7-30-2009

Scriptural Scribe

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To a doctoral candidate in UD's religious studies program who flexes her brain on academic papers, a 300-word commentary on the Sunday scriptures may seem like a walk in the park. Not so.

"These short little pieces take more work than anything else," said Sharon Perkins, who started writing for the weekly column Word to Life in 1994. "Since space is so limited, every single word must have important meaning. I edit, re-edit and end up changing my entire essay sometimes."

Though Perkins said she struggles to put the finishing touches on the final drafts of her columns, the results were impressive enough to gain the attention of the Catholic Press Association, which in June awarded the column second place for best scripture commentary.

Word to Life originally ran in the North Texas Catholic, the newspaper of the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas. Today, it's syndicated by the Catholic News Service and appears in diocesan papers across the country. Three other writers also contribute to the column.

"I find pastoral writing gives me balance," said Perkins, who lives in Austin, Texas. "It's not academic writing like my dissertation, and it's good to be able to cross over to different writing styles."

The award citation included one of Perkins' columns (url: http://www.catholicnews.com/data/word/08wl0413.htm); to read other installments of the column, see its Web site (url: http://www.catholicnews.com/word2lif.htm).

— By Rachael Bade