

CATHOLIC CALENDAR.

A page devoted to local Catholic interests

March 14, 2003

Vol. 29, No. 5

Lake Charles, La.

Internet Address: <http://lcediocese.org>

The Second Sunday of Lent

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

Mark: 9:2-10



Vindicated

Fr. Frank Pavone,
Priests for Life

I wasn't even a priest yet when the "NOW vs. Scheidler" case began in June of 1986. During the 17 years since then, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has attempted to penalize Joseph Scheidler, Director of the Pro-life Action League, and others who work in union with him.

For doing what, you ask? That question is the heart of the case.

Joe Scheidler and company have labored ceaselessly to save children from abortion and to help their parents find the resources to care for their children.

They have gone to the very places where those children were scheduled to be killed, and have peacefully intervened for their lives. They have provided the final refuge for those lives, the final intervention for the parents who were not moved by all the political, legislative, religious, multimedia and educational work of the pro-life movement. Armed with nothing but the rosary, the pro-life activists endured heat, cold, ridicule and rejection in order to be there for those in need, and to stand in solidarity with the

poorest of the poor. And many lives were in fact saved.

But in the eyes of the National Organization for Women, the pro-life activists engaged in "violence" and "harassment." In fact, NOW tried to use the RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) statutes against the pro-lifers.

RICO laws were crafted to stop organized crime and drug trafficking, not the peaceful, non-violent intervention of those who are trying to save lives.

After 17 years of litigation, the Supreme Court gave the final word on February 26, 2003, deciding by an 8 to 1 majority that RICO cannot be used against the pro-life activists, even if their activities deprived the abortion mills of business.

This is a victory for common sense and, in its implications, a victory for the pro-life movement and for the unborn.

There is still an unresolved issue, of course, that goes beyond the technical boundaries of the case. The fact is that abortion is not a legitimate business in the first place. While the Justices wrestled with the notion of "property," and

whether it could be said that pro-life activism deprived the abortion mills of their property, nobody addressed the fact that the abortion mills deprive God of His property! The pro-abortion forces complained that Joe Scheidler trespassed into the "clinics." But the crime of trespassing into the sacred space of the womb, and violating it with bloodshed, was never raised.

Yes, this decision is a victory. But it is only a first step. The reputations of these pro-life activists must be fully restored. They never committed any violence.

Moreover, the path they have forged must be followed by the rest of us.

Presence at the abortion mills, sidewalk counseling, street preaching, and good old-fashioned American picketing are honorable activities, are integral to our movement, and deserve to be promoted by pro-life groups and by the Church at every level. Thank God for those who do these things; I am honored to be among them.

Everything That Is Good Is Born Of Silence

A Lenten Meditation on the Sacrament of Reconciliation

(First of two parts)
Everything that is good is born of silence!

When you sit down to a delicious dinner of crawfish or shrimp gumbo, ham turkey, and chicken, candied yams, green beans, corn bread, and homemade peach cobbler, made from scratch, there were probably no recipes. The mother, the father, the eldest daughter, or whoever does the cooking, just "knows" how to prepare each dish the way the family likes it. In the past cooking tradition was passed on in family kitchens as children watch their parents add a pinch of this and a dash of that as the house is filled with fragrant aromas.

Tens of billions of years ago, God dwelled in awesome silence. This divine power triggered the process of creation, massive cosmic explosions, the birth of the universe, the evolution of the planets and rivers of stars and suns that are the stuff of creations yet to come.

Tens of millions of years ago, glacial ice receded from the surface of the earth. The seas were formed. Elemental life forms developed on the ocean floor. Over time, their decedents moved to land. A long process of complex silent mutations began that would lead to the dawn of man.

Tens of thousands of years ago, our precocious ancestors grasped the relationship between the elemental thumb and the rest of the hand and fingers. This silent insight led to the first tools and the quest for fire. The exploration of space, laptop computers, and E-mail, were only a blink away.

Everything that is good is born of silence.

Silent knowing, silent admiration, silent awe before the mystery of the human person precede the embrace of friendship. We would not be were it not for the silent flow of sexual communion of our mothers and fathers as lovers. From their naked knowing was born the wonder of our new lives.

There was silence before the prodigious creativity and discoveries of the great philosophers, scientists, musicians, artists, and poets.

Everything that is good is born of silence!

Silence pervades in the Gospel story (Luke 15-11-32) misnamed "The Prodigal Son," that is heard in many Penance Services during these days of Lent.

There is the silence of the wise father who does

not argue with his foolish son who asks for his half of the family money, even though he has no idea of what he will do with it. There is the silence of the flesh merchants who gladly separate the impetuous youth from his money. There is the silence of the servants at the father's house doing the wealthy man's bidding. The silence of the father waiting at the gate of the estate for some

About quarreling with our family members.

About dishonesty, lying, or stealing.

About the irresponsible use of alcohol.

About the misuse of the gift of sexuality.

About how we spend our time at work.

About the way we use and abuse money.

About the way we treat our mothers and fathers, our grandmothers and grandfathers, our sisters and brothers, our sons and daughters, our co-workers, the old, the poor, the sick, the homeless.

About our attitudes towards people of a different race, religion or background.

About how faithful we are to building up our neighborhood, our schools, our home.

About the ways in which we are working for peace in a time when so many are speaking of war.

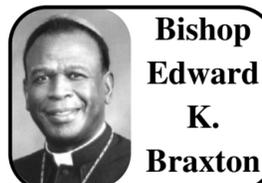
About how much we truly care about our Catholic faith, our parish, our priests, our deacons and lay ministers.

About how faithful we have been in following Jesus of Nazareth as He carries His cross to Calvary, on the way to His suffering and crucifixion for our salvation.

About how willing we are to carry our own crosses, large or small in preparation for Easter.

Before we can confess our sins, we need to know our sins. Before we can know them we need silence. I invite all who are reading my words to prepare themselves in prayer, express sorrow for your sins and ask God for reconciliation and forgiveness. Because everything that is good is born of silence.

The Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church are not magic. Confession is a serious matter. It is an opportunity for us to meet Jesus Christ to tell him that we love him and to receive from him the forgiveness of our sins. We dare not take this rite lightly. Let us prepare in Silence. The priests are waiting in our parishes for us to approach the Lord Jesus Christ by going to confession. As your Bishop, I ask you to break your silence between now and Easter and celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation.



Bishop
Edward
K.
Braxton

sign of his son's return. There is the grave silence of the older son, who is bitter and angry because his years of dedicated service seem to have been taken for granted. There is the silent art of the shoemaker working with gold, silver, and leather, preparing the slippers that will be placed on the feet of the repentant son. And there is the silent weight of the mountain weighing down on the coal that would become the diamond rings for his fingers. There is even the silent ignorance of the calf in the fattening pen, soon to be slain for the welcome home feast, which does not know that his day of days has come.

The most profound silence, the most eloquent silence, the silence that speaks loud and clear to us is that of the son when he is far from his father's house, starving to death while feeding the pigs. At long last he comes to his senses, makes his way home and confesses to his father, "I have sinned against God and against you."

If, during this season of Lent, this season of confusion, this season of anticipation for those to be baptized, confirmed at the Easter Vigil, you and I are to become aware of our sins, the things we do wrong each day, and to become aware of our true sorrow for them, each one of us needs a great silence. No radio, no television, no movies, no earphones, no portable stereos, no magazines, no singing to ourselves, no idle conversation, no day dreaming. We must have silent waits, silent listening before ourselves and before God, if we are to come to our senses and confess our sorrow. In this silent self-knowledge we will face the painful truth of our selves.

Catholics to cycle across U.S. to find solutions to poverty

WASHINGTON - The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) announced March 5 that it is sponsoring a bike ride across America to focus public attention on poverty in the United States and on the need to promote permanent solutions toward breaking the cycle of poverty. A team of twenty riders will leave San Francisco on June 1, 2003, and will ride primarily across the mid-section of the country, ending on August 1 in Washington, DC.

"This solidarity ride is a unique and creative way to not only raise awareness of domestic poverty, but also provide useful information about ways that low-income people are successful in breaking the cycle through economic and community development projects," said CCHD Executive Director Reverend Robert Vitillo. "The Church believes that all persons have a right to enjoy the human dignity they have received as a gift from

God. Thus, we Catholics are committed to breaking the cycle of poverty and other affronts to human dignity."

The group of riders, ranging in age from 21-67, will travel through 12 states and 32 Catholic Dioceses in an effort to call attention to the increase in US poverty in America. According to the latest census figures, nearly 33 million Americans now live below the poverty line. In the United States, one out of every six children lives in poverty and one out of every 10 families is poor. "Short term fixes," according to Father Vitillo "do not solve poverty. Poverty usually occurs in a cycle and unless the cycle is broken through effective long-term solutions, poverty will continue."

As the cyclists progress across the country, they will spend time in the evenings with grass roots groups and Catholic parishioners interested in learning more about the issues, encouraging a dialogue about effective ways

to permanently eliminate the effects of poverty and urging people to take action.

This bike ride across America has been named the "Brake the Cycle of Poverty Tour" and will not only include a core group of twenty who will ride from coast to coast, but will also encourage smaller solidarity rides in communities and regions, such as one that is planned to leave Long Island, N.Y., on July 27 and join up with the core group in Baltimore on July 31 for the final leg of the trip. The purpose is to call attention to U.S. poverty, and to stimulate a dialogue about issues and solutions and urge people to take action. An additional goal is to raise awareness of the Church's response to U. S. poverty through CCHD's support of community-based, self-help projects that are initiated and led by low-income people.

For more information about the Brake the Cycle of Poverty in America Bike Ride, visit www.brakethecycle.org.

(This page paid for by the Diocese of Lake Charles.)