

# **Limbo reflects ‘restrictive view of salvation’**

VATICAN CITY – After several years of study, the Vatican’s International Theological Commission said there are good reasons to hope that babies who die without being baptized go to heaven. In a document published April 20, the commission said the traditional concept of limbo – as a place where unbaptized infants spend eternity but without communion with God – seemed to reflect an “unduly restrictive view of salvation.”

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# **Pastor says ‘words are not enough’**

BLACKSBURG, Va. – Words are not enough to comfort grieving parents, said a priest who spent time with the parents of several of the slain Virginia Tech students when they first learned their son or daughter was dead. In the early hours after the murder rampage on campus that left 33 dead, Father James Arsenault, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Blacksburg, was at Montgomery Regional Hospital with those who were wounded and their families.

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# **World must do more to support Iraqi refugees**

ROME – The international community must do more to welcome and support the thousands of refugees daily fleeing the “horrific violence” in Iraq, a Vatican official

said. "The world is witnessing an unprecedented degree of hate and destructiveness in Iraq," which not only destroys the "social tissue and the unity of Iraq," but is exerting "a widening deadly impact" on the whole Middle East, said Archbishop Silvano Tomasi.

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## **T.O.R.C.H. support group keeps home school fire lit**

Anita DiGregory hasn't an inkling on how to pronounce any of the Latin words in her son's lessons, but that doesn't prevent the mother of four from continuing her call to home school. "I absolutely love home-schooling and I wouldn't do it any other way," said Mrs. DiGregory. "It is so rewarding. I get to be the one who sees the light on their faces when they start reading. I get to be the one to grade their papers. I get to be with them all the time."

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## **Maryland native to showcase portraits**

Joseph Sheppard, an internationally acclaimed painter/sculptor will present an exhibition of more than 50 drawings, paintings and sculpture at the arts program gallery of the University of Maryland University College through June 18.

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# **Councilman Curran basks in the smoke-free spotlight**

Being known as the “Poster Child of Smoke-Free Maryland” may have shined the political spotlight on Baltimore City Council Vice President Robert Curran, but the St. Francis of Assisi, Baltimore, parishioner doesn’t believe his successful push for city- and state-wide smoking bans is his greatest accomplishment as a public servant. Leading the charge to help Stadium Place become a nationally recognized senior housing complex at the site of the former Memorial Stadium in Waverly is what he deems his most shining triumph, but concedes the smoking ban is his highest profile political feat.

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# **Church leaders to go ahead with dedication**

WARSAW, Poland - Church leaders have vowed to press ahead with the dedication of a Catholic church in Azerbaijan a week after it was damaged by attackers. “The opening will undoubtedly take place - there’ve been no changes in our program,” said Father Rolandas Makrickas, an official at the Vatican’s Tbilisi-based nunciature. The newly completed Immaculate Conception Church in Baku was damaged April 10 by fire after explosives were hurled through its windows.

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# **French-speaking Catholics find solace in Mass**

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – They greet each other as family inside the small chapel at Bishop Ireton High School in Alexandria, with warm hugs, a “Comment ça va?” and three kisses on alternating cheeks.

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## **A change of direction for the ‘deacon and his wife’**

Deacon Frederick Passauer and his wife Kathy were booming business owners of an insurance company in Manchester, when they heard God’s calling. The couple sold their business and their home and moved to the Deep Creek Lake area to start their new business, serving parishioners of western Maryland. “We knew this was our goal. To be in ministry,” said Mrs. Passauer. “The people here have really embraced us.”

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## **St. Mary’s Seminary and University dedicates addition**

St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Roland Park, the nation’s first Roman Catholic seminary, dedicated a new room in its library April 18 highlighting Pope John Paul II’s contributions to Catholic-Jewish relations.

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# Participants publish their side of brain death debate

VATICAN CITY - Breaching normal protocol, several participants in a 2005 Vatican-sponsored conference over the ethics of declaring someone brain dead have published the papers they delivered at the debate. Many of the papers reproduced in "Finis Vitae: Is Brain Death Still Life?" argue that the concept of brain death was devised mainly to expand the availability of organs for transplant and claim that some patients who had been pronounced brain dead continued to live for months or even years.

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# Portland Archdiocese: \$75 million settlement

PORTLAND, Ore. - The first Catholic diocesan bankruptcy proceeding in the nation ended April 17 when a federal judge approved a \$75 million settlement of clergy sexual abuse claims and a financial reorganization plan for the Portland Archdiocese. Smoothing the way for U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Elizabeth Perris, lawyers at the last moment negotiated payment for all remaining sex abuse claims. A last case, which was not over sex abuse, was settled just a few hours before the court approval was announced.