



The Mustard Seed

Catholic Center 1000 Pinebrook Road Venice FL 34285

Pastoral Bulletin

Vol. 5, No. 4

February 23, 2007

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office of the Bishop

Lenten Message of Pope Benedict XVI – Please find enclosed the Lenten Message of Pope Benedict XVI for 2007, “*They shall look on Him whom they have pierced*” (Jn 19:37). Please share this with your parishioners this Lenten season.



Office of the Chancellor

Please hold the date for the Chrism Mass which will take place on Tuesday, April 3, at 10:30 a.m. at Epiphany Cathedral. If there are any priests in your parish observing 25 or 50 years of priesthood, please contact Carol Compton at 941-441-1128 in the Bishop’s Office.



Worship and Ministries Department

The Lent/Easter Newsletter is now on the Diocese Worship Web Page.



Catholic Campaign for Human Development/Catholic Relief Services (CCHD/CRS)

Catholic Relief Services Operation Rice Bowl began Ash Wednesday. All resources received in parishes are also available in English and Spanish on line at <http://orb.crs.org/resources/> and <http://orb.crs.org/espanol/>. Weekly bulletin announcements and intercessory prayers are available at <http://orb.crs.org/assets/parishes/bulletin.pdf> and http://orb.crs.org/assets/parishes/prayer_intentions.pdf, respectively.

The Catholic Relief Services Collection (March 17-18) supports Catholic Church organizations that carry out international relief and solidarity efforts. Programs include relief and resettlement services to the victims of persecution, war and natural disasters as well as development projects to improve the living conditions of the poor; advocacy on behalf of the powerless; peace and reconciliation work for people suffering from violence; and legal and support services for poor immigrants. To find out how Catholics here are touching lives all over the world, and for resource materials in English and Spanish visit www.usccb.org/crscollection and <http://www.usccb.org/crscollection/resources.shtml>.

Annual Catholic Relief Services Appeal – Please include the Bishop’s letter enclosed in your bulletin of the weekend of March 10-11. The collection is to be taken up the weekend of March 17-18 and the proceeds sent to the Finance Department no later than March 31.



BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please publish the following in your parish bulletins:

Worship and Ministries Department

The Separated and Divorced Ministry will be holding a workshop "*A Day of Healing: Beyond Divorce*" at Epiphany Parish from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. on Mar. 24. Marianne Skrobiak, M.S., M.A., LPC, a well known author, retreat director, inspirational speaker and spiritual mentor will be the presenter. Come and find spiritual nourishment, identify excess baggage, name your losses, reconnect with God, self and others - get rebalanced and recharged. The cost for the program is \$25 per person and will include continental breakfast and lunch. For information and/or reservations please call Louise or Betty K in the Family Life Office 941-484-9543.

A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism, by Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, is now available for purchase from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Publishing for \$9.95. This handbook offers practical suggestions for implementing and strengthening spiritual ecumenism, the heart of all efforts to re-unite divided Christians. It is grounded in the documents that have shaped the Catholic Church's engagement in seeking Christian unity, those of the second Vatican Council, as well as the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It is written for anyone who values deeply the restoration of Christian unity, especially those responsible for promoting it at various levels of Church life. For more information or to purchase the book, call 800-235-8722 or fax 202-722-8709.



Respect Life Department

If you're struggling after an abortion, don't struggle alone. For confidential help, call Project Rachel in Florida toll-free at 877-908-1212 or e-mail project.rachel@dioceseofvenice.org.

Did You Know? In their statement *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*, the U.S. Catholic Bishops write: "One alternative to the death penalty is life without the possibility of parole for those who continue to pose a deadly threat to society." This alternative is currently available in the state of Florida. The entire statement may be found online at: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/penaltyofdeath.pdf>. For further information, please contact the diocesan Respect Life Department at 1-941-484-9543.

The Florida Legislative Session begins March 6 and ends April 27. Please pray for our legislators that they make wise decisions which respect the life and dignity of all human life. Join the prayer campaign by praying for specific legislators as outlined at www.dovrespectlife.org/prayercalendar0607.pdf. Please pray for the hundreds of people from throughout the state who will be participating in Catholic Days at the Capitol in Tallahassee on March 13-15 and visiting legislators about stem cell research and other important topics. For a copy of the Prayer Calendar, call 941-441-1112.

Become a member of **E-Mail for Life** and make your voice heard in Tallahassee and Washington on important life issues such as stem cell research. If you are not part of a parish-based Action Alert Network, register by e-mailing action.alert@dioceseofvenice.org and put in the subject line: JOIN E-MAIL FOR LIFE. See www.dovrespectlife.org/2007dovdir.pdf for your legislators' contact information.

Sarasota Area Only:

The Sarasota Gabriel Project is looking for retired or semi-retired counselors, social workers or medical professionals to help with its one-on-one mentoring program for pregnant women. For details, contact the Respect Life Department at 941-441-1101.



Out and About the Diocese

Bishop's Eucharist Series Scheduled for Broadcast on Relevant Radio

Relevant Radio and the Rosary Evangelization Apostolate have produced a national radio series on the Holy Eucharist with 8 participating Bishops. This Series will be aired on Relevant Radio (1410 AM Venice and 1660 AM Naples) each weekend during Lent of 2007. 9 a.m. to 10 a.m (CST).

Mother Antonia Brenner known as the "Prison Angel" is an 80 year old Irish American nun who lives in a Mexican prison. For nearly 30 years she has lived in a small, cold cell in Tijuana's La Mesa prison where she ministers to some of the most maltreated inmates on earth and their guards. She has an amazing and inspirational story to tell with faith and wisdom. A book "Prison Angel" written by Jordan and Sullivan was awarded a Pulitzer prize in 2005. **Mother Antonia will speak at St. Thomas More Church at 7 p.m., March 1 and repeat her talk on March 2 at 10 a.m.** A free will offering will be taken. There will be refreshments.

The Blessed Edmund Rice School invites all to a free, informal presentation and discussion on Monday, March 5, 7:30 p.m., with scripture scholar, author and activist Monsignor Ralph Kuehner on "**Scripture and the Themes of Social Justice.**" As a past director of social concerns for the Archdiocese of Washington, Msgr. Kuehner has established programs for the poor, the homeless, the elderly and victims of discrimination, and has received many honors including, Papal Chamberlain from Pope John XXIII, Domestic Prelate from Pope Paul VI, and "Washingtonian of the Year" from the Washingtonian Magazine. For additional information and directions call Mary Campo, 941-441-1117.

Saint Martha's School will be hosting a "**Luck of the Irish Casino Night**" **Saturday, March 17, 6 p.m.** The event committee is excited to be bringing our school and surrounding communities an evening of dancing, music and casino gaming in **Saint Anne's Hall, Saint Martha School, 4380 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, Fl 34232.** The evening will include Roulette, Blackjack or Texas Hold'em with professional dealers in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. **Please call 941-552-3586 for tickets or more information.**

St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Naples is sponsoring the international personality, Tatiana, in **concert** on Friday, **March 23 at 7 p. m.** at St. Peter the Apostle Church. Her concert is entitled "**I Thirst - The Crucifixion Story**". Tatiana left fame, fortune and family at age 21, leaving Communist Croatia to come to freedom in the United States and to dedicate her life to Jesus Christ through her music. There is no admission fee, however, a free-will offering will be taken. For more information, call 239-774-3337.

COURAGE Meeting - A group for men and women in the Diocese of Venice with same-sex attractions (SSA) who desire to lead a chaste life, welcomes others to a bi-weekly gathering. The Diocesan guided, prayer and sacrament-oriented meetings, seek to mutually strengthen Christian spirituality in the Catholic moral tradition. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured. For further information phone 239-910-0189. All inquiries are welcome.



The Mustard Seed is an official publication of the Diocese of Venice, published bi-weekly on Fridays by the Department of Communications. Notices of general interest will be considered for publication. Send copy to: Department of Communications, 1000 Pinebrook Road, Venice FL 34285 OR via e-mail (preferred method) to: newsletter@dioceseofvenice.org no later than **seven days prior** to publication date. The pastoral bulletin is available at www.dioceseofvenice.org/specialissues/parishbulletin.cfm

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
BENEDICT XVI
FOR LENT 2007**

“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced” (Jn 19:37)

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

“*They shall look on Him whom they have pierced*” (Jn 19:37). This is the biblical theme that this year guides our Lenten reflection. Lent is a favorable time to learn to stay with Mary and John, the beloved disciple, close to Him who on the Cross, consummated for all mankind the sacrifice of His life (cf. Jn 19:25). With a more fervent participation let us direct our gaze, therefore, in this time of penance and prayer, at Christ crucified who, dying on Calvary, revealed fully for us the love of God. In the Encyclical *Deus caritas est*, I dwelt upon this theme of love, highlighting its two fundamental forms: *agape* and *eros*.

God’s love: agape and eros

The term *agape*, which appears many times in the New Testament, indicates the self-giving love of one who looks exclusively for the good of the other. The word *eros*, on the other hand, denotes the love of one who desires to possess what he or she lacks and yearns for union with the beloved. The love with which God surrounds us is undoubtedly *agape*. Indeed, can man give to God some good that He does not already possess? All that the human creature is and has is divine gift. It is the creature then, who is in need of God in everything. But God’s love is also *eros*. In the Old Testament, the Creator of the universe manifests toward the people whom He has chosen as His own a predilection that transcends every human motivation. The prophet Hosea expresses this divine passion with daring images such as the love of a man for an adulterous woman (cf. 3:1-3). For his part, Ezekiel, speaking of God’s relationship with the people of Israel, is not afraid to use strong and passionate language (cf. 16:1-22). These biblical texts indicate that *eros* is part of God’s very heart: the Almighty awaits the “yes” of His creatures as a young bridegroom that of his bride. Unfortunately, from its very origins, mankind, seduced by the lies of the Evil One, rejected God’s love in the illusion of a self-sufficiency that is impossible (cf. Gn 3:1-7). Turning in on himself, Adam withdrew from that source of life who is God Himself, and became the first of “those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage” (Heb 2:15). God, however, did not give up. On the contrary, man’s “no” was the decisive impulse that moved Him to manifest His love in all of its redeeming strength.

The Cross reveals the fullness of God’s love

It is in the mystery of the Cross that the overwhelming power of the heavenly Father’s mercy is revealed in all of its fullness. In order to win back the love of His creature, He accepted to pay a very high price: the blood of His only begotten Son. Death, which for the first Adam was an extreme sign of loneliness and powerlessness, was thus transformed in the supreme act of love and freedom of the new Adam. One could very well assert, therefore, together with Saint Maximus the Confessor, that Christ “died, if one could say so, divinely, because He died freely” (*Ambigua*, 91, 1956). On the Cross, God’s *eros* for us is made manifest. *Eros* is indeed – as Pseudo-Dionysius expresses it – that force “that does not allow the lover to remain in himself but moves him to become

one with the beloved” (*De divinis nominibus*, IV, 13: PG 3, 712). Is there more “mad eros” (N. Cabasilas, *Vita in Cristo*, 648) than that which led the Son of God to make Himself one with us even to the point of suffering as His own the consequences of our offences?

“Him whom they have pierced”

Dear brothers and sisters, let us look at Christ pierced in the Cross! He is the unsurpassing revelation of God’s love, a love in which *eros* and *agape*, far from being opposed, enlighten each other. On the Cross, it is God Himself who begs the love of His creature: He is thirsty for the love of every one of us. The Apostle Thomas recognized Jesus as “Lord and God” when he put his hand into the wound of His side. Not surprisingly, many of the saints found in the Heart of Jesus the deepest expression of this mystery of love. One could rightly say that the revelation of God’s *eros* toward man is, in reality, the supreme expression of His *agape*. In all truth, only the love that unites the free gift of oneself with the impassioned desire for reciprocity instills a joy, which eases the heaviest of burdens. Jesus said: “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself” (*Jn* 12:32). The response the Lord ardently desires of us is above all that we welcome His love and allow ourselves to be drawn to Him. Accepting His love, however, is not enough. We need to respond to such love and devote ourselves to communicating it to others. Christ “draws me to Himself” in order to unite Himself to me, so that I learn to love the brothers with His own love.

Blood and water

“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.” Let us look with trust at the pierced side of Jesus from which flow “blood and water” (*Jn* 19:34)! The Fathers of the Church considered these elements as symbols of the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. Through the water of Baptism, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, we are given access to the intimacy of Trinitarian love. In the Lenten journey, memorial of our Baptism, we are exhorted to come out of ourselves in order to open ourselves, in trustful abandonment, to the merciful embrace of the Father (cf. Saint John Chrysostom, *Catecheses*, 3,14ff). Blood, symbol of the love of the Good Shepherd, flows into us especially in the Eucharistic mystery: “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation ... we enter into the very dynamic of His self-giving” (Encyclical *Deus caritas est*, 13). Let us live Lent then, as a “Eucharistic” time in which, welcoming the love of Jesus, we learn to spread it around us with every word and deed. Contemplating “Him whom they have pierced” moves us in this way to open our hearts to others, recognizing the wounds inflicted upon the dignity of the human person; it moves us, in particular, to fight every form of contempt for life and human exploitation and to alleviate the tragedies of loneliness and abandonment of so many people. May Lent be for every Christian a renewed experience of God’s love given to us in Christ, a love that each day we, in turn, must “regive” to our neighbor, especially to the one who suffers most and is in need. Only in this way will we be able to participate fully in the joy of Easter. May Mary, Mother of Beautiful Love, guide us in this Lenten journey, a journey of authentic conversion to the love of Christ. I wish you, dear brothers and sisters, a fruitful Lenten journey, imparting with affection to all of you, a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 21 November 2006.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI



One Light, One Journey, One Human Family

This Lent, our faith community will participate in Operation Rice Bowl. Operation Rice Bowl is Catholic Relief Services' official Lenten program and it calls Catholics in the United States to walk in solidarity with the poor through the traditional Lenten practices of **prayer, fasting, and giving**, while we **learn** about the joys and challenges in the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world. By participating in these four activities, we come to understand our call to be part of one human family.

“In the face of the terrible challenge of poverty afflicting so much of the world’s population, indifference and self-centered isolation stand in stark contrast to the ‘gaze’ of Christ. Fasting and almsgiving, which, together with prayer, the Church proposes in a special way during the Lenten Season, are suitable means for us to become conformed to this ‘gaze.’”

**2006 Lenten Message of
His Holiness, Benedict XVI.**

Photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT-Caritas

75% of your contributions to Operation Rice Bowl support Catholic Relief Services' development projects overseas and Lenten education activities in the United States.

25% of your contributions remain in your diocese to fund local hunger and poverty alleviation programs. Contact your local Diocesan Director (contact information can be found at www.crs.org) or visit www.crs.org/orb to learn how the 25% is used in your diocese.

Who benefits from our parish's participation in Operation Rice Bowl?

Your support helps families around the world through Catholic Relief Services' development projects.

- **Microfinance** projects encourage the growth of small businesses.
- **Education** projects provide resources and training.
- **Health** projects provide basic health and nutrition services.
- **Agriculture** projects help farmers improve crop yields.
- **Water** projects make clean water accessible and improve the health of communities.
- **HIV/AIDS** projects support the local Catholic Church in communities around the world in addressing the many needs of people affected by this disease.

This Lent take some time to:

Pray *the Operation Rice Bowl Lenten Prayer.*

*Lord God, you are merciful to all.
By the alms we give to Operation Rice Bowl
help us to extend your mercy to all people.*

*Jesus is the Way to the Father.
His vision was that we might be united as
brothers and sisters on One Journey of Faith.*

*Make his Love burn within us.
Teach us to work for Jesus' vision of unity
that all people may live as One Human Family.*

*By his Word enlighten our hearts.
May our faith, hope, and charity turn hatred
to love, conflict to peace, death to eternal life.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Learn *about our global community and the work that Catholic Relief Services does on your behalf around the world.*

Learn about our brothers and sisters overseas and the work that Catholic Relief Services does on your behalf around the world. Prepare this simple meal, which is a typical meal that would be prepared by our neighbors in Angola, to share with your family and friends.

Visit www.crs.org/orb to meet the participants of CRS programs around the world and read their personal stories. Learn how your participation in Operation Rice Bowl has made a positive difference in their lives.

Give *sacrificial contributions to Operation Rice Bowl this Lent to support the work of Catholic Relief Services around the world.*

Fast *in solidarity with those who are hungry.*

- Hunger is the most extreme form of poverty, where individuals or families cannot afford to meet their most basic need for food.
- 852 million people across the world are hungry - 815 million of them are in developing countries.
- Every day, more than 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes - one child every five seconds.
- In the United States, 13 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means one in ten households in the U.S. are living with hunger or are at risk of hunger.

Recipe from Angola: Kizaka (serves 4)

3 tomatoes, chopped
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 lb collard greens or spinach
¼ cup sesame seeds or unsalted peanuts
garlic, crushed (to taste)
vegetable broth (optional)
Salt (to taste)

In a large saucepan, cook the collard greens or spinach in boiling water until tender and drain excess water. Vegetable broth may be added for flavor. Set aside.

Toast the peanuts or sesame seeds in the oven at 300°F until browned. Remove from the oven to cool, then add salt (optional) and finely chop or grind the nuts or seeds.

In a frying pan, sauté the onions and garlic in oil until slightly browned. Add the tomatoes and cook until tender. Then add the peanuts or sesame seeds. Continue cooking for about 5 minutes.

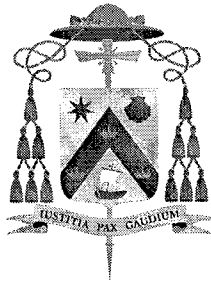
Season the cooked greens with the mixture of onion, garlic, tomato and sesame seeds or peanuts. Sauté ingredients together for a few minutes. Serve over hot rice.

Who is Catholic Relief Services?

Established in 1943, Catholic Relief Services is the official overseas relief and development agency of the United States Catholic Community. The fundamental motivating force of Catholic Relief Services is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That motivation compels the agency to alleviate human suffering, to foster justice and charity and to enhance the development of peoples around the world. Catholic Relief Services works in 99 countries around the world and provides assistance on the basis of need, not creed, race or ethnicity.

Learn more about Catholic Relief Services and Operation Rice Bowl by visiting www.crs.org.





DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA
Office of the Bishop

March, 2007

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the story of the Last Judgment, Jesus reminds us to care for those in need. If we ignore those who are hungry, thirsty, ill, without clothes, strangers, or in prison, we turn away from Christ. When we act with compassion, generosity, and commitment to justice for the "least among us," we are His true disciples.

The **Catholic Relief Services** collection, scheduled for the weekend of March 17/18, gives us an important opportunity to express Christian compassion and generosity toward our brothers and sisters in need. Proceeds from the collection will help build the Church's international social ministry by funding the work of five agencies:

Catholic Relief Services, the official international relief and development agency of the U. S. Catholic community, assists people in 99 countries on the basis of need - not race, creed or nationality. It provides financial assistance to the poor, and addresses the root causes of poverty.

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. provides a full range of legal and support services for poor immigrants and advocates for comprehensive immigration reform. Its focus is on reunification of families and protection of those fleeing persecution.

Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) annually resettles one quarter of the refugees admitted to the United States, serves victims of human trafficking, and advocates for migrating families.

Social Development and World Peace of the USCCB advocates for the poor and vulnerable and for international peace and justice.

The Holy Father's Relief Fund assists victims of natural disasters and other emergencies around the world.

We have all met *Jesus in Disguise*. He is with us in the poor, the needy, the homeless, etc. Please be generous with the gifts you have been given. May Almighty God continue to bless you and your families with His Love and Peace.

Sincerely in Christ,


+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of Venice in Florida