rate of decline is not related to an increase of new vocations; instead, it is these mergers that account for the increases in membership."

There are some institutes that show consistent growth even without such mergers, the report said.

"These communities do not exhibit the growth-followed-by-decline pattern and seem to point to even further expansion into the foreseeable future," it said. For instance, the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, was established in 1973 with nine members. The community has continued to grow gradually, and its membership will approach 100 by the end of the decade, the report predicted.

In some cases statistically significant growth actually represents very few people, Gautier noted.

Six institutes that have been cited in anecdotes and news reports as evidence of a reversal of the trend toward decline, have increased their membership by a combined total of 267 people since 1970. That number, the report said, is "too few to have an effect on the overall picture."

"Whatever these institutes have done or are doing is unlikely to offset losses in the tens of thousands elsewhere. It is simply not enough."



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Nov. 2-8 is Vocations Awareness Week

LSU-A student answers vocation call to join Little Sisters of the Poor

By Jeannie Petrus
CT editor

For Nicole Orzeck, it wasn't a question of if or when, it was the matter of "which one" of the religious communities she would join when she became of age to enter the convent.

"When I was in the 7th grade, I read a book about Mary and decided then that I wanted to be like her," said 22-year-old Nicole, who graduated from LSU-A this past fall. "I talked to Father Chad Partain (at Cathedral at that time), who inspired me to seek out different religious communities."

When Nicole was 18 years old, she entered a cloistered community of Carmelite nuns, but soon realized that that kind of lifestyle was not a good fit for her.

She enrolled at LSU-A and began working on a degree in nursing. As a frequent visitor to the LSU-A Catholic Student Center, Nicole confided in Lynn Ray, the campus minister, about her desire to enter a religious community.

"Lynn was extremely encouraging and supportive of helping me to discern my vocation and to discover the different communities," she said. "Lynn also put me in touch with several priests -- Fr. Kenneth Michiels, Joy Retnazihamoni, John Pardue, and Blake Deshautelle -- who were also very supportive."

Through the process, Nicole learned that there are a lot of religious communities of women to choose from, each with a differ-



NICOLE ORZECK JOINS LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR. Nicole Orzeck, from St. Francis Xavier Cathedral parish, is congratulated by Sister Carolyn, the vocations director for Little Sisters of the Poor, after deciding to join the religious community located in Mobile, Ala.

ent focus of ministry.

Some of the ministries of the different religious communities include schools, hospitals and medical professions, domestic and foreign mission work, orphanages, nursing home care and working with the poor.

After researching several communities on the internet, and visiting with local sisters, her next step was to visit the communities she was interested in. With the help of Lynn Ray, she traveled to Mobile, Ala., where she visited the Little Sisters of the Poor.

"I felt 'at home' when I visited the Little Sisters," she said. "I

felt in my heart that this is where I am suppose to be."

"Because my grandmother had Alzheimer's and I felt comfortable helping her, I knew I wanted to continue working with the elderly," she said. "I choose the Little Sisters of the Poor, because of its ministry with the elderly, and because 'it just felt right.'"

As part of her formal discernment, Nicole is currently working as a CNA (certified nurses aide) at the Little Sisters of the Poor Sacred Heart Residence in Mobile.

She also is living in one of the community homes, where

Are you considering A Religious Vocation?

Ever wonder if God might be calling you to become a Catholic nun or sister? Don't know where to begin now that you feel drawn to looking into religious life?

1. Pray -- Be open to listening to God. Embrace the possibility of whatever God has in mind for you.

2. Meet Nuns -- Do you know any real nuns at your parish or school? Interacting with nuns gives you a chance to begin to imagine yourself as a nun and to see how it "fits."

3. Talk with a Mentor -- Reach out to a family member or a trusted friend that will be supportive of you while you explore religious life and this feeling of being called to become a nun.

4. Contact a Religious Community -- You'll know when it's the right time for you to move from learning about religious life to formally exploring it with a specific community.


5. Work with a Vocations Director -- The vocations director of a particular religious community is the official person who helps you to get to know the community and to discern God's call in your life.

6. Join the Community -- Once you and the community have discerned that yes, in fact, God has called you to one another, you go through the formal steps of joining. These include: Aspirancy, Postulancy, Novitiate, First Vows, Final Vows.

she is experiencing first hand, the prayer, community, and apostolate of the Little Sisters.

By Nov. 1, (if approved) she could begin her 9-month pos-

tulancy in Illinois, followed by three years in New York for novitiate and first vows; and final vows in Rennes, France, where the Motherhouse is located.

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Awakening Retreat (Oct. 31-Nov. 2) open to college-age students

The LSU-A Catholic Student Organization will be hosting an Awakening Retreat Oct. 31 - Nov. 2 at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville.

Awakening is a powerful three-day retreat for college-aged men and women. Though the retreat is Catholic in nature, it is open to people of different denominations and faiths who wish to discover the Christian message of faith, hope and love.

"People always ask me, 'Exactly what is an Awakening Retreat?'" said Lynn Ray, campus minister at LSU-A and Louisiana College. "It's hard to explain to someone exactly what it is, so I usually tell them, 'you just have to experience it.'"

The retreat invites participants to experience God's unconditional love through a variety of activities including: prayer,



2013 AWAKENING RETREAT. Students gather in the main chapel of Maryhill Renewal Center on one of the evenings of the Awakening Retreat held last year. The weekend retreat is open to college-aged men and women.

sachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Texas, Virginia, Kentucky, and Washington D.C.

The first Awakening Retreat in Louisiana was held in 1974 at McNeese State University in Lake Charles. The chaplain at the time, now Bishop Sam Jacobs, along with his colleagues felt the need for a different kind of retreat. In the words of bishop Jacobs "... we felt we had to first provide them with a 'conversion' experience before a 'catechesis experience.'"

"The Awakening Retreats are very dear to my heart," said Lynn, "because it was during a college Awakening Retreat in the 80s that I experienced an 'awakening' of my own Catholic faith."

Back in the 80s, Lynn was a nursing student at Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe (now ULM). She attended an Awakening Retreat at McNeese State University in Lake Charles.

"The Awakening Retreat I attended in college, re-awakened my faith, and set my life on a completely different course," she said. "I returned the next year and participated as a facilitator for the retreat. This set me on the path to do ministry work and later to do the work I do today as a campus minister."

For a list of locations for upcoming Awakening Retreats through the fall of 2015, go to www.awakeningretreat.info.



songs, fellowship, and discussion. The goal of the retreat is to provide participants with the opportunity to 'contemplate God's role in their lives.'

The cost to attend for the whole weekend is \$30, which includes two nights in a private room, all meals, and a t-shirt.

For more information, call Lynn ray at 318-613-0634 or call Catsby at 318-445-6424, ext. 221.

History

The first Awakening Retreat

was developed in 1965 by the Diocese of Brooklyn, in the United States. A team of priests, brothers and lay people, under the direction of Fr. Douglas L. Brown of the Brooklyn diocese, made use of the Cursillo Retreat format, which has its roots in Ignation spirituality, but adapted it for older teenagers.

The retreat was immediately successful. Within three years, it was adopted in Connecticut, California, Arizona, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Maryland, Mas-

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Xtreme Obstacles -- Are YOU ready for the challenge?

Are you tough enough to withstand three miles of military obstacle course challenges?

Prove your athletic ability, Saturday, Nov. 1 beginning at 7 a.m. on the grounds of St. Frances Cabrini School.

It's best to work as a team, so gather up some friends. But if you dare, you can go it alone. Just beware! It's tough!

According to Liz Hines, curriculum coordinator and director of development, a military style obstacle course is currently being constructed in preparation for the Nov. 1 event.

"We've had people with bulldozers digging trenches, and people hauling in tires and bales of hay for some of the 50 plus obstacle challenges," said Hines.

Several walls have been constructed for climbing -- some

with and some without ropes. There will be "rivers" of water to cross, water-filled trenches to crawl through, and lots of ropes to swing through the trees. Sandwiched in with a 1 mile run before the obstacle course and a 1 mile run after the course.

Only the best will survive.

"It will definitely be tough," said Hines. "But it will be fun. Mud and water will be a big part of the fun, so it won't matter if it happens to rain on that day."

To register, go to www.cabrinischool.com. The cost is \$45 per person if you register as a team; or \$50 to register as an individual. Any age can participate, but anyone under 18 must have parental consent form signed. All participants must sign a "death risk" waiver. All proceeds will benefit Cabrini School.



10-FT TOWERS TO CLIMB (above), water-filled trenches and a tire obstacle course are only a few of the challenges that await the tough participants.



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The end of an era: Maria Von Trapp, RIP

The real story behind *'The Sound of Music'* is truly a Christian story of faith

By Jerry Newcombe
townhall.com



MARIA FRANZISKA VON TRAPP, the last of the original Von Trapp family made famous in the Broadway musical and the film, *"The Sound of Music,"* died in February of this year.

Earlier this year, an event happened that did not receive wide notice. The last of the Von Trapp Family Singers, the last of the children---the real ones---died.

Her name was Maria---not to be confused with the lady played by Julie Andrews, Maria Augusta Trapp, who died in 1987. Maria Von Trapp's death in February 2014 marks the end of an era.

The Sound of Music deserves its accolades as the Movie of the Year (1965) and one of the finest films ever made. Even my one-year-old granddaughter is mesmerized by the puppet scene.

As a film it is an icon. One time the great anti-gambling crusader, Rev. Tom Grey was asked on 60 Minutes to respond to those who say gambling is just entertainment. Noting the tragic toll the "entertainment" of gambling often takes on its victims, Grey asked, "Who watches *The Sound of Music* and then shoots himself in the parking lot?"

What's fascinating about the real Von Trapp Family is just how Christian the true story is.

The religious elements come out to some degree in the movie. Yet when the movie was marketed for Brazil, instead of the title we know the movie by, they decided to call it (in Portuguese) "The Rebellious Nun." But Maria didn't really rebel per se. She just discovered that God's call on her life was to serve God as a wife and mother, not in a cloister.

In her 1949 book, *The Story of the Trapp Family Singers*, Maria Augusta Trapp said of her marriage to the Captain, Georg Von Trapp, "I greeted it with a heart full of happiness and readiness to serve God where He needed me most---wholeheartedly and cheerfully."

Although her role expanded later, Maria the nun was initially assigned just to tutor Maria, the daughter of Captain Von Trapp. Ironically, Maria the little girl was "of delicate health." She is the one who died earlier this year, after living to be 99, outlasting them all.

Maria didn't mind the assignment to help the children (even though there had been 25 tutors and governesses before her) because she viewed it as temporary: "After all---I don't belong here; I am just loaned." But soon she came to be appreciated by the whole family, including the Captain.

Maria was shocked when she asked Maria Von Trapp, "Don't you have an Advent wreath every year?" The child replied, "No, we never did. What is it?" So the nun on loan to help the children not only brought music to the von Trapp family, but a Christ-centered Christmas as well.

The Captain later confessed, "I always feared Christmas more than any other day. But this year you have made it very beautiful for us. Thank you."

Maria whispered a prayer of gratitude to Jesus, "I thank You so much for sending me there. Please help me to draw them all closer to You."

Her prayer was answered. The Captain said to Maria, "I wish my children would get thoroughly acquainted with Holy Scriptures...Let's start them with the New Testament, and let's read it together every evening until Easter."

Maria said of their Bible-reading: "It proved to be the Book of Books, the only one in the whole world to which a four-year old girl would listen with enraptured interest while all the phi-

losophers are not yet able to get to the bottom of its divine wisdom."

Maria and the Captain got married in 1927; and the Von Trapps began performing musically as a family after a priest friend, Father Wasner, discovered what talent they had. They became a smash hit.

Meanwhile, after the Nazis took over their native land in

"Children, we have a choice: Either keep the 'material goods' we still have or 'our faith and our honor.' If we choose this, we have to leave." -- Capt. Georg Von Trapp

1938, the children told their parents: "In school we are not permitted to sing any religious songs with the name of Christ or Christmas."

This was just the tip of the iceberg. So they had a family conference, where Captain Von Trapp said: "Children, we have the choice now." Either keep "the material goods we still have" or "our faith and our honor. We can't have both any more...I'd rather see us poor, but honest. If we choose this, then we have to leave. Do you agree?" They agreed and got away in time.

On a sad note, they later learned that their mansion they had fled back in Salzburg had been seized by the Nazis, who turned their chapel into a beer parlor. Heinrich Himmler himself lived there and Father Wasner's room was turned into a guest bed-

room for Hitler. One day Hitler had all the servants shot on the spot because one of them had hummed a Russian folksong.

The family came to America to tour as a music group. But initially it did not go well in this country. Their act was too oriented toward sacred classical music. They were almost reduced to getting menial jobs unrelated to music just to stay in America. Their first manager lost money on them and said, "You will never be a hit in America. Go back to Europe."

Said Maria: "Back to Europe, with the Swastika stretching its black spider legs all over the map."

But they got another chance from a new manager who said, "...we shall start by changing your name. Trapp Family Choir sounds too churchy. I am the manager of the Trapp Family Singers."

Eventually, they settled down in Vermont and created the Von Trapp Family Lodge, which still operates today. So we salute the end of an era, which proved the wisdom of the statement made in the movie: "When the Lord closes a door, somewhere He opens a window." Or as the elder Maria says in her book, "God's will hath no why."



THE VON TRAPP FAMILY. The original Von Trapp Family singers consisted of seven children: Martina, Johanna, Hedwig, Werner, Maria, Agather, and Rupert. But after Maria and Georg married, they had three more children. In real life, Maria the nun was initially assigned just to tutor Maria, the daughter of Captain Von Trapp. Ironically, Maria the little girl was "of delicate health." She is the one who died earlier this year, after living to be 99, outlasting them all.

Left Behind promotes fundamentalist view of rapture theology

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

(CNS) -- Catholic viewers will likely feel left out by "Left Behind" (Freestyle).

In part, that's a good thing, since, in bringing the first in a series of novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins to the big screen, director Vic Armstrong has steered clear of the anti-Catholicism that characterized the overall saga's print version.

What remains, however, is a low-rent drama based on an interpretation of the Apocalypse at odds with church teaching on the subject. That, by itself, makes this inappropriate fare for youngsters -- or poorly catechized adults for that matter.

Like a previous versions of Left Behind, this reboot rests on



LEFT BEHIND. Nicolas Cage stars in a scene from the movie "Left Behind." (CNS photo/Teddy Smith, courtesy Stoney Lake Entertainment)

-- and exists to promote -- rapture theology. As portrayed here, that's the notion that there will be stages to the Second Coming of Christ, the first of which will be the sudden gathering up to heaven of all true believers.

Those unfortunate enough to find themselves in the situation of the title will then face a period of tribulation characterized by the famines and earthquakes Jesus prophesied in Chapter 24 of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Not surprisingly, the spontaneous disappearance of millions of people -- many of them driving cars or even airplanes at the time -- triggers all manner of catastrophe. And the low morals of those rejected by the Lord mean that shoplifting and other forms of social chaos are bound to commence tout de suite.

Observing all this is the movie's trio of main characters: airline pilot Rayford Steele (Nicolas Cage), his daughter, Chloe (Cassi Thomson), and Chloe's newfound crush, famed journalist Cameron "Buck" Williams (Chad Michael Murray). Conveniently for all concerned, Chloe met and fell for Buck at the airport, just as he was about to board a London-bound flight helmed by none other than you-know-who.

Halfway across the ocean, the rapture kicks in, and panic breaks out among the unrighteous. Those at the center of the story can't say they weren't warned, though. Chloe's mom, Irene (Lea Thompson), was a fervent convert who served as a Christian Cassandra to all around her.

As for Buck, a woman back

MOVIE REVIEWS

at the airport made a nuisance of herself asking if he didn't recognize the divine plan behind all those disasters he'd been covering lately. But would he listen? If he had, there'd be nothing left of him on earth but his clothes and wristwatch.

In the end, "Left Behind" amounts to little more than a 1970s-style disaster movie with a tedious overlay of misguided messaging.

The film contains themes requiring a solid grounding in faith. Rated PG-13.

Charmingly bizarre fable, The Boxtrolls, features impressive 3-D animation

By Joseph McAleer - CNS

(CNS) -- "The Boxtrolls" (Focus), is a charmingly bizarre urban fable about rich and poor and things that go bump in the night.

This 3-D adventure, featuring impressive stop-motion animation, is based on the 2005 children's book "Here Be Monsters!" by Alan Snow.

The setting is Victorian England and the quaint village of Cheesebridge, marketed as "A Gouda Place to Live." Yes, the residents are obsessed with dairy products, and the mayor, Lord Portley-Rind (Jared Harris), rules the roost from a mansion on

Curds Way (get it?).

His plucky daughter, Winnie (Elle Fanning), longs for attention, but her father only has eyes for brie and camembert. Her world is turned upside down when she discovers "monsters" roaming the streets at night.

These are the Boxtrolls, aptly named as they are short of stature and wear recycled cardboard boxes (which double as hiding places). Scavengers by nature, they scour the garbage heaps for junk which they transform into magical inventions in their underground world.

Fearing for his cheese, Lord Portley-Rind accepts an offer from the wicked Archibald



THE BOXTROLLS. Eggs, voiced by Isaac Hempstead Wright, appears with other animated characters in the movie "The Boxtrolls." (CNS photo/Focus)

Snatcher (Ben Kingsley) to root out and eliminate the Boxtrolls. In exchange, Snatcher will be

elevated to the ruling class, and obtain a seat at the hallowed cheese-tasting table. To under-

score Snatcher's evil nature, he sidelines as the drag queen Madame Frou Frou in a desperate attempt to mingle with high society.

Moreover, Snatcher's assistants, Mr. Trout (Nick Frost) and Mr. Pickles (Richard Ayoade), offer a running commentary, questioning their boss's motives and reminding the audience of the difference between good and evil.

The Boxtrolls have a bad rap, because once they allegedly stole a baby along with the garbage. Lovingly raised underground, the boy, named Eggs (Isaac Hempstead Wright) after his box outfit, is now 11 and curious about the "upper" world.

Rated PG.



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Cenla Magnificat

Cenla Magnificat, a ministry to Catholic Women, will host a brunch Oct. 25, from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Merci Beaucoup in Natchitoches.

The speaker will be Patti Gallagher Mansfield, who was present at Duquesne University in 1967 when the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was born. She has written several books and most recently was mentioned by Pope Francis during one of his general audiences.

Tickets (\$15 per person) are on sale Oct. 13-22 by calling Mary at 318-359-7735, Joan Gahagan, 318-352-8701 (Natchitoches area); Sue Dauzat, 318-240-1256 (Avoyelles Deanery); Servant House, 318-253-7810 (Avoyelles Deanery); Donna Reason, 318-240-3824 (Avoyelles Deanery); June Giglio, 318-876-3712 (Avoyelles Deanery); and Diane Ardoin, 318-419-1547 (Alexandria area).

Adult Faith Series

Everyone is invited to a 10-week Adult Faith Series on Jesus Christ: Life and Light Revealed in St. John's Gospel. The series, which began Sept. 2, is held at St. Joseph Church in Marksville on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the parish office bldg. A Bible (New American Bible) and Catechism of the Catholic Church (both may be purchased at the Office) are recommended for the sessions. To sign up, please call 253-7561. Topics include Oct. 21: The Great Hour; Oct. 28: The Great Prayer; Nov. 4: Unique Death of Jesus; Nov. 11: Resurrection of Jesus (New Life & Light).

Rachel's Vineyard

The Rachel's Vineyard ministry for healing after abortion is having a retreat on the weekend of Oct. 31 - Nov. 2 at the Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center, 5500 St. Mary St., Metairie, LA. The price of the retreat is \$170 (some financial assistance is available, if necessary). This Catholic retreat for healing the pain of abortion is open to everyone whose life has been touched by abortion. All faiths are welcome. For more information and to register, contact Melanie Baglow, (504) 889-2431



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or (504) 710-6458, mkbaglow@cox.net or Pam Richard, (504) 460-9360 or (985) 809-0773, richj504@bellsouth.net. This retreat is strictly confidential.

Women's Charismatic Conference

The date for the 2014 Women's Catholic Charismatic Conference, originally scheduled for Oct. 4, has been moved to Saturday, Nov. 22 at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville. Registration and a continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m. and the conference begins at 9 a.m. We will close with a vigil Mass at 4 p.m. The theme of the conference is "Be Not Afraid." Our speakers are Aggie Neck and Tracy Simpson. Conference fee of \$50 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Please contact Diane at 318-419-1547 for more information.

Interested in Monastic Life?

Are you interested in how to live a monastic life without living in a monastery? Fr. Bob Garrione, parochial vicar at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral has established online (with the Bishop's approval) The Monastery of the Oblates, Cistercian de Guadalupe, a group of lay brothers and sisters from all over the continental US, Canada, Australia and England, who learn the beauty of a monastic Benedictine/Cistercian (Trappist) spirituality and how to apply it to their lives, without moving away to live in a monastery. For more info, call Fr. Bob at 318-445-1451 ext 11 or email oblcist@gmail.com.

Job Opening

Substitute Child Nutrition Technician needed for the Diocesan Catholic School Cafeteria's in Avoyelles, Natchitoches, and Rapides Parish. Applicant must be drug-free and able to pass a background screening. Current position would be on an as needed basis only, with possibilities of leading into a permanent full-time position. Must be available between the hours of 6:00 am and 3:00 pm. M-F. If interested contact the Diocese of Alexandria Child Nutrition Office at (318) 445-6424 ext. 232.

Volunteer Opportunities -- Radio Maria

Radio Maria is a Catholic radio station located in Alexandria (601 Washington Street).

Volunteers are needed to:

- answer the phone between the hours of 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



CDA COURT NOTRE DAME 1452. The Catholic Daughters of America, Court Notre Dame #1452, from Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish in Alexandria present a check to Bishop Herzog. Pictured are (from left) Connie Stemmann, finance secretary; Joan Lanisus, regent; Bishop Herzog, and Elsie Campbell, vice regent.

(Monday - Friday)

- stuff envelopes for periodic mailouts
- be on a "call list" of volunteers, and called as needed when there is a need.
- answer the phone during semi-annual (Spring and Fall) Mariathons for 2-hour shifts
- make a food dish or a dessert for periodic special events at the station.
- light housekeeping at the studio
- work the sound board for 2-hour shifts on the weekend. (Requires a little training to do this.)
- pray on the air
- make a 3-5 minute presentation about Radio Maria to parishes after a weekend Mass

If you think you can volunteer for any of the duties listed above, please call Carla at 318-561-6145.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 1134 held a prayer service Sept. 11 in front of the St. Joseph Catholic Center for the 13th anniversary of 9-11.

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October - November

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20	21 Adult Faith Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville	22	23 VIRTUS Training 5:45 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville Illuminated Rosary 7:15 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville	24	25 Cenla Magnificat 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Merci Beaucoup, Natchitoches St. Rita Church Fair -- Alexandria	26
PRAY FOR FR. P. FAULK	PRAY FOR FR. J. FERGUSON	PRAY FOR FR. B. DESHAUTELLE	PRAY FOR FR. T. FEY	PRAY FOR FR. A. FIGREDO	PRAY FOR FR. R. GARRIONE	PRAY FOR FR. W. GEARHEARD
27	28 Adult Faith Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville	29	30	31	NOVEMBER 1 St. Frances Cabrini Fest	2 Marriage Prep 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport Daylight Savings Time ends
PRAY FOR FR. J. GOOTEE	PRAY FOR FR. R. GREMLION	PRAY FOR FR. J. HASIEBER	PRAY FOR BISHOP R. HERZOG	PRAY FOR MSGR. R. HOPPE	PRAY FOR BISHOP R. HERZOG	PRAY FOR FR. R. HUMPHRIES
3	4 Adult Faith Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville	5	6	7	8	9
National Vocations Awareness Week						
PRAY FOR FR. H. IMAMSHAH	PDS Workshop -- St. Rita Holy Family Center		PRAY FOR FR. J. KAYALAPARAMBIL	FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. G. KROSFIELD	Fall Fair -- St. Francis & Anne, Kolin	
10	11 Adult Faith Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville VETERANS DAY PRAY FOR FR. P. KUNNAMPURAM	12	13	14	15	16
PRAY FOR FR. J. KUMBLUMKAL	PRAY FOR FR. S. KWEBUZA	PRAY FOR FR. M. LAIRD	PRAY FOR FR. P. LAPALME	PRAY FOR FR. R. LEMOINE	PRAY FOR FR. R. MATHEWS	
17	18 VIRTUS 6 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center Alexandria	19	20	21	22 Women's Catholic Charismatic Conference 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center St. Frances Cabrini Sanctuary Society Christmas Shop	23
PRAY FOR FR. L. MELCHER	PRAY FOR FR. A. MESSINA	PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK	PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHIELS	PRAY FOR FR. B. MILLER	PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN	PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK

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