

Dear Catechetical Leaders,

As we move closer to Thanksgiving, I hope you all are finding many ways to be grateful for the blessings of God. I also pray that your school year is progressing well and all those you serve are being nourished by the teachings of our Catholic faith.

Peace,

*Anne*

### **World Kindness Day – Ben's Bells**

In honor of **World Kindness Day** on November 13, this video shares the impact kindness had on a grieving family. Jeanette Mare and her family honor the memory of their son's spirit by creating Ben's Bells - beautiful, hand-crafted ceramic wind chimes that are placed randomly and anonymously in public places around Tucson, and beyond. The bells are a musical reminder of the power people have to change the world by being kind. It's a ritual that affirms our beliefs. Check out the two minute video at [Ben's Bells](http://tiny.cc/8do7t) (<http://tiny.cc/8do7t>).

### **USCCB Meet in Baltimore November 14-16**



Please pray for the Catholic bishops of the United States as they gather in Baltimore for their Fall meeting. The main business of the gathering will be on the inner workings of the church; liturgical, financial and organizational matters. May they be guided by the Holy Spirit in all their deliberations.

Watch [live coverage](#) from the meeting floor.

### **Good Sense, Good Air: While we live we are responsible to the Lord**



On November 7, Bishop Stephen Blaire of Stockton, CA, and chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, addressed the Christian vocation to cultivate and care for God's good gift of Creation in a speech to an ecumenical gathering in Louisville, Kentucky. Bishop Blaire identified how this commitment connects to Catholic concerns for human life and human dignity – particularly of the poor and vulnerable.

Bishop Blaire said that God's generous gift of creation *demands a response back to God and a duty to steward what God has given to us for the good of all the human family*. The bishop highlighted how environmental degradation compromises human life and dignity, especially of the poor and vulnerable. A prime example, he continued, are the adverse impacts which mercury, toxic air pollution and climate change have on human life, particularly on the unborn, in the case of

mercury pollution and future generations in the case of climate change. The full text of his address can be found at <http://tiny.cc/9h8gy>.

### **FREE Professional Development Webinar – Tuesday, November 15**

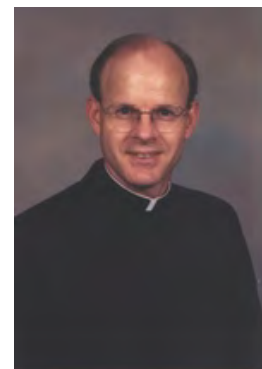
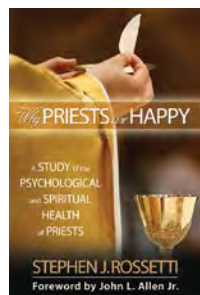


In partnership with the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and the National Association for Lay Ministry, Ave Maria Press is pleased to present this free,



live webinar, *Why Priests Are Happy*, on Tuesday, November 15 from 3 p.m.–4 p.m. EST.

Join Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti, a psychologist, professor of pastoral studies, and frequently consulted expert on clergy and religious for a presentation on his groundbreaking study of the psychological and spiritual health of priests. From this survey of nearly 2,500 priests from twenty-three dioceses in the United States, Rossetti discovered that, contrary to popular media portrayals, American priests enjoy an extraordinarily high rate of happiness and satisfaction, among the



highest of any profession. They like the priesthood and are committed to it. In fact, 92 percent say they are happy in their ministry, among the highest rate of satisfaction of any profession in the United States.

You can order [\*Why Priests Are Happy: A Study of the Psychological and Spiritual Health of Priests\* \(Ave Maria Press\)](#) and/or you can register for the webinar at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/733220408>.

### **Pope Offers Priests 3 Tips – Words are Applicable to Us as Well**



Mindful of the 70th anniversary of Pius XII's institution of the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations, Pope Benedict XVI is recommending three conditions for a priest to grow in conformity with Christ, though he clarified that his words are applicable to others, since it is "important for all, in fact, always to learn more to 'remain' with the Lord."

The Bishop of Rome first emphasized that in the priesthood, "there is the encounter with Christ and being fascinated, struck by his words, by his gestures, by his very person. It is distinguishing his voice from many voices. (...) It is like feeling the radiance of the Good and Love that emanate from him, feeling enveloped and involved to the point of desiring to remain with him like the disciples of Emmaus." The minister of the Gospel is one who is drawn in by Christ, the Holy Father said, "who knows how to 'remain' with him, who enters into harmony, in intimate friendship, with him, that all be done 'as God wishes.'"

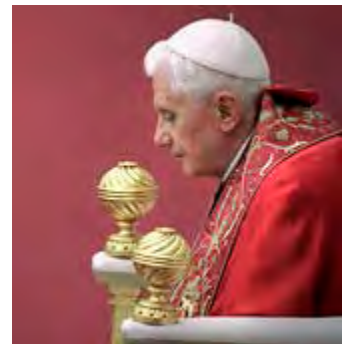
Next, Benedict XVI spoke of the priestly calling to be "administrators of the Mysteries of God 'not for personal gain but with a generous soul.' The Lord's call to ministry is not the fruit of special merits but a gift to be received and to which there corresponds a dedication of oneself not to one's own project but God's, in a generous and disinterested way, that he might dispose of us according to his will even if this does not concur with our desires of self-realization." He stressed. "(...) We must never forget -- as priests -- the one legitimate ascent for the ministry of shepherd is not that of success but that of the cross."

Finally, the Holy Father exhorted priests to live as servants, both in the sense of being role models for the faithful and as servants of the sacraments. "It is one life, then, profoundly marked by this service: from the attentive care of the flock, from the faithful celebration of the liturgy, and from the prompt solicitude for all of the brothers, especially the most poor and needy," he said. "In living this 'pastoral charity' on the model of Christ and with Christ, in whatever post the Lord calls one to, every priest can fully realize himself and his vocation."

The full text of his reflection can be found at [www.zenit.org/article-33777?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-33777?l=english).

### **Alphabet Psalm Gives Guide to Happiness, Says Pope**

God's law is not a yoke of slavery, but rather the path to happiness, Benedict XVI affirmed today as he offered a reflection on the "acrostic" psalm, Psalm 119. He explained how this psalm is unique in that it is constructed according to the Hebrew alphabet, which is made up of 22 letters. Each of its 22 stanzas corresponds to a letter of that alphabet, and with this letter the first word of the stanza's eight verses begins.



"It is an original and very demanding literary construction in which the psalm's author had to employ all his skill," the Holy Father observed. "And this psalm is wholly pervaded by love for God's Word," he continued. "It extols its beauty, its saving power, and its capacity to bestow joy and life. For the divine Law is not a heavy yoke of slavery but a gift of grace that liberates and leads to happiness."

"As the center of life, God's Law asks for the heart's listening -- a listening carried out in an obedience that is not servile but filial, trusting and mindful. Hearing the Word is a personal encounter with the Lord of life, an encounter that must be translated into concrete choices," the Pontiff added. He went on to reflect on just one verse of the psalm's 176 verses: Verse 57: "The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep thy words."

The Holy Father drew from this a lesson for priests, "who are called to live only from the Lord and from his Word, without other securities, having him as their only good and only source of true life. But these verses are also important for all the faithful, the People of God who belong to him alone.... Let us therefore allow the Lord to place within our hearts this love for his Word, and may he grant us always to have him and his will as the center of our lives."

The full text of his remarks can be found at [www.zenit.org/article-33795?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-33795?l=english).

## **National Migration Week – January 8-14, 2012**



This poster is bilingual and this year's theme for National Migration Week helps remind us that Christ makes himself present to each of us in the lonesome traveler, the newcomer, and the migrant. We are called to open our hearts and provide hospitality to those in need. It is our duty to create a space of welcome and acceptance to the migrant who finds himself or herself far away from home and in a vulnerable situation. You can order materials at

<http://www.usccbpublishing.org/productdetails.cfm?sku=M7-265>.

## **Circles of Change**

Stanford **SOCIAL**  
**INNOVATION** REVIEW

One of the statements of the author, Tracy A. Thompson, that confirmed the importance of this concept was "In a well-functioning Circle, members experience a strong sense of belonging, a compelling commitment to shared goals, a high level of accountability to themselves and to the group, a robust climate of joint problem solving and learning among peers, an intense feeling of involvement, and high trust relationships." You can read the full article at

[http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/circles\\_of\\_change](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/circles_of_change).

## **NATIONAL PRAYER VIGIL FOR LIFE, JANUARY 22-23, 2012**



The National Prayer Vigil for Life will be held from Sunday afternoon, January 22, through Monday morning, January 23, 2012. The Opening Mass begins Sunday, January 22, at 6:30 p.m. The National Rosary for Life begins at 10 p.m. Evening Prayer (Byzantine Rite) begins at 11 p.m. Holy Hours begin at midnight and end at 6:00 a.m. Monday, January 23. The Closing Mass begins Monday at 7:30 a.m.

For more information please visit the [National Prayer Vigil for Life web site](#) and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section for complete information on the schedule, parking, bus drop-off times,

seating at the Masses of the Prayer Vigil, and other important information. Additional seating is provided in the Lower Level Memorial Hall during the Opening Mass. Television monitors and communion distribution will allow those seated in this area to fully participate in Mass.

### **Pope Benedict Warns If Spiritual Roots Are Lost, Whole Society Will Suffer**



Public authorities have a duty to acknowledge the role of Catholic volunteer work without distorting it, says Benedict XVI. Christians, the Holy Father said, should "take an active part in the life of society, seeking to make it ever more humane, ever more marked by authentic freedom, justice and solidarity."

"Nowadays, volunteer work as a service of charity has become a universally recognized element of our modern culture. Nonetheless, its origins can still be seen in the particularly Christian concern for safeguarding, without discrimination, the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God," he said. "If these spiritual roots are denied or obscured and the criteria of our collaboration become purely utilitarian, what is most distinctive about the service you provide risks being lost, to the detriment of society as a whole."

The Pontiff's address noted the roots of Christian volunteer work, saying it is not "merely an expression of good will," but is "based on a personal experience of Christ. He was the first to serve humanity, he freely gave his life for the good of all. That gift was not based on our merits," Benedict XVI reflected. "(...) The experience of God's generous love challenges us and liberates us to adopt the same attitude towards our brothers and sisters."

"The grandeur of our human calling," the Holy Father noted, "is to serve others with the same freedom and generosity which characterizes God himself." Acknowledging that Catholic volunteer work cannot respond to every need, he said that still, there should not be discouragement. The little that we manage to do to relieve human needs can be seen as a good seed that will grow and bear much fruit; it is a sign of Christ's presence and love which, like the tree in the Gospel, grows to give shelter, protection and strength to all who require it."

Solidarity in suffering

Monsignor Dal Toso referred to the motivations that animate Catholic volunteers and that, in the new evangelization, must be maintained and promoted. "These profound motivations stem from faith," he noted, stressing that historically, volunteer work is "a phenomenon born from Christianity as an expression of charity, of the faith that animates us." The full text of Pope's address is available at [www.zenit.org/article-33815?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-33815?l=english).



***Technology and Social Media – NEW Category at the NCCL Amazon Bookstore***

Thanks to the work of the Technology Committee, during the Rep Council meeting, a new category has been added to the NCCL Amazon Bookstore. Technology and Social Media already has seven books listed. You can check this category and others out at

<http://astore.amazon.com/natioconfefor-20>. Here are several of the books that you can order:

- [\*Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith\*](#)
- [\*Infinite Bandwidth: Encountering Christ in the Media\*](#)
- [\*Name Your Link\*](#)
- [\*Screen Saved: Peril and Promise of Media in Ministry\*](#)
- [\*The Internet and Social Media: A Legal and Practical Guide for Catholic Educators\*](#)
- [\*The Internet and Social Media: What Parents Need to Know\*](#)

Remember, every time you purchase a book from NCCL's Amazon Bookstore, you are also contributing to NCCL's financial future.

**CORDOBA CATHEDRAL OPENS VIRTUAL TOUR**

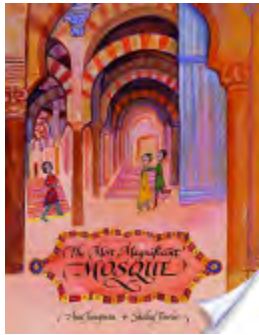


Considered a wonder of art and faith of all time, the cathedral of Cordoba can now be toured virtually. The Internet visit includes the exterior and interior of the cathedral, which has a history dating back to the fourth century and involving Christian and Muslim worship. The tour reveals meticulous details and aspects that at times are overlooked.

The actual cathedral of Cordoba stands at the site of the mid fourth-century Catholic basilica of St. Vincent Martyr, which is still visible in some elements. Christian worship was ongoing in that basilica until 714, when half of the complex was expropriated. Then, in 786, Emir Abd al-Rahman I demolished the whole Christian construction to build the ancient mosque of Cordoba.

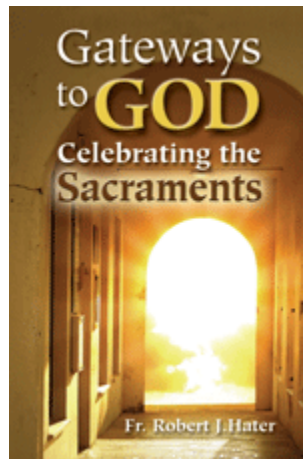
The city was re-conquered by Fernando III, and the monarch decided in 1236 that on the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the ancient mosque should be dedicated to Holy Mary Mother of God and consecrated that same day. To visit the cathedral, go to [www.catedraldecordoba.es/visita/catedral.html](http://www.catedraldecordoba.es/visita/catedral.html).

### **The Most Magnificent Mosque**



This story is connected to the Cathedral of Cordoba and is a great inter-religious story because it is the story of three men who saved the Mosque of Cordoba; one a Moslem, one a Jew and one a Christian. After they speak with one voice, before the Christian King Fernando, on the importance of the mosque to each of their peoples, the king replies, “I can see that I will have no friends here if I pull down your mosque. I will build a church in the small part of the mosque, but the rest of the building and the gardens shall belong to all the good people of Cordoba.” You can order [\*\*The Most Magnificent Mosque.\*\*](#)

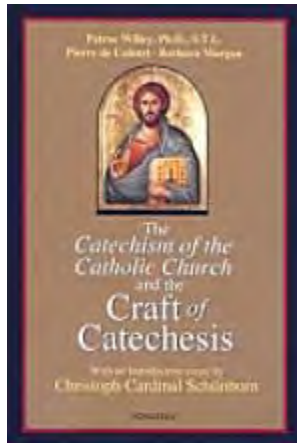
### **Gateways to God: Celebrating the Sacraments**



Theologian and NCCL member Fr. Robert Hater explores the manifold ways sacraments work as gateways that lead us to encounters with God. All creation is sacramental because it is a gateway that reveals God's presence in the universe. Jesus described Himself as the gate to salvation and eternal life. And the Church is the gateway to the kingdom of God and the sacraments, the seven gateways to life-giving grace.

*Gateways to God* especially explores the nature and meaning of sacraments. Using Scripture, history, and pastoral practice, it shows us how to approach the seven sacraments of the Church as gateways to divine life, how to receive them with expectant faith, and how to let them strengthen us for daily Christian living. Why not get your own copy and read about Fr. Bob's experiences at [\*\*Gateways to God: Celebrating the Sacraments.\*\*](#)

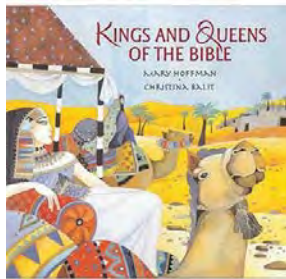
### *Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*



The authors believe that the Catechism is "a place of personal encounter (see CCC 2563) and it is through this encounter that a truly Spirit-led pedagogy can emerge and inspire one's teaching methods, a pedagogy flowing directly from one's prayerful understanding of the Faith. They remind us that the very word "catechesis" coming from a Greek word, means "to re-echo."

They believe "it is structured, organized and written to support a deeply contemplative appreciation of the doctrines of the faith." It is carefully reasoned yet like the faith itself, cannot be fully grasped without "a gaze of faith" that comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit. You can order [\*Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis\*](#).

### *Kings and Queens of the Bible*

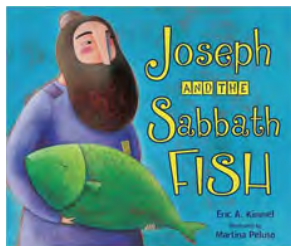


There were many kings and queens mentioned in the Bible, some good and some bad. All the kings and queens mentioned in this book played a large part in the history of the Jewish people.

In this book you will read about the Pharaoh and Moses, King David, King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, Queen Jezebel, King Belshazzar and Queen Esther. Each story is only a few pages long. In the back of this book there is an additional brief paragraph, or sentence with some additional information and where in the Bible their stories can be found.

You can order [\*Kings and Queens of the Bible\*](#).

### *Joseph and the Sabbath Fish*



This is a wonderful parable of how Joseph was repaid a thousandfold for his generosity on the Sabbath. Any child who hears or reads this tale can be certain that stingy Judah is going to be right and Joseph will lose his fortune. However, the story gives us the sense that somehow Joseph will be saved from his plight and will continue to welcome people, including stingy Judah, into his home regardless of his financial situation. There is a sense of excitement and tension when Judah flees Galilee for Africa

and a mystery sets in. This is an excellent tale to read to young children to emphasize the importance of the Sabbath (Shabbat). Since this is a Jewish tale, you will need to make the connection to our celebration of the Eucharist (Mass). You can order [\*Joseph and the Sabbath Fish \(Shabbat\)\*](#)