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## News Briefs

### NEWS BRIEFS Apr-27-2005

By [Catholic News Service](#)

#### U.S.

#### Action by Illinois House committee moves stem-cell measure forward

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (CNS) -- Opponents of a measure that would establish a publicly funded stem-cell research facility in Illinois criticized the methods used by the Illinois House of Representatives Executive Committee to move the legislation forward. In a procedural change that ignored protocol, the committee chair, Democratic Rep. Dan Burke of Chicago, allowed only testimony in favor of the bill before calling for a vote by committee members, who approved the measure 10 to 3 April 13. Opposing testimony, including that of Robert Gilligan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, was heard only after the committee passed the proposal on for a third reading and a final vote. The House measure, and a similar one under consideration by the Senate, would institute a 6 percent tax on cosmetic surgeries to establish the Illinois Regenerative Medicine Institute. It also would ask Illinois voters to approve bond issues of \$1 billion over 10 years to provide grants through the institute to fund both embryonic and adult stem-cell research.

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#### Knights museum remembers late pope with new exhibit of memorabilia

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CNS) -- While rejoicing over the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI, the Knights of Columbus were also remembering the late Pope John Paul II with a new exhibit of artifacts from his papacy at

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their museum in New Haven. "Relatively few people were able to travel to the Vatican for the funeral of Pope John Paul II, but our museum exhibit contains a wealth of material that will provide visitors with a means to honor his memory and to learn more about the life and legacy of John Paul the Great," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. The display brings together items the pope used or received as gifts. Many he later gave as gifts to the Knights of Columbus. The exhibit, which runs through the end of June, makes the museum one of the few places outside of Italy and Poland to have such a collection. One of the largest items is the papal altar chair John Paul II used for his outdoor Mass at Aqueduct Racetrack on Oct. 6, 1995, during his visit to New York City. The Knights commissioned the tall chair -- made of aged, gold-leafed walnut, velvet and steel and designed to match one the pope used at the Vatican.

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### Catholics urged to boycott eBay for allowing listing of Eucharist

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CNS) -- Catholics are being urged to boycott eBay because the popular auction Internet site allowed an Iowa man to try to sell a Communion host purported to be consecrated by Pope John Paul II. The host was later withdrawn by the seller, no money exchanged hands and the host was properly disposed of according to church law. However, groups calling for the boycott contend that eBay should not have allowed the auction of an item sacred to Catholics. The eBay company "is more interested in profits than in the beliefs of Catholics," said Tom Serafin, founder of the International Crusade for Holy Relics, one of the groups supporting a boycott. Hani Durzy, a spokeswoman for the San Jose, Calif.-based company, said the auction of the host was allowed despite criticism prompted by the eBay listing because it did not violate any federal, state or local laws, and was not deemed hateful by the company. In an interview with the National Catholic Register, the spokeswoman also said auctioning the host might be offensive to some but did not incite hate like Nazi paraphernalia, which cannot be sold on the site for that reason. Durzy did not have an immediate response to the call for a boycott. Groups backing the boycott include the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights and the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property. A Web site has been set up, [www.boycottebay.org](http://www.boycottebay.org).

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## WORLD

### **Cardinals say hype, global awareness created hope of Third World pope**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- In the days leading up to the conclave, expectations were high about an outcome that would have been practically inconceivable 30 years ago: that the next pope might be from Asia, Africa or Latin America. Speculation had centered especially on cardinals from Argentina, Brazil, Honduras and Nigeria, but in the end the cardinal-electors chose a European, German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who became Pope Benedict XVI. Did the rapidity of the decision mean the time was not yet ripe for the leader of the world's 1.1 billion Catholics to come from another part of the world? "In part, the expectation was created by the media," said Cardinal Francisco Errazuriz Ossa of Santiago, Chile, president of the Latin American bishops' council. Still, he said, media hype is not entirely to blame. "There is a strong awareness of how the church is growing in other parts of the world, such as India and Korea, and how the church in Latin America is alive and growing," Cardinal Errazuriz said. In this conclave, the cardinal said, the legacy of Pope John Paul II weighed heavily in the balance. Nevertheless, said Cardinal Errazuriz, "I think that in the future there will be a pope from Latin America, India or another part of the world, because the College of Cardinals has become so international."

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### **Ethiopian bishops urge participation in May legislative elections**

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (CNS) -- Ethiopian bishops urged citizens to vote in May 15 legislative elections, saying their participation helped "fulfill their civic responsibility." The bishops said in their late-April statement that citizens should choose the "common good of the nation before any other motivation." The bishops said "the elections are not just political contests among different political parties, but the occasion to elect those leaders that -- by their competence, their impartiality and moral integrity -- are believed to be better agents of social promotion of national unity and the common good," the bishops said. More than 25 million of Ethiopia's 71 million people have registered to vote in May elections, according to Reuters, the British news agency.

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## Muslim leaders welcome pope's pledge of cooperation

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Muslim leaders welcomed a pledge by Pope Benedict XVI to work for closer interfaith dialogue and urged the new pontiff to encourage Catholic-Muslim initiatives. "If prominent Muslims and Catholics were seen meeting, this would send a strong message to the world," said Ronald Shaheed, director of Masjid Sultan Muhammad in Milwaukee, Wis. "The pope should find ways of helping Christians and Muslims get know each other, encouraging young people to take the lead," he told [Catholic News Service](#) April 27 following the pope's first general audience in St. Peter's Square. "As pope for Catholics worldwide, Benedict is already obligated to look at world suffering, unity and peace -- and this is why Christians and Muslims are finding each other. If the world's two largest religious communities could join together, beginning with small steps like ours, this would make a huge difference," he said. David Shaheed, a Muslim who serves as a superior court judge in Indianapolis, said more should be done to publicize interreligious moves already under way. "If people knew what's taken place thus far, this would be more instructive than anything else," David Shaheed said.

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## PEOPLE

### At first audience, pope shares reasons for choosing 'Benedict'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- At the first general audience of his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI sat in the full force of the spring sun, expressing again his "awe and gratitude" that God chose him to lead the Catholic Church. God, he said, "surprised me first of all." Although leading more than 1 billion Catholics is a huge task, the knowledge that he will have the help of God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the spiritual support of the faithful "gives me serenity and joy," he said. Pope Benedict began the audience by touring St. Peter's Square in an open popemobile for about 10 minutes. He stood the entire time, waving and blessing the crowd. He told the estimated 15,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square that in the coming weeks he would continue the series of audience talks Pope John Paul II had begun on the psalms and canticles

used in the church's morning and evening prayers. But first, he said, he wanted to share with the public his reasons for choosing the name Benedict when he was elected pope April 19. "I wanted to call myself Benedict XVI to bind myself to the venerated Pope Benedict XV, who guided the church in a troubled period because of the First World War. He was a courageous and authentic prophet of peace and worked with valiant courage first to prevent the drama of war and then to limit its nefarious consequences," he said. "In his footsteps, I want to place my ministry at the service of reconciliation and harmony among individuals and peoples, deeply convinced that the great good of peace is, first of all, a gift of God, a fragile and precious gift to invoke, safeguard and build day after day with the help of everyone," Pope Benedict said. The second reason for choosing the name, he said, was to evoke the spirit of St. Benedict, founder of Western monasticism.

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### **Pope drops papal crown from coat of arms, adds miter, pallium**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The papal crown has been given the boot once again, this time no longer appearing as part of the new pope's coat of arms. Pope Benedict XVI has dispensed with the image of the three-tiered tiara that traditionally appeared at the top of each pope's coat of arms and replaced it with the pointed miter. The pope also has added the pallium, the woolen stole symbolizing a bishop's authority, to the elements surrounding the shield. The details of the new papal blazon were published in the April 28 edition of the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano. A copy was released April 27 to journalists. "Benedict XVI has chosen a coat of arms that is rich in symbolism and meaning, so as to put his personality and his papacy in the hands of history," said Italian Archbishop Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, an expert on heraldry and creator of Benedict XVI's new insignia. "For at least the past eight centuries, popes have had their own personal coats of arms in addition to the symbols of the Apostolic See," the archbishop said in the Vatican newspaper.

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### **Nonprofit organization benefits from Benedict Web site**

ORLANDO, Fla. (CNS) -- Thursday is usually a quiet day at the New York offices of Modest Needs, an organization that helps

people who would otherwise fall through the cracks with grants of assistance for rent, utilities and other needs. Executive director Keith Taylor knew something was up when donations were coming through the ModestNeeds.org Web site at about five times the normal rate, including one for \$1,000, compared to the usual gift of about \$25. That's when he found out that Rogers Cadenhead had placed a donation link to the Modest Needs site on the temporary Web site for BenedictXVI.com. Cadenhead, who lives in the Jacksonville area, had appeared on NBC's "Today" show and other television news outlets, bringing attention to the Web site; it was one of several sites with pope names he had purchased when Pope John Paul II's health was failing. Gambling on what name the pope's successor would choose, Cadenhead -- who is the author of books and computer programs and has a Web log -- reserved Internet sites April 1 in the names of six recent popes. He said his motivation for registering them was to keep them out of the hands of pornographers or profiteers. Apparently he has an affinity for the work Modest Needs does and decided to support the nonprofit agency by providing a link to it.

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### **Sister Rose Thering honored by Anti-Defamation League**

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Dominican Sister Rose Thering is the first woman to receive the Anti-Defamation League's Cardinal Bea Interfaith Award. The award, which has been given only five times since the honor was established 20 years ago, was presented to the 84-year-old nun at a special luncheon tribute in April in Washington. It is named for Cardinal Augustin Bea, a German Jesuit who deepened and enriched relations between Catholics and Jews before and during the Second Vatican Council. The Dominican nun, who oversees the Sister Rose Thering Endowment for Jewish Studies and serves on the faculty of Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J., was the subject of "Sister Rose's Passion," an HBO/Cinemax documentary which was nominated for an Academy Award as best documentary short subject in 2005. "There is not enough time, and there are not enough superlative adjectives to adequately describe what the life and work of Sister Rose Thering have meant to the world," said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL national director. "She changed the course of history," he added. "She is a woman of valor who has brought enlightenment, honor, scholarship and pure passion to remembering and teaching about the Holocaust, to battling

the demon of anti-Semitism and to challenging the ignorance and prejudice and the teaching of contempt for Jews."

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