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## Archive of January 11, 2008



### [Bishops from Europe and US to visit Holy Land in support of peace](#)

, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - Father Pierre Grech, the general secretary of the Latin Bishops' Conference in the Arab Region, said this week that a group of bishops from the European and U.S. Bishops' conferences will visit the Holy Land January 12-16 in order to support the peace process in the region, where Christians are a minority.

According to the SIR news agency, Father Grech said, "This year the meeting will conclude in Rome for the ad limina visit of the ordinaries of the Holy Land January 14-19. The delegation of European and American bishops will meet with the bishops of the Holy Land on January 12, and afterwards there will be a meeting with Archbishop Antonio Franco, the Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem and Palestine, in order to discuss the accords between Israel and the Holy See."

On January 13, the delegation will visit Bethlehem, Nablus, Nablus, Rafidia, Jenin and Zababdeh, and on January 14 there could be a meeting with Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayed in Ramallah, and with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem.

"This date arrives after a 2007 in which pilgrimages began again and after Annapolis, where the issue of peace between Palestinians and Israelis was discussed," Father Grech said.

Currently the Christian population in the Holy Land only numbers 170,000, that is, 1.5% of the total population. 99% of Christians are of Palestinian-Arabic origin and most are Greek Orthodox, with small communities of Coptic, Syrian and Armenian Catholics.

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### [Nuncio in Mexico reiterates Church's opposition to euthanasia](#)

Mexico City, Mexico, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - During a press conference this week, the Apostolic Nuncio in Mexico, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, reiterated the Church's opposition to euthanasia, calling it an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the human person.

During a pastoral visit to the city of Nuevo Laredo, Archbishop Pierre responded to questions about a new law approved in Mexico City allowing "death with dignity" that includes concepts akin to the legalization of euthanasia.

"Let us hope the new law supporting 'death with dignity,' approved in Mexico City, does not become the path towards euthanasia or assisted suicide in this country," the Nuncio said.

"The Church is always in favor of life above all other things," he went on, "and against any act that intends to deprive it."

"The Church has always said that no normal process of life can be interrupted because that is killing," Archbishop Pierre said. "The Church does not approve that people speed up their own death, because life is sacred from the beginning to the end. Neither does she support the use of extraordinary means to keep alive someone who has reached their end in a normal way," he explained.

"My concern," he added, "is that this law will be the path towards euthanasia, as there is a tendency in today's world to interrupt the natural suffering of a sick person in his or her terminal phase and to bring about death."

Archbishop Pierre stressed, however, that his statements were of an exclusively doctrinal

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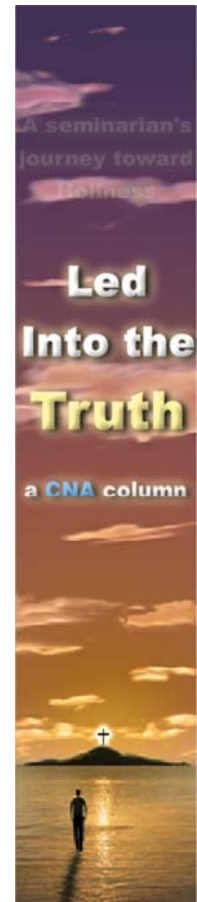
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nature and that he was not intending to interfere in the public life of national institutions, because to do so would not be in keeping with his role as representative of Benedict XVI.

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#### [Airline can order employee to cover cross necklace, British court rules](#)

London, England, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - A British Airways employee who sued her employer after it required her to cover up a cross necklace while she worked has lost her religious discrimination lawsuit, WorldNetDaily reports.

Nadia Eweida, a check-in worker at Heathrow Airport and a Coptic Christian, was sent home after refusing to remove the cross necklace. British Airways said the necklace was a violation of the company's dress code.

Eweida charged her employer with religious discrimination, saying that the company allowed religious employees like those adhering to Islam or Hinduism to wear faith-related clothing, jewelry, religious markings, or other items.

The Reading Employment Tribunal had previously ruled against Eweida, but she appealed the decision.

The 56-year-old Eweida, who was placed on unpaid leave, reacted to the ruling, saying, "I'm very disappointed. I'm speechless really because I went to the tribunal to seek justice. But the judge has given way for BA to have a victory on imposing their will on all their staff."

Eweida was represented by an attorney from the Alliance Defense Fund. Chief Counsel Benjamin Bull issued a statement responding to the decision.

"Christian employees should not be singled out for discrimination. This decision will be appealed," he said. "According to British Airways, it's OK for employees to wear a symbol of their faith unless it's a Christian cross. The airline took no action against employees of other religions who wore jewelry or symbols of their religion. That type of intolerance is inconsistent with the values of civilized communities around the world."

The court ruled that the airline can prohibit Eweida from visibly wearing the cross. It held that other types of religious symbols, such as turbans, bangles, and other religious markings, are acceptable because they cannot be concealed.

In a statement, British Airways said: "We have always maintained that our uniform policy did not discriminate against Christians, and we are pleased that the tribunal's decision supports our position.

"Our current policy allows symbols of faith to be worn openly and has been developed with multi-faith groups and our staff."

British Airways noted Eweida's eight years of employment with the company, saying she "continues to be a valued member of our staff."

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#### [Catholic pizza billionaire backs Romney](#)

Boston, Mass., Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - Tom Monaghan, the Catholic philanthropist who made his fortune in Domino's Pizza, has endorsed former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney in his campaign to become the Republican candidate for president.

"It is an honor for me to endorse Governor Mitt Romney for President," Monaghan said. "He is a proven leader and has demonstrated his effectiveness in multiple arenas - in his successful business ventures, the running of the Olympics and in politics. I had first hand experience of Mitt's effectiveness and expertise during the sale of Domino's Pizza to Bain Capital."

"Most importantly," he continued, "Governor Romney is a man of principle. As someone who values the importance of faith in one's life, I recognize in Mitt his deep religious convictions which will serve him well in facing the critical moral issues facing our society. I believe he will stand firm on the pro-life issues and for the traditional family values that our country was founded on and which are so critical to the future of our nation."

Monaghan is chairman of the Ave Maria Foundation, which he founded in 1983. A former owner of the Detroit Tigers, Monaghan now works in non-profit endeavors. In 1998 he founded the Ave Maria Institute, which later became Ave Maria College, a liberal arts college that preceded Ave Maria University. Monaghan is the present chancellor of the university.

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Governor Romney responded to Monaghan's endorsement, saying, "Having known Tom since 1998, I am proud to have his support in this critical election. As a successful businessman, he has also been a strong supporter of conservative causes across the country. His philanthropic work has touched the lives of millions."

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#### [Cardinal Newman beatification hoped for this year as saint guidelines tighten](#)

Vatican City, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - Cardinal John Henry Newman, the famous 19th-century British convert to Catholicism, could be beatified this year even as Pope Benedict tightens the guidelines for canonizations, the Daily Telegraph reports.

On Tuesday [CNA reported](#) that Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins told the Vatican's newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, that Cardinal Newman's beatification was "imminent". Now he has given an even more specific timeframe, telling the Daily Telegraph that he hoped the beatification would happen this year.

Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of the Saints, said, "Cardinal Newman was a relevant intellectual, an emblematic figure of conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism and personally I wish his beatification to happen very soon."

The congregation has been evaluating a reported miracle in which an American was inexplicably cured of a crippling spinal condition after praying to Cardinal Newman.

Cardinal Newman, a prominent cleric in the Anglican Church, caused great controversy when he converted to Catholicism in 1845. His defense of Catholic belief was remarkable to Victorian England, and his explanations of the development of Christian doctrine continue to be very influential. He died in 1890.

In his discussion of Newman's beatification, Cardinal Martins also addressed new regulations Pope Benedict XVI is introducing into the consideration of potential saints' causes.

Cardinal Martins said that a 20-page rulebook would soon be distributed to all bishops to "reflect the new spirit introduced by Pope Benedict in the sainthood process" which will involve "more sobriety, more rigor, more accuracy and maximum caution."

Pope John Paul II relaxed rules for investigations of proposed saints, especially by his 1983 abolition of the Promotor Fidei, commonly known as the "Devil's Advocate," an official who would argue for the most skeptical interpretation of a candidate's character and actions.

483 saints were canonized and 559 blessed were beatified under Pope John Paul II, while Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate has overseen the canonization of 14 and the beatification of 559. Some have criticized the large numbers as evidence the Church is acting as a "saint factory."

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#### [Public Radio International skit blasphemes Eucharist, apology made](#)

Salt Lake City, Utah, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - A January 7 public radio skit that made disparaging remarks about the Eucharist while attacking Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee provoked outrage from Catholics and a speedy apology from its distributor.

The offensive segment was part of a show called "Fair Game with Faith Salie," broadcast on Utah public radio station KCPW.

In the skit, a woman's voice announces a "Huckabee family recipe" supposedly leaked by his opponents.

A man's voice then says:

"Tired of bland unsatisfying Eucharists? Try this Huckabee family favorite. Deep-Fried Body of Christ--boring holy wafers no more. Take one Eucharist. Preferably post transubstantiation. Deep-fry in fat, not vegetable oil, ladies, until crispy. Serve piping hot. Mike likes to top his Christ with whipped cream and sprinkles. But his wife Janet and the boys like theirs with heavy gravy and cream puffs. It goes great with red wine."

The woman's voice responds: "Now that is just ridiculous. Everyone knows evangelicals don't believe in transubstantiation."

Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, said in a Wednesday press release that his organization had lodged a complaint with KCPW general manager Ed Sweeney.

"This kind of programming would be over-the-top on a shock-jock station, never mind a

station funded by the taxpayers," Donohue said. He wrote that the Catholic League wanted to know who developed the skit, which he called "an assault on Jesus."

Whoever the skit creator was, Donohue said, "he or she used presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee and evangelicals as foil, saving the real sucker punch for Roman Catholics. This is despicable on several counts: it is blasphemous and bigoted. But it may also be motivated by a political calculus, making it really dirty if it is."

Brian Schott, news director at KCPW, responded to offended Catholics on a blog at the station's website. "I can see where the outrage is coming from, but the skit was meant to poke fun at Mike Huckabee's Southern roots and his problems with obesity. That's not my interpretation, that's why they wrote it."

Schott said the station did not originate the show, and does not have editorial control over it. "The host is a friend of mine — and she's really upset that this is the reaction. She's Catholic herself, and didn't mean to poke fun at Jesus."

Terry Mattingly, a religion news reporter and analyst writing at GetReligion.org, discussed Schott's response:

"The point, you see, is that the producers of the show were not mocking Jesus and they were not mocking Roman Catholics. They were mocking Bible Belt people. They were mocking an evangelical from the Bible Belt who is running for president. The problem was that they had to use the Mass and the Catholic faith in order to get to the punch line about the evangelical target. Follow that?"

An official from Public Radio International, the parent organization that carries the radio show, contacted the Catholic League. The official said that the offensive skit was pulled from the company's website and that an on-air apology was given.

"We are satisfied with the result," a Catholic League statement read, saying the organization's action "effectively ends the discussion."

Editor's Note: CNA previously reported that National Public Radio was the distributor of this skit. However, Public Radio International is the distributor of the skit. We regret the error.

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#### [Vatican shocked at manipulation of Pope's speech on Rome](#)

Vatican City, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - The Holy See's Press Office has expressed amazement at how Pope Benedict XVI's meeting with the mayor of Rome and other regional government officials yesterday is being used for political gain.

As he does every year, the Pontiff offered his insights on how the lives of Romans and those living in the Italian region of Lazio can be improved. However, these remarks were reported in the press as a "thorough dressing down" of the governing officials.

Political rivals of those currently in office seized on the Pope's comments as an opportunity to gain political capital.

The Pope's warning is "right, though poverty and degradation don't only affect Rome, but all Italian cities" said Minister of Social Solidarity, Paolo Ferrero, who appreciates the fact that every now and then "people make the invisible visible". Ferrero sees only one solution: "Increase social expenses for housing and a minimum starting income", according to AGI News.

The Vatican's press office responded to these and other remarks by saying, "The political manipulation that has followed the words addressed by the Holy Father yesterday to representatives from the Region of Lazio, and the Province and City of Rome cannot but provoke amazement. It was certainly not the Pope's intention to undervalue the social work being carried out with praiseworthy dedication by the leaders of the City of Rome and of the Region."

Rome's mayor, Walter Veltroni, thanked Pope Benedict for this explanation saying, "I would like to express my gratitude to the Holy Father for the words spoken this morning, which represent a recognition of the work and the great commitment over these years of the Council's administration, of other local institutions and of all those social services that have contributed to the growth of the city, to improving its quality of life without losing sight of the needs of its more vulnerable and less privileged citizens".

Veltroni added that his fellow politicians should view the Pope's speech as "a further spur to our work" and that "Today the controversy caused by loathsome and instrumental political reactions to the Pope's speech can be laid to rest".

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### [Vatican City police thanked by Pope, given inspiration to serve](#)

Vatican City, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - As he does at the beginning of every year, the Pope received members of the police force in charge of public security for Vatican City today. Thanking them for their vigilance and dedication, Benedict XVI also reminded the security force that they should see in those they protect "the face of a brother or a sister whom God has put in your path".

The Holy Father exchanged best wishes for 2008 with the officers and then gave them inspiration for continuing in their service, drawing on this year's theme for World Peace Day, "The Human Family, a Community of Peace".

Quoting from the text of the message, the Pope indicated that "the natural family, as an intimate communion of life and love based on marriage between a man and a woman, constitutes 'the primary place of humanization for the person and society', ... the prototype of every social order".

"In your daily role of vigilance", he told his listeners, "you meet no small number of families. They arrive here from all over the world to pay homage to the Apostles, and in particular to St. Peter upon whose faith Christ founded the Church. They come to renew together their profession of this faith, ... to participate in audiences and celebrations presided by the Apostle Peter's Successor".

The Holy Father thanked the officers of the General Inspectorate for Public Security for their "constant interest in people and in the motives that animate them", as well as for their "willingness, patience and spirit of sacrifice".

He applied the vision of the family to their work, telling them to seek in each pilgrim "the face of a brother or a sister whom God has put in your path, a friend yet unknown, ... in the knowledge that we are all part of the one great human family".

The Pope cautioned that seeing people this way is only possible if the each worker is committed to recognizing God as "the ultimate source of our own life and the lives of others."

Benedict explained that "Without this transcendent foundation, which is God, society risks becoming a mere aggregation of neighbors, and it ceases to be a community of brothers and sisters called to form one great family".

"May the Lord help you to carry out your profession", Benedict XVI concluded, "remaining ever faithful to the ideals which must constantly inspire it. Society needs people who do their duty and are aware that all work, all service conscientiously undertaken, contributes to building a more just and a truly free society".

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### [Release of hostages a demand of humanitarian rights, Colombian bishop says](#)

CNA STAFF, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - The secretary general of the Bishops' Conference of Colombia, Bishop Fabian Marulanda, said the release by the rebel group FARC of two female hostages (Carla Rojas and Consuelo González) is due to the "moral obligation to return them because their release is not a favor, it is a demand of human rights."

Speaking to CNA, the Colombian bishop explained that the news "has caused great joy, great emotion. We see a window opening for the release of all the kidnapped," he said. This fact "is very important because it shows how the release of the kidnapped is possible on the basis of good will," he added.

Bishop Marulanda emphasized the need to maintain "hope that the release of all the kidnapped can happen provided that the FARC listen to the cries of the Colombian people, of other friendly governments and of the entire world, because I believe that at this point in life there can't be anyone in the world who values kidnapping and approves of it. So the FARC must realize that they gain nothing by going down this road," he said.

The bishop went on to stress that the Church's efforts to get the kidnapped released are motivated purely by humanitarian reasons. "The participation by the Church is not because the government has requested it, but because it is part of her mission. The mission of the Church is to work for reconciliation, to help all Colombians to live together in peace," he said.

Currently the FARC is holding some 4,000 people hostage, including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, as well as other politicians, police officers and foreigners. The Marxist group's strategy is to "exchange" the kidnapped for some of its own members who

are in prison.

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#### [Spanish cardinal: investing in healthy family life is best bet for peace](#)

Madrid, Spain, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - Amidst the debate in Spain over the recent pro-family march in Madrid, the archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal Agustin Garcia-Gasco, said, "A society without families, or with confused or weakened families, is a society continually exposed to violence," and therefore "investing in healthy family life is the best bet for stable and lasting peace."

In his weekly letter, the cardinal emphasized that a culture of peace has as its foundation the education of the family, where God plays a "decisive" role. "With God as the origin and goal of the lives of individuals and nations, the consequences for all human beings to live in peace and dignity are decisively favorable," he said. "To forget about God or silence Him from the lives of people does nothing to bring about the peace that we all long for," he added.

Cardinal Garcia-Gasco went on to note that the family is crucial for the education of people in their true dignity and harmony with others," since, for starters, it is "the primary place for humanizing the person," since "human beings are called to develop a personal story that is unique and irreplaceable." Likewise, he went on, the family is also "the primary place for humanizing society" and "without the warmth of family love, human coexistence is cheated of the most intimate hope of all human beings: to love and to be loved."

The family is the "cradle of life and of love," the cardinal said, noting that if people accepted human life lovingly and were committed to developing it to its fullest, "especially when it is weak and in need," "there would be no room in our world for domestic violence, abortion, genetic manipulation, terrorism, war or any kind of human exploitation."

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#### [New campaign launched to promote family rosary](#)

Madrid, Spain, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - The recent controversy unleashed between pro-family organizations and government officials in Spain in the wake of the pro-family march on December 30 has inspired a new campaign to promote the family rosary in the country.

Ignacio Mendez Sanz and his wife Maria Candelaria Perez, presidents of the Association of the Rosario of Santo Domingo el Real, said this week that "the problems affecting Christian families in general and families in Spain in particular" are inspiring many to pray the rosary in family.

In a press release, the Association pointed out the different challenges facing the family in Spain:

- The offensive against natural marriage, the family and human life.
- The marginalization of religion classes and especially the imposition in schools of the indoctrination class called Education for Citizenship.
- The prevailing secularism and relativism that seeks to undermine morality and Christian customs.

In the face of these challenges, "We believe that the institution of the family in Spain is in urgent need of prayers," the Association stressed.

Those who want to join the campaign can visit [www.cofradiarosario.net](http://www.cofradiarosario.net) (only in Spanish)

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#### [Female guerrilla member escapes from FARC to avoid forced abortion](#)

, Jan 11, 2008 (CNA) - A 17 year-old member of the Marxist rebel group FARC who is three months pregnant has escaped from the organization to avoid being forced to undergo an abortion and to save the life of her child. She revealed that forced abortions are a common practice in the rebel group.

According to the Colombian daily "El Tiempo," the young girl known as "Nicole" was forced by her commanders to drink solutions intended to provoke an abortion. She escaped on December 19 and turned herself in to government forces.

"My comrades dropped me off in a home in the small town of Nazareno en Planadas, with a

bunch of explosives, and since they warned me about the abortion, I took advantage of the moment and I fled," she said. She was taken in by the Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being.

Nicole joined the FARC when she was 10 years old—the Marxist group commonly recruits young girls for its ranks.

According to doctors at the University Hospital of Neiva, Nicole will have a high-risk pregnancy. She is stable and the unborn child is healthy, but doctors have yet to determine if the baby was affected by the abortion solutions she was forced to drink.

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