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Breaking down barriers

Teens celebrate God's infinite love and mercy at Archdiocesan Youth Rally, page 11.

A father's love, a son's passion

Hughes family shares inspiring story at father and son breakfast

By Mike Krokos

BEECH GROVE—This is a love story about faith, family, perseverance and passion.

It's a story about the power of a father's unconditional love for his son and the dreams that love has unleashed.

It's a story about the sacrifices a father is willing to make so his son's dreams can become reality.

The story of Patrick Henry Hughes, and his father, Patrick John Hughes, inspired and captured the hearts of more than 500 people who attended the annual Holy Name of Jesus Parish Father and Son Breakfast on March 2.

Patrick Henry Hughes, who will turn 20 on March 10, was born without eyes and the ability to straighten his arms and legs.

Yet, for Patrick Henry, life is more about using the gifts that God has given him.

His view is "not disabilities at all, more abilities."

"I see blindness as ability and sight as a disability," said Patrick Henry, who attends Mass at St. Bartholomew Parish in Louisville, Ky., with his parents and two brothers, ages 17 and 12.

"I just see what's on the inside [of a person]."

For Patrick Henry, his abilities include being a talented pianist, vocalist and trumpet player.

A full-time student at the University of Louisville who commutes back and forth from campus, Patrick Henry also excels in the classroom. The sophomore is a straight A student majoring in Spanish. He is fluent in Spanish and hopes to be an interpreter or international ambassador to a Spanish-speaking country. And

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Photo by Tom Fougere/University of Louisville

Patrick John Hughes and his son, Patrick Henry Hughes, perform as part of the University of Louisville marching band during halftime at a 2006 home football game.

Conference connects the Holy Spirit and evangelization

By Sean Gallagher

BATESVILLE—"I can feel the fire, Holy Ghost fire. I can feel the fire burning in my soul."

These words were sung with passion and flowed from a high school auditorium on March 1 in Batesville during a conference sponsored by St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County.

Some 500 people from across Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio attending the conference belted out the song between presentations that focused on how the gifts, also known as charisms, of the Holy Spirit are to be used in everyday life to share the Gospel with others.

The conference, "The Holy Spirit and Evangelization: Go and Make Disciples of All Nations," featured Bishop Sam Jacobs of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux in Louisiana, Sister of Charity of New York Nancy Kellar, Father Daniel Wilder of the Diocese of Peoria, Ill., and Father Gregory Bramlage, pastor of St. Nicholas Parish.

Called by Name, a music group made up mostly of members of St. Nicholas Parish and led by Angie Meyers, led participants in praise and worship songs between presentations and during the conference Mass.

Participants thought it was the Holy Spirit that was the driving force behind all that happened at the conference.

"I think this is absolutely wonderful," said conference attendee Chris Dickson, a member of St. Mary Parish in Richmond. "This is the best conference that I've ever been to here yet.

"It really convicted me because I know that I haven't been doing the job [of evangelization] that the Holy Spirit has been telling me that I'm supposed to do. I've been too timid. And now, it's like, 'OK, all the stops are out now. You have no more excuses.'"

In his presentation, "The Charisms and Evangelization," Bishop Jacobs emphasized how the Church's mission of evangelization

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Photo by Sean Gallagher

Karen Kamphaus, a member of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County, plays a tambourine during a praise and worship song on March 1 during a conference on the Holy Spirit and evangelization sponsored by her parish and held at Batesville High School in Batesville.

Israeli Catholic analyst says U.S. is part of Middle East problem

JERUSALEM (CNS)—A Catholic political analyst said the current U.S. administration is part of the problem in the Middle East, not the solution.

"Unfortunately [President George W.] Bush's administration is a failure in the ... Middle East, starting in Afghanistan, stretching through to Iraq and moving on to Lebanon and Israel-Palestine," said Wadie Abunasser, an Arab and director of the International Center for Consultations in Haifa, Israel. "There is a lack of good American understanding of the reality and mentality of the region."

Abunasser added that the situation continues to deteriorate because of a lack of sufficient international intervention, specifically by the United States.

Despite the numerous visits to the region by members of the U.S. administration, including U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who arrived in Ramallah, West Bank, on March 4, Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular do not feel they have benefited, he said.

People were not optimistic about Rice's visit, Abunasser added.

"Palestinians feel the purpose of the peace process is to bring them to their knees," he said.

Although on-again, off-again talks were resumed following Bush's visit in January, people have not felt any concrete changes on the ground, he said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose Fatah Party was ousted from the Gaza Strip last summer by the Islamic militant group Hamas, suspended peace talks on March 2 after the Israeli incursion into Gaza.

In Ramallah, Rice said that she believed a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians was still possible this year and urged the two sides to resume talks.

Abunasser said the recent escalation of violence along the Gaza border between Palestinian militants and the Israeli military is a clear indication of the complete lack of their understanding of each other.

"Israel has been running after Hamas for 20 years, and Hamas is growing," he said. "I am not saying that Hamas is good, but these

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LOVE

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he is in the school's marching band. But that is only part of Patrick Henry's story.

A love of music

His mom, Patricia, seemed on her way to a "picture-perfect pregnancy" after she and her husband conceived a child in 1987.

Though there was no explanation why, "his [Patrick Henry's] eyes didn't grow and his limbs didn't straighten out," Patrick John said of his firstborn child.

When doctors gave the young parents a list of all the things that newborn Patrick Henry wouldn't do in life, his father was devastated and tried to come to grips with the fact that his son wouldn't be able to compete in sports and experience many of the other things he had enjoyed.

Then one day, when his wife was shopping, Patrick John was faced with the challenge of trying to calm his crying 4-month-old son.

His solution? He sat with Patrick Henry at the piano and played a few notes, which seemed to soothe and calm the infant.

"He got quiet at the piano,"

Patrick John said.

What developed in the months and years ahead was Patrick Henry's love of music.

"At 9 months, he would play notes back to me," his father said.

By age 2, Patrick Henry was playing requests on the piano like "You Are My Sunshine" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

At the father and son breakfast, Patrick Henry sat at a piano, gently sliding his fingers on the keys as he performed "Rustles of Spring," a classical piece whose soothing sound is music to any listener's ears.

Later, he shared melodic vocals as he played "Somewhere, Over the Rainbow" and Brooks and Dunn's hit song "Believe" on the piano.

"He's my hero," father Patrick John told ESPN's Tom Rinaldi when discussing his son during a television piece on the family in 2006. The video was aired at the father and son breakfast.

"The places my son has taken me. ... He has taken me on a path I would have never imagined," Patrick John said at the father and son breakfast. "I have been blessed."

Sacrifices for a son

Patrick John works the graveyard shift—11 p.m. to 5 a.m. at United Parcel Service in Louisville—so he can attend classes with his son at the University of Louisville. But that is only one of the

Photos by Mike Krokos



Patrick John Hughes, left, watches as his son, Patrick Henry Hughes, sings and plays the piano at the annual Holy Name of Jesus Parish Father and Son Breakfast in Beech Grove on March 2.

sacrifices that father has made for his son.

When Patrick Henry enrolled at the University of Louisville in 2006, he was interested in playing in the school's pep band at basketball games. There was one catch: Only members of the marching band can play in the pep band.

Not to be deterred, Patrick John attends band practice with Patrick Henry. Father learns each new routine and pushes his son in his wheelchair through the 220-member band's maneuvers.

The father and son's commitment has not gone unnoticed. In 2006, Patrick Henry received the Disney's Wide World of Sports® Spirit Award, given each year to college football's most inspirational figure. Patrick Henry was the first nonathlete to win

the award.

For Patrick John, his strength comes through his son, who he said views himself as "just a guy living his life."

"He's got a discipline in him that I wish I had when I was younger," Patrick John said.

Faith, family, friends and freedom

Though he is a straight A student, Patrick Henry is also known for the straight F's he lives in life: faith, family, friends and freedom.

His faith in God is evident. In the past year, he spent 15 minutes a day reading the Bible. He read the entire book in roughly 10 months. It was the fourth time he has read it in its entirety.

'Love your kids, and do what you can for them. Make the most of your time.'

— Patrick John Hughes



Alex Law, 11, a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, meets Patrick Henry Hughes after the March 2 Holy Name of Jesus Parish Father and Son Breakfast.

He also lives his life by the acronym "P.A.T.": P is for passion, patience and perseverance; A is for ability and positive attitude; and T is for try and try again, Patrick Henry says.

"Never give up," he adds.

For his father, the life lessons are abundant and a blessing.

"One of the greatest gifts Patrick has given me is perspective," Patrick John said. "Do you see the day as an opportunity or a struggle?"

"No matter what your burden, have faith and never give up," he added. "I let this unfold at God's speed."

Afterward, Patrick John offered more advice for parents.

"Love your kids, and do what you can for them," he said. "Make the most of

your time."

Joe Norris, a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, was moved by Patrick John's relationship with his son, Patrick Henry.

"It's an amazing commitment that his father has," said Norris, who attended the breakfast with his son, Jake, a freshman at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Mike Lamping, president of the Holy Name of Jesus Parish Men's Club, which sponsored the event, said the annual breakfast is a way to bring families together.

Lamping, who attended with his two sons, Matt, 23, and Mason, 16, said that the Hughes' message struck a chord for both parents and children at the program.

"You talk about quality time," Lamping said. "That's what's it all about." †

The Criterion

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Lenten speaker says faith can help further the common good

By Sean Gallagher

How are individual Catholics to apply their faith to everyday circumstances as well as to political discussions on the local, state and national levels in a society filled with people who profess a multitude of religions or none at all?



Robert Royal

This was the question that Robert Royal sought to answer in a presentation on Feb. 27 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis as part of its Lenten "Spaghetti and Spirituality" adult faith formation speaker series.

Royal is the president of the Washington-based Faith and Reason Institute (www.frinstitute.org), and the author of several books about the intersection of faith and public life. He is also the graduate dean for the Catholic Distance University (www.cdu.edu).

At the start of his remarks, Royal sought to distinguish between a society being secular, which he said is true to varying degrees in every age, and a secularism that has been growing in strength in some societies during the past several decades.

"Secularism is something quite different than that secular space where all voices—religious and non-religious—are welcome," Royal said. "Secularism is not neutral. It is a substantive position like Methodism or Marxism or Catholicism."

He said that Catholics in the United States, speaking from the perspective of their faith, can do much to oppose injustice, especially to those who are most vulnerable in our society.

"The Church is fulfilling its own proper role toward a proper secular order when it opposes these things," Royal said. "And it has a right to say secularism should not be because it is not a fair system in a democracy."

He also said that religion needs to play a role in discussions about the right ordering of society because it is being re-energized more and more around the world, despite sociological theories from the past that foresaw a gradual secularization of society.

Royal said that the fact that the emergence of a new generation of "militant atheists," such as Richard Dawkins (author of the recently published *The God Delusion*) and Christopher Hitchens (who recently wrote *God Is Not Great*) points to the strength of religion, not to its weakness.

"It's clear you don't attack something that is weak," Royal said. "One of the reasons why the secularists are so irritated at the moment and are coming forth with



Robert Royal, president of the Washington-based Faith and Reason Institute and graduate dean of the Catholic Distance University, speaks to approximately 180 people on Feb. 27 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis during its Lenten "Spaghetti and Spirituality" series. Royal emphasized to his audience that it is the special role of the Catholic laity to "take Catholic principles and to see that they permeate ... free societies."

these attacks on all religion is that religion remains powerful in the world."

Royal also pointed out the continuing power of religion in the world by discussing a speech made last December in Rome by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Since its revolution in the late 18th century, France has been known for its growing separation of religion from discussion of public matters, which in French culture is called "laïcité."

In his speech, however, Sarkozy said that France has to respect the role of faith in its history and the wisdom that religious traditions can offer today to French society.

"Imagine if even in France this sort of argument is starting to be made, people have started to understand something dangerous about what happens when we have a strictly secularist society in which religious voices cannot speak," Royal said.

He said Catholic voices in the

United States "need to be bold" in speaking about public matters on which their faith can make contributions to further the common good.

This is important because there are trends in our society and culture that are putting millions of

lives at risk and having terrible effects on the lives of the most poor among us.

Royal argued that, contrary to the "militant atheists," it is not so much organized religion that has been a source of violence in the world as "organized irreligion."

Royal noted that, in the 20th century, communist regimes built on atheism were responsible for some 100 million deaths and that Nazism, which promoted a "scientific racism," accounted for another 40 million deaths.

"But we should not take for granted in our Western democracies that we've entirely escaped those sorts of slaughters of the innocents," he said. "We know that in this country, since abortion has been

legalized, 50 million babies have died in the womb. In other words, *Roe v. Wade* has killed more children in the womb than Nazism killed in the 20th century."

Royal emphasized that injecting a Catholic perspective on discussions of public affairs is primarily the role of the laity, something that the Second Vatican Council highlighted.

"The specific role of the laity is to take Catholic principles and to see that they permeate these free societies," Royal said. "And to do that is hard."

"It means being very quick on your feet, and knowing how to argue and when to argue and when not to argue. It means knowing what you're talking about. It means being courageous. And one of the hardest things for most people is to say some hard things when it can have social and maybe even professional consequences."

Royal exhorted his listeners, in this season of Lent, to grow in holiness for the sake of the common good.

"It's the way of holiness that will hold our identities as Catholics together," Royal said. "And count on it. It will transform not only your families, not only your communities. It can transform America and it can transform the world. That's why Jesus came into the world and asked his disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations." †



'The specific role of the laity is to take Catholic principles and to see that they permeate these free societies.'

—Robert Royal

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Editorial



Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein greets St. Mark the Evangelist parishioners Donald and Ruth Allen during the 23rd annual archdiocesan Golden Wedding Anniversary Mass on Sept. 16, 2007, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. The Allens have been married for 67 years.

Success in marriage requires cooperation with God's grace

In the mid 1970s, the late Msgr. Charles Koster traveled from Indianapolis to Saint Meinrad once a week to teach a class on the sacrament of marriage to seminarians.

Msgr. Koster was well-qualified for this assignment. At the time, he was judicial vicar for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

Having personally dealt with thousands of married couples—in both good times and bad—Msgr. Koster was keenly aware of the importance of this sacrament for the health and vitality of the family, the Church and society.

During one of his classes at Saint Meinrad, he summed up his view of marriage by saying, "It's unreasonable to think that any two people should be able to stay together for life—without the grace of Christ assisting them. There are many serious obstacles to a successful married life. God's grace can overcome these, but only if the couple cooperates."

Success in marriage involves much more than simply "staying together." It requires a partnership that is spiritual, emotional and physical.

It means committing to a lifelong journey that will require ongoing conversion from self-centeredness to a genuine openness to another.

And it requires the willingness to sacrifice individual goods and desires for the sake of others—spouse, children and an extended family that opens out to the entire community.

Without patience, perseverance and a profound sense of the presence of God's grace, the sacrifices that even ordinary married life demands can seem overwhelming.

And in times of severe doubt or trial, God's grace is especially needed to keep the couple together, to heal their wounds and to strengthen the bonds that selfishness, sin and serious neglect too often weaken or tear apart.

What's the secret to a long-lasting, happy and holy married life? If "God's grace" is the answer, as Msgr. Koster believed, what should married couples do to cooperate with Christ—in good times and bad—and achieve success in their married lives?

A recent survey of Catholics about marriage conducted in June 2007 by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University has identified

some simple but very important information.

According to Louisville Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, who chairs the U.S. bishops' subcommittee on Marriage and Family Life, the survey shows that "Catholics are neither more nor less likely to get divorced than anyone else."

But the archbishop goes on to say that, based on the CARA research findings, those who attend Mass weekly are more likely to have a Catholic spouse, to say they are very familiar with Catholic teaching on marriage, and to have views about marriage that are informed by their faith and consistent with Church teaching.

As Archbishop Kurtz notes, "Religious affiliation and practice are related positively to marital stability and vice versa," not only for Catholics but also for people of all faiths.

In other words, Catholic married couples who practice their faith and who attend Mass weekly tend to have stronger marriages. This statistic would not have surprised Msgr. Koster—or his successors in the Marriage Tribunal or pastors in parishes throughout the archdiocese.

There is a correlation between participation in the sacraments and success in the vocation of marriage—just as happy, successful priests are found among those who take seriously their commitment to prayer, to fidelity in priestly ministry and to the sacrificial gift that is celibacy.

Frequent Mass attendance does not guarantee a successful marriage. But it does make a difference in whether married couples are practicing their faith. As Msgr. Koster taught in his class on the sacrament of marriage for seminarians more than 30 years ago, God's grace makes all the difference—if we cooperate.

Lent and Easter are seasons of special grace for those who take seriously this time of the Church year. Let's use this as a time to pray for the gifts of marriage and family life.

Let's also pray that those who are called to the married life will take seriously the opportunities they have to cooperate with God's grace through their active participation in the prayer and worship of the Church.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Natalie Hoefler

Christ's wedding day message offers gentle reminder to bride about sacrificial love

My husband of a few minutes and I were kneeling to the left of the altar and slightly behind the priest during our nuptial Mass. The priest had just consecrated the host. He placed the Eucharist on the altar and genuflected.

As I was gazing at the Eucharist, I had a very real sensation that Christ was gazing back at me. He seemed to speak in my mind: "Now we both sacrifice our lives—I for the world, and you for your spouse."

There were no rays of light. No choir of angels sang. It was just a simple, private moment that Christ gave me as a gift on my wedding day.

And it was not tidings of "Congratulations!" or "Now will you stop bothering me?" It was a message of truth about the type of love to which spouses are called.

How relevant that his message on the sacrificial nature of marriage came during the sacrament of the Eucharist, the pinnacle of sacrifice.

How awesome and humbling it is that our Savior lifts us to his level through sacrifice: "Now we both

sacrifice," he said, as if the very act of sacrificing gives us common ground with him.

I know sacrifice is not unique to married couples. I know we're all called to sacrifice in unique ways, whether single, married or religious.

But the special reminder that Christ gave me during the nuptial Mass brought home the essence of marriage: sacrificial love.

I know when our marriage hits difficult times or when we're faced with day-in and day-out trivialities, I might forget to refer back to what we learned in our marriage preparation.

But I will try to call upon the graces received during the sacrament of marriage, graces given to help us succeed in our vows.

And I will never forget Christ's simple but powerful wedding day message that I am called to sacrifice for my spouse as Christ sacrificed himself for me and the world.

(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Letters to the Editor

Properly defining words would help in public discourse about immigration

I would like to comment on the "Be Our Guest" column in the Feb. 22 issue of *The Criterion*.

In the column, the letter writer used the word immigration 10 times with no modifier.

I am a strong believer in legal immigration, and I am equally opposed to illegal immigration.

In the past, when you used the word immigration it always meant legal immigration. But that has changed.

Now, if you wish to clearly express your feelings about immigration you have to identify whether you are talking about a legal or illegal status.

I also do not understand why giving support to illegal immigrants is the Christian thing to do.

Don't we understand that by supporting these uninvited guests we place them in the most egregious situation imaginable? By breaking the law to enter this country, followed by obtaining illegal documentation—as many do—puts them in a position to be abused by many people, including some Christians.

Why would we want to encourage

anyone to work for below livable wages, live in substandard housing conditions and be in constant fear of deportation?

I certainly agree there are those who abuse illegal immigrants for their own self-interest. But let's not forget that illegal immigration is all about self-interest.

They, for the most part, are not interested in the welfare of this country, but only in what they can financially gain while working in this country.

They do not want to assimilate into our society, learn our language or permanently add to its diverse culture.

I also agree that the situation is very complex. This complexity is the result of our political leaders neglecting the problem of illegal immigration for 40 to 50 years and, might I add, for their own self-interest.

My hope is that public discussion on this matter will include precise use of words that will clearly define its position. Then maybe we can start understanding and solving this problem.

Leo Rhoda
Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.



SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

Passiontide reminds us to join our sorrow and pain to that of Christ

St. Joseph Church in Jasper is one of the largest churches in Indiana.

It has an awesome character about it and certainly had that effect on me as a child. Like a lot of families in those days, our family had a favorite pew that we occupied invariably.

As a child, I think I had all of the symbols and images on our side of the church memorized.

And I was always startled when, on the fifth Sunday of Lent, called Passion Sunday, we arrived in church and all of the statues were covered in purple cloth.

It was the practice in those days as a penitential and kind of mournful sign to cover the crosses, statues and images in the church in view of the approaching observance of the Passion and death of Jesus.

When I was a junior monk at Saint Meinrad, my assignment for a time was church decoration. And covering the statues and images for Passiontide was one of my jobs. There were a lot of statues!

After the Second Vatican Council and the reform of the liturgy, a good number of devotional practices were set aside. I missed some of them; this external marking of Passiontide was one of them.

The Ordo, the official Church calendar for 2008, has this entry: "In the dioceses of the United States, crosses in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for the Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent

until the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Images in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the beginning of the Easter Vigil." (Notice, the restoration of this devotional practice is not obligatory.)

I welcome the practice to mark Passiontide. External signs and symbols that promote our devotion are an acknowledgement of our need for aids to help us strengthen our faith.

We need images and symbols to stir our imagination and to direct our attention to the shifts of meaning and experience in the liturgical life of the Church. This is one of the distinctive features of Catholic worship.

There was a day when we may have placed too much emphasis on devotional externals that, in fact, distracted us from the essential meaning and centrality of the Eucharist and the mysteries celebrated in the liturgy of the Church year.

Arguably, in order to achieve a liturgical and devotional balance after the Second Vatican Council, we tended to the other extreme.

In some respects, our eucharistic and other liturgical celebrations tended to become overly intellectualized. Heart and mind and emotions are all important in our human experience of life. So it is in our experience of liturgical life in the Church.

I don't intend to say that this means crosses and sacred images should be

covered during the two weeks of Passiontide. But practices such as this can help capture our attention, and help focus our prayer and reflection more specifically about what is being celebrated in the liturgical year.

So what about Passiontide? What should be different in our worship and prayer? Before we celebrate the wonder of Easter with Jesus, we are led to focus on the stark fact that he suffered an ignominious death.

In order to redeem us from the otherwise hopeless darkness of sin that had been our human heritage, freely he took upon himself the burden of our suffering. He was unjustly convicted and crucified as a criminal. He accepted that humiliation, and the very real emotional and physical suffering it entailed.

That, of course, is by no means the end of the story. But for a brief time in the liturgical year, the Church encourages us to ponder the awesome gift of Jesus in all its stark reality.

It is also in this brief time of Passiontide that we remind ourselves that when it is our lot to suffer in this life, we have the opportunity to join our sorrow and pain to that of Christ.

And it is fruitful to reflect that our participation in his Passion and death on the cross gives some ultimate meaning to our own suffering. No one escapes the reality that in one way or another sickness and the heavy burdens of human loss and sorrow touch every life.

As we reflect and pray with the Church during these weeks of the Passion of Jesus, we recall once more that in the end we have been freed of suffering. We walk with him to the Kingdom "where every tear will be wiped away" (Rv 21:4, Rv 7:17).

These two weeks of Passiontide remind us that we arrive at the Kingdom and Easter by way of the cross. †

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein's prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein's
Prayer List
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for March

Youth: that they may be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so that they can truly discern their role in the Church, especially God's call to priesthood and religious life.

La Pasión nos recuerda que debemos unir nuestras penas y dolor es a los de Cristo

La Iglesia de San José en Jasper es una de las más grandes en Indiana.

Posee un encanto increíble y ciertamente surtía ese efecto en mí cuando niño. Al igual que muchas familias hoy en día, nuestra familia tenía un banco predilecto que invariablemente ocupábamos.

De niño creo que había memorizado todos los símbolos e imágenes presentes en nuestra parte de la iglesia.

Y siempre me impactaba cuando al llegar a la iglesia el quinto Domingo de la Cuaresma, llamado Domingo de Pasión, todas las estatuas estaban cubiertas con mantos violetas.

En aquella época era costumbre cubrir las cruces, las estatuas y las imágenes de la iglesia en señal de penitencia y de duelo en vista del advenimiento y la observación de la pasión y muerte de Jesús.

Cuando era monje júnior en Saint Meinrad, por un tiempo mi tarea fue decorar la iglesia. Y cubrir las estatuas e imágenes para la Pasión era una de mis labores. ¡Había muchísimas estatuas!

Después del Concilio Vaticano Segundo y la reforma de la liturgia, muchas prácticas devocionales cayeron en desuso. Extraño algunas de estas prácticas. La expresión tangible de la Pasión es una de ellas.

En *El Ordo*, el calendario oficial de la Iglesia de 2008, viene la siguiente anotación: "En las diócesis de Estados Unidos, las cruces en la iglesia podrán cubrirse a partir de la culminación de la Misa del sábado de la Cuarta Semana de la Cuaresma, hasta el final de la Celebración de la Pasión del Señor el Viernes Santo. Las imágenes de la iglesia podrán cubrirse a partir de la

culminación de la Misa del sábado en la Cuarta Semana de la Cuaresma hasta el comienzo de la Vigilia Pascual." (Obsérvese que la restitución de esta práctica devocional no es obligatoria.)

Me acojo a esta práctica para señalar la Pasión. Las señales externas y los símbolos que promueven nuestra devoción constituyen un reconocimiento de nuestra necesidad de recursos para fortalecer la fe.

Necesitamos imágenes y símbolos que estimulen nuestra imaginación y dirijan nuestra atención a los cambios en la significación y la experiencia en la vida litúrgica de la Iglesia. Esta es una de las características que distinguen la adoración católica.

Quizás hubo una época en la que hacíamos tanto énfasis en los símbolos devocionales externos que de hecho nos distraían del significado esencial y del papel central que desempeñan la Eucaristía y los misterios que se celebran durante el año litúrgico de la Iglesia.

A fin de lograr un equilibrio litúrgico y devocional después del Concilio Vaticano Segundo, posiblemente nos inclinamos hacia el extremo opuesto.

En cierto modo, es probable que nuestras celebraciones eucarísticas y demás celebraciones litúrgicas pasaran a intelectualizarse demasiado. El corazón, la mente y las emociones son importantes en nuestra experiencia humana de la vida. Lo mismo sucede con nuestra experiencia de la vida litúrgica en la Iglesia.

Con esto no quiero decir que las cruces y las imágenes sagradas deberían cubrirse durante las dos semanas de la Pasión. Sin

embargo, prácticas como esta pueden ayudarnos a captar nuestra atención y mantener nuestras oraciones y reflexiones centradas más específicamente en aquello que se está celebrando en el año litúrgico.

¿Y qué hay de la Pasión? ¿Qué debería ser distinto en nuestra adoración y oración? Antes de celebrar la maravilla de la Pascua con Jesús se nos lleva a concentrarnos en el hecho desolador de que sufrió una muerte infame.

Para poder redimirnos de la oscuridad irremediable del pecado que forma parte de nuestra herencia humana, Él asumió libremente la carga de nuestro sufrimiento. Se le condenó injustamente y se le crucificó como a un criminal. Aceptó esa humillación, así como el crudo sufrimiento físico y emocional que eso conllevaba.

Por supuesto, la historia no termina aquí. Pero durante un breve período en el año litúrgico la Iglesia nos invita a reflexionar sobre el maravilloso obsequio de Jesús con toda su cruda realidad.

Asimismo, durante este breve período de la Pasión nos recordamos a nosotros mismos que, cuando llega nuestro turno de sufrir en esta vida, tenemos la oportunidad de unir nuestro sufrimiento y dolor al de Cristo.

Y resulta provechoso reflexionar sobre el hecho de que nuestra participación en su pasión y muerte le da sentido a nuestro

propio sufrimiento. Nadie está exento de la realidad de que la enfermedad y las pesadas cargas de la pérdida humana y el sufrimiento, de alguna forma tocan todas las vidas.

Mientras reflexionamos y rezamos junto con la Iglesia en estas semanas de la Pasión de Jesús, recordemos una vez más que al final, hemos sido liberados del sufrimiento. Caminamos con Él hacia el Reino "donde toda lágrima será enjugada" (Rv 21:4, Rv 7:17).

Estas dos semanas de la Pasión nos recuerdan que llegamos al Reino y a la Pascua por medio de la cruz. †

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo
Buechlein
Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa,
Language Training Center, Indianapolis.

Las intenciones vocacionales del Arzobispo Buechlein para marzo

Los jóvenes: que ellos acepten el ánimo del Espíritu Santo, para que puedan discernir su papel en la Iglesia, especialmente la llamada de Dios a hacerse sacerdote y entrar en una vida religiosa.

Events Calendar

March 7

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei meeting**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast and program at Priori Hall, "Faith and Business—Can They Co-Exist?" Andy Ording, Zipp Speed cycling components company, presenter, \$10 members, \$15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or e-mail LumenDei@sbcglobal.net.

Good Shepherd Parish, 1109 E. Cameron St., Indianapolis. **Stations of the Cross followed by soup and bread dinner**, 6 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-783-3158.

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 4050 E. 38th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten fish fry**, 4:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-546-1571.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten lecture series, "The Real Teaching of Vatican II,"** Benedictine Father Matthias Neuman, presenter, 7:45-9 p.m., fish fry, 5-7:30 p.m., Way of the Cross, bilingual service, 7 p.m. Information: 317-291-7014.

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 N. Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Rosary, Mass with Benediction, Stations of the Cross**, 6 p.m. Information: 317-283-5508.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 1401 N. Bosart Ave., Indianapolis. **Lenten fish fry**, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-357-8352.

St. Jude Church, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Music and message by Sarah Bauer and Marlene**

Stammerman, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-786-4371.

Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Men's Club, **fish fry**, 5-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454 or e-mail tduell@holyname.cc.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish, 203 4th St., Aurora. **School PTO fish fry**, 4-7 p.m. Information: 812-926-1558.

St. Michael Parish, 11400 Farmers Lane, Bradford. **Fish fry**, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 812-364-6173.

SS. Frances and Clare Church, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. **"Voices of Easter" of those who were there with Jesus during his ministry and Passion**, 7 p.m., child care available. Information: 317-859-4673.

Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **Benefit concert for School on Wheels**, 7-8 p.m., donations accepted for school supplies. Information: 317-417-8108.

March 8

Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel, 31 W. Ohio St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Pro-Life Dinner**, 6 p.m. registration, 7-9 p.m. dinner, \$45 per person, \$35 per student. Information and reservations: www.archindy.org/prolife/index.html.

St. Christopher Parish, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. **Sixth annual Catholic Women's Convocation, "God's Work of Art,"** 8 a.m.-3 p.m., \$40 per person. Information: 317-241-6314, ext. 122, or e-mail nmeyer@saintchristopherparish.org.

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holliday Drive, Indianapolis. **Natural Family Planning class (NFP)**, 9-11 a.m. Information: 317-465-0126.

St. Roch Parish, Family Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Single Seniors meeting**, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-1102.

Knights of Columbus #6138, 695 Pushville Road, Greenwood. **St. Patrick's Day celebration**, dinner and music, dinner \$10, concert \$15, 6 p.m. Information: 317-887-1249.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **"Fully Alive! Fully Franciscan!"** Franciscan Sister Diane Jamison, presenter, 2-3:30 p.m. and 9-11:30 p.m., \$25 per person. Information: 812-933-6437 or e-mail center@oldenburgosf.com.

St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 10655 Haverstick Road, Carmel, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette). **Morning of Reflection for Separated and Divorced Catholics, "Can You Drink the Cup?"** 9 a.m.-noon. Information: 317-236-1586 or e-mail mhess@archindy.org.

March 9

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **"St. Joseph's Table,"** Italian meal, \$8 adult, \$4 child age 2-11, children under 2 free. Information: 317-636-4478.

Holy Cross Parish, Kelley Hall, 125 N. Oriental St., Indianapolis. **St. Patrick's Party**, 4-7 p.m., \$5 per person, adults only. Information: 317-926-3324.

St. Anthony Parish, 379 N.

Warman Ave., Indianapolis. **Euchre party**, 1:30 p.m.

House of Joseph, 523 Fabyan Road, Indianapolis. **St. Barnabas Parish, divorced, separated, widowed singles in Indianapolis South Deanery, social and guided meditation**, Father Jim Farrell, presenter, 6:15-8 p.m., Mass, 5 p.m. Information: 317-919-8186 or e-mail Anita@indykress@yahoo.com

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Parish Hall, 4218 E. Michigan Road, Shelbyville. **Knights of Columbus Father Seger Council, chicken and noodles dinner**, 3:30-6:30 p.m., \$8 per person. Information: 317-392-2395 or e-mail weimar63@machlpc.com.

MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles. **Confession, 1 p.m., Mass, 2 p.m.**, on third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in, groups of 10 pray the new Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

March 11

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild, meeting**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-881-5818.

Christ the King School, 1827 Kessler Blvd., E. Drive, Indianapolis. **Sponsor couple training session for FOCCUS**, 6:30-9 p.m. Information: 317-236-1595 or e-mail dsarell@archindy.org.

March 12

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **"Spaghetti and Spirituality" speaker series, "He Said/She Said: Communicating Charitably in an Uncharitable World,"** Colleen Hammond, presenter, Mass, 5:45 p.m., meatless pasta dinner, 6:30 p.m., presentation, 7:15 p.m., \$5 suggested donation. Registration due Feb. 18. Information and reservations: 317-636-4478.

Vito's on Penn, 20 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap, "St. Joseph and the Role of Fathers: Who's Your Daddy?,"** Richard Sontag, presenter, 7 p.m. Information: 317-506-9557 or www.indytheologyontap.com.

March 13

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Lenten Lecture Series, "The Eucharist,"** Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind, presenter, 2-3:30 p.m. and 7-8:30 p.m., \$10 per session. Information: 812-933-6437 or e-mail center@oldenburgosf.com.

St. Joseph Hill Parish, 2605 St. Joe Road West, Sellersburg. **Annual dessert card party**, 7 p.m., \$4 per person includes dessert. Information: 812-246-2512.

March 14

Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange, "Missionaries in Corporate America,"** Lou Russell, president and CEO

of Russell Martin and Associates, speaker, Mass, 6:30 a.m., buffet breakfast and program with follow-up workshop, **"Building a Culture of Customer Service,"** Danny O'Malia, presenter, \$12 per person. Information and registration: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org.

Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 10th St., Ferdinand. **"Benedictine Life Weekend,"** weekend come and see. Information: 800-738-9999.

March 15

Indiana Convention Center, 500 Ballroom, 100 S. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis. Marian Center of Indianapolis and archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, **fifth annual "Treasuring Womanhood" Indiana Catholic Women's Conference**, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Mass, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, celebrant, \$40 per person includes lunch, March 5 early registration deadline, \$45 per person with lunch after March 5. Information and registration: 317-924-3982.

St. Vincent Women's Hospital, 8111 Township Line Road, Indianapolis. **Natural Family Planning class (NFP)**, 9-11 a.m. Information: 317-228-9276.

March 16

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten concert**, St. Michael Choir, "The Seven Last Words of Christ" by Theodore Dubois, 4 p.m., free admission, donations benefit parish. Information: 317-926-7359. †

Saint Meinrad lecturer to speak on embryonic stem-cell research

James J. Walter, a professor of bioethics at Loyola Marymount University in



James J. Walter

Los Angeles, will deliver the annual Thomas Lecture on Philosophy and Theology at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad at 7 p.m. CDT on March 27 in the Newman Theater. "Human Embryonic Stem-Cell Research: A Catholic Perspective" is the title of the lecture.

Walter is the Austin and Ann O'Malley Professor of Bioethics and the chairperson of The Bioethics Institute at Loyola Marymount University. He earned five advanced degrees, including a Ph.D. in ethics at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

He completed a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical bioethics at the Department of Medicine of Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University of Chicago, and has extensive experience as a bioethics consultant for several hospitals.

Walter's most recent book is *Artificial Nutrition and Hydration and the Permanently Unconscious Patient: The*

Catholic Debate (Georgetown University Press, 2007). He has also authored dozens of book chapters, articles and reviews, and is the recipient of several awards, including the 2007 Spirit of St. Francis Award from St. Francis Medical Center in Lynwood, Calif., for excellence in clinical bioethics consultation.

In 2005, he was appointed by the California Council on Science and Technology to a one-year, statewide panel on bioethics. He is the founding chair of The International Forum for Catholic Bioethicists, which meets annually in Brussels, Belgium, with participants from around the world.

The Thomas Lecture is made possible by an endowment established in honor of the late George and Mary Thomas and the late Benedictine Father Kieran Conley. The lecture provides an opportunity for students and faculty members at Saint Meinrad School of Theology to explore issues in philosophy and theology.

The lecture is free and open to the public. Parking is available at the Guest House and student parking lots. Saint Meinrad operates on central time.

(For more information, call Mary Jeanne Schumacher at 812-357-6501 during business hours.) †



Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry volunteers, from left, Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner Rick Sparks of Indianapolis and Our Lady of Mount Carmel parishioners Sally Dennis and Deanna Reckelhoff of Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, prepare food for homeless and low-income people on Nov. 16, 2005, at the ministry's location at 14th and Pennsylvania streets in Indianapolis.

Cathedral Kitchen receives gift to establish endowment

Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry, a ministry of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis, recently received an anonymous \$15,000 gift for the purpose of establishing an endowment to support the ministry's service to poor and homeless people in Indianapolis.

Income from the endowment's investment with the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation will provide supplemental funding for the Cathedral Kitchen's regular operation.

Started in the 1930s during the Great Depression, the Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry is now located at

1350 N. Pennsylvania St. at the former Cathedral Grade School building.

The Cathedral Kitchen serves about 100 hot meals a day, six days a week, and the Food Pantry provides assistance for 200 households each week.

Volunteers from around the city work in teams to raise funds, procure food, prepare and serve meals, and maintain the facility.

Dr. Margie Pike, director of the Cathedral Kitchen, noted that "the Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry truly provide extraordinary opportunities to live out Christ's message to serve the poor and needy with nourishment, dignity and love." †

Property tax debate continues at state Capitol

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

The finish line is in sight for lawmakers racing to deliver property tax relief for Indiana residents by the March 14 adjournment deadline.

Which property tax relief plan will make the final hurdle? Will it be Gov. Mitch Daniels' plan, the Senate Republicans' plan, the House Democrats' plan or some combination of the three?

Perhaps the bigger concern, a question being asked by the Indiana Catholic Conference, the Indiana bishops' official public policy representative, is: "How will the property tax relief plan affect the least among us—the poor?"

The Church is not the lone voice raising this concern for the poor. Two Catholic lawmakers, Rep. John Day (D-Indianapolis) and Sen. John Broden (D-South Bend), have chimed in to stand up for lower income residents.

Rep. Day offered an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) amendment to House Bill 1001 which was adopted and passed the full House in late January. The Indiana Catholic Conference supported the amendment.

Rep. Day's amendment increases the EITC from 6 percent under current law to 9 percent.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit is designed to help lower to moderate income families, especially those with children," Rep. Day said. "Over 450,000 families in Indiana have benefited from it. For a poor person, a tax credit is almost always better than a deduction.

"On a credit, if the credit is greater than the taxes owed on the income earned, the person gets a refund. For example, a family of three with an income of \$15,000 would get approximately \$250 back at the current 6 percent EITC," Rep. Day said. "Under the House version of House Bill 1001, that same family would get about a \$400 credit at the proposed 9 percent credit. The Earned Income Tax Credit is a very targeted, focused tax credit to benefit the families that really need it—the working poor.

"Tax policy should be fair," Rep. Day said. "It should be based on ability to pay and should help those like the elderly on fixed incomes, the working poor and anyone that is struggling to get by. In hindsight, the U.S. bishops got it right in their 1986 pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, when they specifically mention tax fairness and that the tax code should reflect a sensitivity to the needs of poor."

House Bill 1001, which contains significant portions of the House Democrats'

property tax plan, passed the full House in a bipartisan vote of 93-1 on Jan. 24.

The primary components of the House Democrats' plan include:

1) Homeowners would pay property taxes based on income, and caps the maximum payment of homeowners' property taxes to 1 percent of household income beginning in 2009;

2) Increases the renter's deduction from the current \$2,500 deduction to \$5,000;

3) Eliminates township assessor positions statewide;

4) Excludes instruction school building projects from voter referendums; and

5) Excludes local debt from the cap.

The Republican-controlled Senate amended House Bill 1001 and ties

property tax relief to assessed valuation of property rather than to household income.

The Senate Republicans' plan also includes a property tax cap of 1.5 percent of a home's assessed value in 2009 and 1 percent of a home's assessed value in 2010, excludes the earned income tax credit, increases the renter's deduction from the current \$2,500 deduction to \$3,000, and allows for voter referendums on all building projects.

Senate Democrats offered several amendments on the floor to help low to moderate income earners in Indiana, to no avail.

Sen. Broden offered an amendment to tie property taxes to one's ability to pay, which paralleled the House Democrats' plan. His amendment would cap property taxes to a maximum

1 percent of household income.



"Those with the lowest income would receive the highest property tax

credit," Sen. Broden said. "Households with an adjusted gross income [AGI] of \$35,000 and below would get a 90 percent credit, \$35,000 to \$50,000 get a 75 percent credit, \$50,000 to \$75,000 get a 62 percent credit, \$75,000 to \$100,000 get a 52 percent credit and those with incomes over \$100,000 would get a 40 percent homestead credit.

"The problem with the Senate version of House Bill 1001 is [that] people's homes with an assessed valuation of \$200,000 or more are getting the lion's share of the property tax relief," he said.

Sen. Broden explained that because the House and Senate version increase the

sales tax from 6 to 7 percent, which disproportionately burdens lower to middle income families, the Senate version doesn't offer poorer families any way to offset the higher taxes they will pay.

Under the House Democrats' plan, which in part was contained in Sen. Broden's amendment, "The big winners would be the widow or older couples that have a lot of equity in their home, but are on a fixed income,"

Sen. Broden said. "Local governments and schools are very nervous about the Senate version of House Bill 1001 because they are not sure where they are going to get the money to fill the shortfall. The House Democrats' plan allows local governments the flexibility they need."

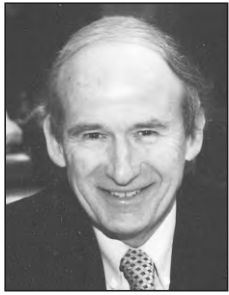
House Bill 1001 entered the conference committee phase on Feb. 29 where the four conferees—a House Democrat, House Republican, Senate Democrat and Senate Republican—began to

hammer out differences.

The four conferees are Rep. William Crawford (D-Indianapolis), Rep. Jeff Espich (R-Uniondale), Sen. Luke Kenley (R-Noblesville) and Sen. Tim Skinner

(D-Terre Haute). Once they agree on a final plan, it will be voted on by the House and Senate, and sent to the governor for approval before it becomes law.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †



Rep. John Day



Sen. John Broden



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Poverty persistent but can be overcome, speakers say

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Poverty, both domestic and global, has shown itself to be persistent, but successes have been made in ridding the world of some of its worst scourges and there is much yet to be accomplished, said speakers at a Catholic conference in Washington.



John Carr

"The reality of global poverty is getting closer" to individuals' lives, said Lesley-Anne Knight, the first woman secretary-general of Caritas Internationalis, but "its sheer persistence means it can all too easily slip from our conscience."

Still, Knight said, targeted efforts have made inroads: Ghana is implementing a school nutrition program with locally grown foods. Burundi has established free medical care for mothers and children. And in Mozambique, insecticide-treated mosquito netting has halved the rate of malaria.

Knight made her comments on Feb. 25 at the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington, attended by 700 Catholics from across the nation and co-sponsored by 20 Catholic organizations.

On the other hand, Knight said, the cost of providing a basic education to those children who still lack it would come to about \$10 billion a year—or what Americans spend on ice cream annually.

Nutrition-based health care, she added, would run about \$13 billion a year, about two-thirds of what Americans and Europeans spend each year on pet food. Child nutrition, according to Knight, would cost \$12 billion a year, the equivalent of U.S. and European annual expenditures on perfume.

The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty, which is being spearheaded by many Caritas agencies, focuses not only on aid, but also on trade and debt.

"Trade rules are stacked in favor of rich countries and multinational companies," Knight declared, and against the citizens in developing countries, "most of whom make their living from agriculture."

Meanwhile, African nations are seen as failures, she said,

if they do not live up to their end of the Millennium Development Goals, a series of eight objectives to be reached by 2015, ranging from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education.

"It is not a failure for that nation. It is a failure for all the developed countries," said Knight, who urged greater debt relief for poor countries.

Norman Francis, president of Xavier University of New Orleans, said on Feb. 25 that poverty should not still persist in the United States.

"It is immoral for the United States, for its place in the world, to have the extent of poverty it has," he said.

"Everybody knows education is the key to eradicating poverty," Francis told his audience.

He said he still rereads from time to time a 25-year-old federal report on education, "A Nation at Risk," on the need to improve the nation's schools.

"It's still applicable," Francis said. "If a foreign nation had done to us what we had allowed to happen in our nation's high schools, we would have declared it an act of war."

Despite the nation's shortcomings in educating its people, "we have enough educational water in this country to give every child a full glass of water," Francis said.

"We've got to find solutions for our schools to stem the dropout rate," he added.

Although generations of young black men have been lost because of subpar education, "the children of the poor have succeeded despite the odds," Francis said.

New Orleans' reconstruction has come along more slowly than anyone would have hoped since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in August 2005. Some critics say "blame the victim," but "they never knew" the extent of the destruction, he added.

Xavier was under five feet of water during the hurricane



Lesley-Anne Knight, secretary-general of Caritas Internationalis, gestures during the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington on Feb. 25. Caritas Internationalis is the umbrella organization for 162 national Catholic charities around the world.

and, in trying to do a good turn for its university employees, housed them in trailers supplied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, only learning recently that the trailers were riddled with formaldehyde, a carcinogen.

But New Orleans will not be rebuilt to what it was, said Francis, chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, created in Katrina's wake. "We will rebuild it the way it should be."

John Carr, the U.S. bishops' secretary for social development and world peace, said that, with John Edwards having bowed out of the Democratic presidential primaries, "the mantra seems to be 'whatever you do unto the middle class, that's what you do unto me.'"

Catholics are a mixed lot politically, caring for both human life as well as human dignity, and caring for the Earth as well as "the wretched of the Earth," Carr said.

He added that Catholics have to press lawmakers to recognize the connections Catholics have made on the political issues of the day, although it may not be an easy thing to do.

Reminiscing on his own failed try for elective office decades ago, Carr said, "There are worse things you can do than to stand up for what you believe in and lose." †

Archdiocesan parishes schedule annual Lenten penance services

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of penance services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

Due to space constraints, penance services scheduled later during Lent may be omitted from the list in this week's newspaper. However, the entire schedule is posted on *The Criterion Online* at www.CriterionOnline.com.

Batesville Deanery

March 12, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood

March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Rock, Franklin County

March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County

March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris

March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg

Bloomington Deanery

March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Connersville Deanery

March 11, 7 p.m. for St. Rose, Knightstown, and St. Anne, New Castle, at St. Anne, New Castle

March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Bridget, Liberty

March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville

Indianapolis East Deanery

March 13, 7 p.m. for St. Bernadette, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower)

March 13, 7 p.m. for Holy Cross, St. Mary and SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Indianapolis North Deanery

March 9, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X

Indianapolis South Deanery

March 8, 9:30 a.m. at St. Barnabas

March 10, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist

March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Ann at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery

March 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield

March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Ann at St. Ann

March 13, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

New Albany Deanery

March 8, 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs

March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville

March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford

March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs

March 16, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany

Tell City Deanery

March 9, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Paul, Tell City

March 11, 6:30 p.m. deanery service at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad †

Lenten activities are available online

Be sure to visit *The Criterion's* Lenten Web page at www.archindy.org/lent.

The page consists of links to daily readings, a Lenten column by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, a full list of communal penance services taking place at parishes and other features. †



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'Walking to Jerusalem'

Lenten journey takes Holy Spirit students thousands of miles

By John Shaughnessy

When they began their walk of more than 6,000 miles, the students, teachers and staff members at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis never expected how much their Lenten journey would lead them to places that would make them smile, shape their faith and even break their hearts.

Before the journey began on Ash Wednesday, Holy Spirit principal Rita Parsons just wanted to create a Lenten theme that would connect with the students, and make them focus more closely on the challenges and sacrifices that Christ endured in the days leading to his death and resurrection.

So she and parish nurse Joannie LeBeau came up with the idea of "Walking to Jerusalem," a 6,236-mile journey from Indianapolis that they hoped would also tie in with the school's efforts toward improved health and fitness.

Everyone at the school was given a pedometer and divided into three teams so there would be some friendly competition as the miles accumulated while they walked at school and at home. Everyone

was also encouraged to pray and think about Lent as they walked.

"When we kicked it off on Ash Wednesday, we told the children that Jesus made many sacrifices for us," Parsons says. "We told them to challenge themselves in their walking. The faith connection comes in how they talk about it and pray about it. You'll find [students in] many classes walking around the campus with their rosaries. They see how walking can help them and how prayer can be done at the same time."

The faith connection was also developed as students were encouraged to give up treats and use the saved money to contribute to service projects that would help others. One of the service projects especially touched home with the Holy Spirit community—a fundraiser for the Leukemia Foundation.

On Feb. 9, three days after Ash Wednesday, the school community was devastated when a student teacher named Michelle "Shelly" Sharp died of the disease.

"She had made such an impression on the fifth-graders and the kindergarten kids," Parsons says. "She meant a lot to them. We had a fundraiser, 'Pennies for Patients,' for the Leukemia Foundation. Our goal was \$1,100. And we raised more than \$3,200. We felt like it was a tribute to her."

Most of that money came from the students' pockets and their hearts. That same sense of caring has marked their approach to the figurative walk toward Jerusalem.

"I think it's a really good idea," says Rachel Clark, 12, a sixth-grade student at Holy Spirit. "When we walk, we pray the Our Father and the Hail Mary."

"I think it's pretty cool that we're doing this," says Lindsey Newhart, 12, a seventh-grade student. "We usually do it in religion class. It's part of the whole Jerusalem and resurrection theme. It helps us understand Lent more."

There have been moments of humor, too. In the front section of the school's main hallway, a huge map has been placed on the



At Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis, sixth-grade student Rachel Clark, middle, tracks the progress of her team's path in "Walking to Jerusalem," a 6,236-mile journey that the school community is making as a Lenten journey. Principal Rita Parsons, left, and seventh-grade student Lindsey Newhart also examine the map.

wall, starting with the United States on the left and extending to Israel and beyond on the right. A young child looking at the map noticed the huge blue area marking the Atlantic Ocean. He innocently asked Parsons, "How are we going to walk on water?"

Without missing a beat, Parsons answered, "Jesus walked on water." Her answer seemed to satisfy the boy, at least for the moment.

The school is also using the map and the "Walk to Jerusalem" as tools for teaching social studies. Each Wednesday, the three teams turn in their mileage for the past week. Teachers then pinpoint on the map where the teams are in their imaginary trip to Jerusalem.

When one team landed in Hershey, Pa., teacher John O'Hara pointed out that the city is the home of the Hershey

chocolate company.

When another team's mileage landed it in New York City, O'Hara noted that it has been the city with the largest population in the United States since 1790.

"The kids are getting into it," Parsons says. "It's great. I see the pedometers on them. The other day, the volleyball team was running before practice. They said they were getting their miles in."

Parsons says that research has shown that if people do something for 30 days, it becomes a habit. She believes that their "Walk to Jerusalem" in the 40 days of Lent will have a lasting impact on the students.

"The walk is integrating everything," Parsons says. "It's integrating their lives. It's integrating their health and their faith. They're going to remember this and how it's connected to their religion." †

Did you know that 2,000 steps equals one mile?
On average, it takes 12-15 minutes to walk one mile.

Students are reminded daily of the impact every step they take during the Lenten season.

Shared values of Christianity, Islam guide believers, say officials

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—By emphasizing their teachings about faith in God and the obligation to love one's neighbor, Catholics and Muslims can promote respect for one another and joint actions for peace and justice, said Vatican and Muslim representatives.

The spiritual and moral values shared by Christianity and Islam are important for forming consciences and guiding the behavior of believers, said a statement issued after the annual meeting of officials from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and from al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt.

The Feb. 25-26 meeting in Cairo focused on the theme "Faith in God and Love of

Neighbor as the Foundations for Inter-religious Dialogue."

The theme is similar to that which 138 Muslim scholars proposed as the basis of dialogue when they wrote to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders in October.

The al-Azhar meeting was chaired by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the pontifical council, and by Sheikh Abd al-Fattah Alaam, president of al-Azhar's permanent committee for dialogue with the monotheistic religions.

The meeting's final statement said Christians and Muslims must get to know each other better, and that identifying common spiritual and moral values is

important for increasing cooperation and improving relations.

The statement also said that Islam, Christianity and Judaism provide firm foundations "for the values of peace, truth, justice, right behavior" and cooperation in protecting the environment.

"It is important that these noble principles and exemplary values guide human behavior, especially at the present time when boundaries and distinctions between peoples are decreasing and the phenomenon of violence, extremism [and] terrorism is increasing, together with contempt for religions, religious values and everything that is considered sacred," the delegates said.

Members of the dialogue group also called for respect for religious symbols and personalities, and asked the media "to be vigilant that freedom of expression not be taken as a pretext for offending religions."

In mid-February, a Danish newspaper reprinted cartoons that many Muslims found offensive, and that sparked outrage and protests in 2006.

The Vatican and al-Azhar representatives also encouraged members of all religious groups to "respect the dignity and honor of the human person without consideration of race, color, religion or conviction," and to "condemn any offense against personal integrity, property and honor." †

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has been given to all the faithful.

"You are an evangelizer," said Bishop Jacobs with gusto. "You are to proclaim the word of God. You are to proclaim the Good News of salvation.

"You are to announce what God has done for you in baptism, and how he has brought you into the fullness of his life. And then, when we're confirmed and hands are laid upon us by the bishop and he anoints us with the sign of the cross, he's empowering us to be evangelizers. He's empowering us to be witnesses."

Bishop Jacobs explained how an ordinary conversation we have with another person can be a real moment of evangelization.

He called such an opportunity "a divine appointment" where God has brought the journeys of the two people in the conversation together at a specific time and place.

"From all eternity, God has willed that you and that person intersect at that moment," Bishop Jacobs said. "That's not an accident.

"That divine appointment might be as simple a thing as listening to another person. It might mean nothing but just being a friend to another person until that person is ready to hear the Good News of salvation."

In her presentation titled "Being More Effectively Evangelistic," Sister Nancy noted that the Greek used in Acts 1:8 to describe the power that God gave to the Apostles to work wonders and to preach the Gospel is also the root for the English word "dynamite."

"I think we're still playing with little sparklers," Sister Nancy said. "[God] wants to make us explosive through the power of his Holy Spirit.

"The power of the Holy Spirit was not given to make us comfortable. It was given to make us missionaries. And one of the things that can stifle the gifts of the Holy Spirit is that if we do not say 'Yes' to our mission."

At the end of his presentation, Bishop Jacobs presented a challenge to his listeners to use the gifts given in the Holy Spirit for the sake of the Gospel.

"If not you, who? If not now, when? If not the truth of the Gospel, what? If not in the power of the Spirit, how? If not in your home or school or place of work, where?"

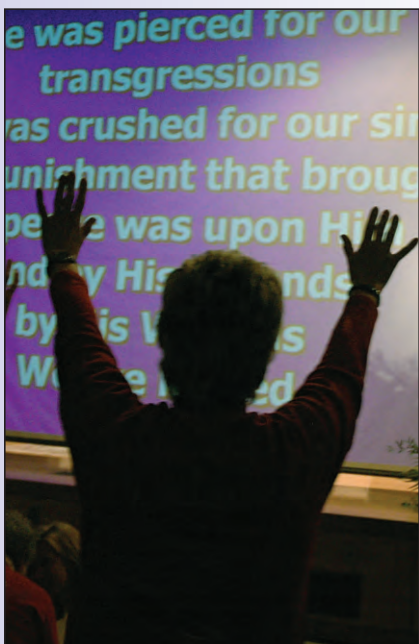
"God needs us to do our part to help others to know his great love," Bishop Jacobs said. "Has God loved us? Yes. Now what are we going to do with God's love? Go and make disciples of all the nations." †



Bishop Sam Jacobs of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux in Louisiana prays during the conference Mass.



From left, Patty Kohrman, a member of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County; Cathy Niese, a member of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh; and Donna Moore, a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, dance during a praise and worship song on March 1 performed at a conference on the Holy Spirit and evangelization held at Batesville High School in Batesville.



A conference participant prays during a praise and worship song.



Sr. Nancy Kellar, S.C.



Bishop Jacobs prays with conference participants who came forward during the Mass to recommit their lives to Christ.



Chris Dickson, a member of St. Mary Parish in Richmond, prays during the conference.



Participants sit during the conference Mass. Approximately 500 people from across Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio traveled to Batesville for the conference.

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Breaking down barriers

Teens celebrate God's infinite love and mercy at Archdiocesan Youth Rally

By Bryce Bennett

The music to the song "Sanctuary" faded out, but the voices of the youths only grew louder.

With eyes closed and hearts open, these 550 teenagers prepared themselves for the message of Jesus Christ during the annual Archdiocesan Youth Rally held on March 1-2 at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis.

The 2008 theme of the rally was "Infinite." What became apparent from the moment the youths came to the rally was the infinite eagerness, anticipation and longing they displayed for the Good News.

Father Jonathan Meyer, archdiocesan director of youth ministry, touched upon this longing during his homily at Sunday Mass.

"We need to break down the barriers and manifest what God wants for us," he said.

Festivities started on March 1 with the pre-rally at Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, where youths were invited to socialize and play basketball and volleyball. They also had the option of playing board games, video games, corn hole or watching a movie. The evening ended with the Stations of the Cross and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Youth rally participants also welcomed Steve Angrisano as the keynote speaker. Angrisano is known for his ministry as a Christian recording artist and motivational speaker as well as serving as master of ceremonies for the 2005 and 2007 National Catholic Youth Conferences. He said he noticed something special about this group of young people.

"Their [the youths'] openness and desire for God is something that was really special to see," Angrisano said. "This group has thrown themselves into God for truth."

Brian Hanley of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis recognized Angrisano and was happy to see him as the keynote speaker.

"I attended the 2007 National Catholic Youth Conference and was blown away by his message as well as his singing and guitar playing," Brian said.

Angrisano's keynote address focused on the youths beginning to recognize that God is all around them. He reminded the teens that God is in everything they do.

"We have a God of miracles, not just a God of stained-glass windows. ... We have a God who is in this room with us right now," Angrisano said.

After the March 2 morning keynote

address, the youths separated into smaller groups by grade levels, where they listened to presentations by other speakers who gave personal testimonies and advice focusing on themes such as love, bullying and friendship.

Jeremy Reiss gave a talk to high school seniors on the importance of love, chastity and marriage. Reiss and his wife, Erin, are newlyweds and members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

"Chastity is a hard road traveled, but in the end the better way," Jeremy Reiss explained. "My hope is that I will be able to share my story in order to help you in your struggles."

A key component to Jeremy Reiss' talk on marriage focused on the commitment to the spouse in marriage.

"Love in marriage is about making yourself, as well as your partner, a better person," he said.

Joseph Lorentz, 15, of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, attended the group session on friendship. He said he came away with a more comfortable sense of who he is.

The youths then divided into even smaller group sessions to focus on topics that are at the core of teenage life. These smaller group sessions allowed the youths to talk one-on-one with each other about the issues of drama/stress, voting, fitting in and what God has planned for them.

Joe Connelly, youth minister at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, and Janet Roth, youth minister at St. Ann, St. Benedict and Sacred Heart parishes in Terre Haute, hosted a breakout session on the effects of drama and stress in teens' lives. Roth reminded the teens to ask for God's intercession.

"Remember that you are not alone. Remember to pray every day and use God as your strength," Roth said. "We do not get to heaven alone."

The youth rally participants then gathered for Mass at Christ the King Church. It was a true celebration of music,



Meeting with youths during the Archdiocesan Youth Rally, Benedictine Sister Mary Nicolette Etienne, left, discusses vocations and life at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. Vocation efforts were a part of the youth rally that was held at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis on March 1-2.

prayer and faith centered on God's infinite love and kindness.

Father Meyer asked the youths to extend this enthusiasm into their everyday lives.

"We need to know Christ on the inside, but we also need to let everyone know on the outside," he said.

The youth rally concluded with a spirited adoration session and closing ceremonies in which the Archdiocesan Youth Council members were recognized for their hard work in planning the weekend event.

Kirk Meyers, 18, a member of Annunciation Parish in Brazil in the Terre Haute Deanery, was among those who served as an Archdiocesan Youth Council member. He admitted the work was hard, but ultimately fulfilling.

"I was amazed at how everyone was able to come together and worship God in our own way," he said.

Pat Jansen, 18, a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in

Greenwood, who also served as an Archdiocesan Youth Council member, said he came away with a greater confidence in himself and a greater understanding of God's presence.

"I received so much guidance and advice from other Archdiocesan Youth Council members on how to speak in front of crowds of people," Pat said. "Spiritually, I have learned this weekend that, no matter whatever I do, I know God will be there for me." †



Father Jonathan Meyer, archdiocesan director of youth ministry, celebrates the Archdiocesan Youth Rally Mass on March 2 at Christ the King Church in Indianapolis.



Hoping to grow in their faith, participants in the Archdiocesan Youth Rally filled the main gymnasium at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis on March 2. About 550 teenagers from across the archdiocese attended the event, which was also held at Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.



Musicians and singers used their talents at the Archdiocesan Youth Rally to try to lead teenagers to a deeper, more meaningful connection to their faith.

Sisters of St. Benedict to host four-day 'Triduum Retreat'

By Mary Ann Wyand

For more than 50 years, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove have invited guests to join them for Holy Week liturgies at the monastery chapel.

The sisters offer a four-day "Triduum Retreat" at the monastery with accommodations for men and woman at the adjacent Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, located at 1402 Southern Ave.

"These holiest days of the liturgical year are filled with the history of our salvation," explained Benedictine Sister Mary Luke Jones, director of the retreat center.

"We consider ourselves to be seeking our way to heaven just like everybody else," she said, "... and we want to welcome others to join us in that prayer. ... [St.] Benedict says in his *Rule* that all guests are to be treated as Christ. That is what directs our ministry of hospitality."

The sisters enjoy sharing their liturgies and prayers with other faithful throughout the year and especially during the Triduum, Sister Mary Luke said. "The Holy Week services are wrapped in the spirit of silence and prayer and retreat."

On Holy Thursday, the monastic community and guests enjoy the *Agape* (love) feast based on an early Christian banquet or common meal.

"Following the example of Jesus, [our] prioress, Sister Carol Falkner, and subprioress, Sister Rebecca Marie Fitterer, serve the meal," Sister Mary Luke said. "Later, during the Mass of the Lord's Supper, they wash the feet of 12 sisters. At the conclusion of the Eucharist, participants are invited to 'watch and pray' before the Blessed Sacrament."

Benedictine Father Matthias Neuman, chaplain, is the celebrant for the Triduum liturgies.

For the Good Friday liturgy, Sister Mary Luke said, the monastery chapel is stripped of decorations, the altar is bare and the door of the empty tabernacle is left standing open as if in mourning.

A single, large cross dominates the chapel for the Adoration of the Cross during the Good Friday afternoon service as Sister Antoinette Purcell proclaims the Passion narrative in the New Testament from memory.

"Each morning and evening [throughout the year], the monastery community gathers for the chanting of the Divine Office," Sister Mary Luke said, which is also known as the Liturgy of the Hours.

"Consisting of hymns, psalms and prayers, this is the official prayer of the Church that is the responsibility of men and women religious," she said. "The Office takes on special significance on Holy Saturday while Jesus lies in the tomb. Devoid of organ music and with no 'Alleluia,' this day of silence and prayer prepares us for the glorious Easter Vigil."

Outside the monastery chapel, a new fire is kindled to start the Easter Vigil and the Paschal Candle is lit there. As the sisters and guests process into the chapel, the celebrant sings "Light of Christ."

Sister Mary Luke said the Scripture readings are "told" around a fire by four sisters who memorize the selections from Genesis, Exodus and Ezekiel.

"Throughout Holy Week, the monastery schola [choir] sings the traditional lamentations," she explained, "but on Holy Saturday the glorious 'Alleluia,' which has not been uttered for 40 days, rings forth. Lilies, candles and altar decorations adorn the chapel as the Easter celebration begins."

After the evening liturgy, guests join the sisters at the assembly room in the monastery for hot cross buns, Easter eggs,

bread and drinks.

"On Easter Sunday," Sister Mary Luke said, "the community gathers once again for Mass in honor of the Resurrection and in thanksgiving for the sacrifice made by our Lord and Savior. The monastery's bell choir and schola add to the assembly's voices raised in praise."

The "Triduum Retreat" includes lunch and dinner with the sisters, opportunities for spiritual direction, and time to walk the grounds as well as pray at the outdoor labyrinth and Stations of the Cross.

St. John the Evangelist parishioners John and Eileen Ahrens of Indianapolis have enjoyed participating in Advent and Lenten retreats with the sisters since December 1996.

"We find it very worthwhile," Eileen Ahrens said. "It's been a very good experience for us. I think, especially at the Triduum, it's nice to have the quiet time, to keep the silence and to be able to pray with the sisters. ... It's a time of quiet and prayer to focus on God."

John Ahrens said he has meditated on the Passion narrative during Holy Week for years. He finds it more contemplative and meaningful at the monastery.



This cross adorns the monastery chapel at the Sisters of St. Benedict's Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

"It's sacred time apart, separateness from everything," he said, a time devoted to God.

(For more information about the "Triduum Retreat," call the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center at 317-788-7581.) †

Mercy sister named Canon Law Society of America's executive coordinator

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Mercy Sister Sharon Euart has been named executive coordinator of the Canon Law Society of America, effective on Aug. 1.

Sister Sharon is the first woman to hold what is the society's chief administrative officer position. She was president of the organization in 2004-05.

Sister Sharon has been a member of the Canon Law Society of America since 1984, and was a consultant to its board of governors in 1995-97, a member of the organization's publications task force, and served on the Committee on the Canonical Aspects of the Sexual Abuse of Minors.

She also was a member of the special task force that drafted a guide to the implementation of the U.S. bishops' essential norms for diocesan and eparchial policies dealing with allegations of clerical sexual misconduct.

A former associate general secretary of the

U.S. bishops' conference, Sister Sharon serves as a consultant to the bishops' Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance and to the work group on "Apostolos Suos," the Vatican document by Pope John Paul II on the theological and juridical nature of bishops' conference.

Sister Sharon is also vice chair of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate's board of directors and a member of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative. Currently, she is a canon law consultant and visiting canon law instructor at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

She has a doctorate in canon law from Catholic University and master's degrees from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

The Canon Law Society of America has more than 1,500 members. †

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Witness of early Christians converted the Roman Empire

By Jem Sullivan

Learning about the early Christians and how they responded to persecution and challenges is a bit like tracing one's family tree. In looking back, we rediscover not only how the first Christians lived, but also how their example helps us to be better Christians today.

Looking back gives us fresh insight into the present and the future of Christian faith. But why, after almost 2,000 years, does the witness of early Christianity remain relevant?

Much of what we know about the first Christians comes to us from the New Testament. Scriptures were born out of the heart of the early Christian communities, and the experiences of those men and women who were privileged to walk, talk and eat with Jesus.

As we hear God's Word proclaimed at each Sunday Eucharist, we are reminded of the unique place that those first Christians hold in the history of the Church.

The early Christians lived in a cultural and social climate not unlike our own. They were often misunderstood, frequently misrepresented, and both subtly and overtly persecuted for believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Yet, within a span of four centuries, the witness of the early Christians converted the whole Roman Empire.

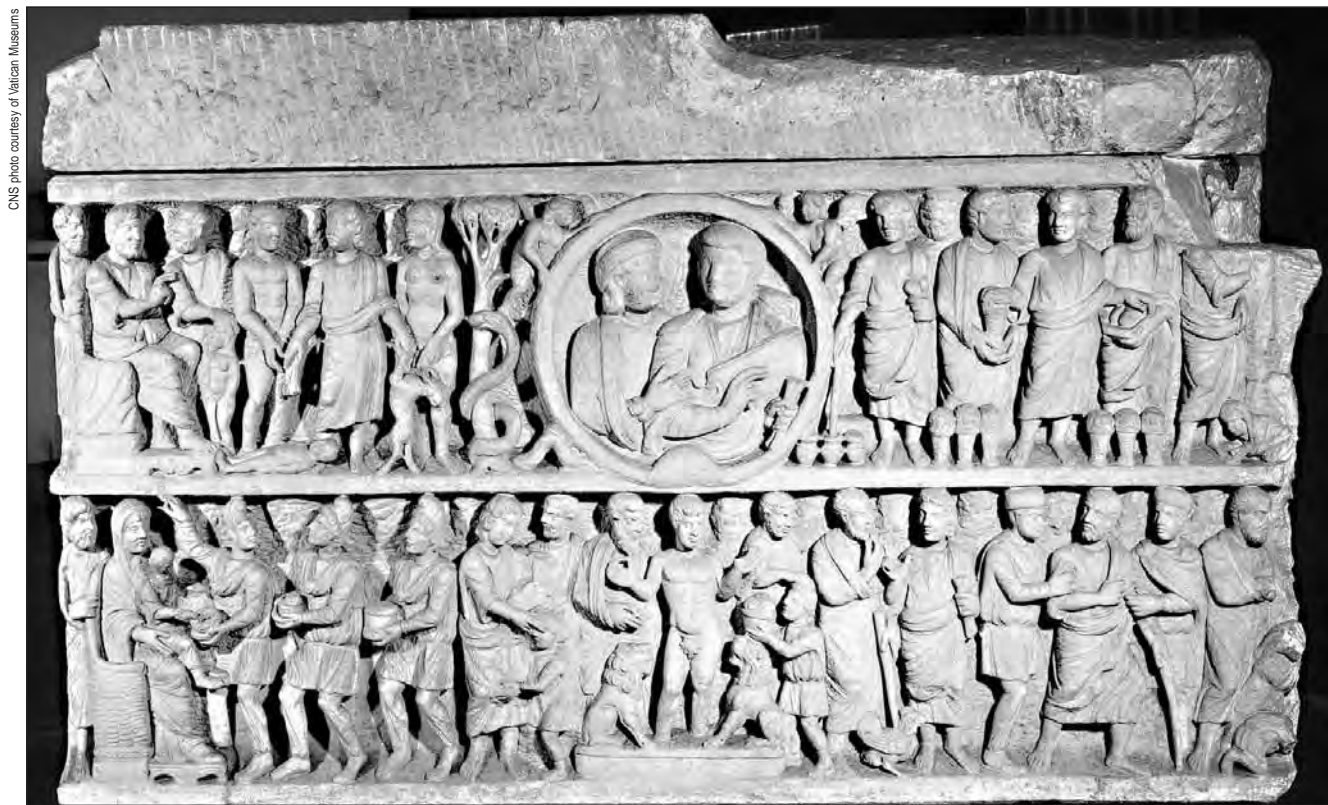
This remarkable historical fact carries timely lessons for us as we reflect on how we are to live the Gospel in contemporary culture.

The Acts of the Apostles offers us one of many biblical descriptions of the daily life of the first Christians. In the second chapter of Acts, we read that, "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. ... All who believed were together and had all things in common. ... Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes, ... and every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42, 44, 46-47).

From this account, we know that the lives of the first Christians were centered around the teachings of the Apostles summarized in Christian creeds.

To be a Christian was to live by a creed, at the heart of which was the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the incarnation of God.

To learn more about what the early Christians believed, we now look to those creeds and councils of the early centuries.



As we hear God's Word proclaimed at each Sunday Eucharist, we are reminded of the unique place those first Christians hold in the history of the Church. The undefined faces of the deceased couple are seen at the center of this "dogmatic sarcophagus" from the first half of the fourth century. The artwork at top shows God creating Eve, the miracle of Cana, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The bottom half depicts the adoration of the Magi, Daniel in the lion's den and Peter baptizing his jailers. The piece is on display in the early Christian funerary art gallery, called the Pio Christian Museum, at the Vatican Museums.

The writings of the Fathers of the Church—bishops, pastors and theologians of the first four centuries—also provide us with invaluable wisdom and insight.

We know too that the Eucharist and the Scriptures stood at the heart of early Christianity.

But faithfulness to the Apostles' teachings, to the Word of God and the Eucharist, was not simply in the realm of abstract ideas or theological concepts. The genius of early Christianity was the many ways that Christian belief took concrete form in family relationships, neighborhoods and society.

As the early Christians gathered their resources together in devotion to the Eucharist and communal prayer, they were attentive to the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable members of society who suffered various injustices.

These first Christians not only lived for their faith in Jesus Christ, they also were willing to die for their faith.

To be an early Christian was to choose a radical way of life, a life inspired by love of God and neighbor that was so different from the prevailing culture that it compelled more and more people to choose the same life in spite of threats of persecution and martyrdom.

To be an early follower of Christ was to practice a courageous non-conformism and offer countercultural witness to faith, hope and love.

By their perseverance through persecution, their fidelity to the teachings of the Apostles as well as to the Eucharist and the Word of God, by their love for Christ in the face of the poor and their joyful witness in the face of martyrdom, the first Christians continue to teach us how to "give an account of the hope that is in us" as followers of Christ today (1 Pt 3:15).

Looking back to the roots of our Christian family tree, we are encouraged in our own day to live courageously what we believe in love of God and love of neighbor.

(Jem Sullivan teaches in the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.) †

Year of St. Paul challenges us to conversion in our own lives

By Carole Norris Greene

In his January 2008 pastoral letter on the Year of St. Paul, which begins in June, Bishop Michael Saltarelli of Wilmington, Del., encouraged the people of his diocese to "discern how best to study, pray and celebrate the life, inspired writing, spirituality and missionary spirit of St. Paul."

So much of the story of the early Church can be traced back to the "contemplative and enthusiastic heart of St. Paul," Bishop Saltarelli said, adding that the best way to celebrate the Year of St. Paul is to ask the risen Lord what "deep and intimate conversion of life"

he is calling us to as Christians.

"Christ lives within us," Bishop Saltarelli said. "He wants to express himself through our facial expressions, our tone of voice, even our body language," thereby allowing all whom we encounter to "sense something different in us and be led to ask themselves questions that could alter their lives and destinies."

Bishop Saltarelli called the Year of St. Paul "a time for us to stand on the shoulders of Catholic saints through the centuries and to live Paul's life-changing words in ways that address the world's need for holiness in the 21st century."

(Carole Norris Greene is associate editor of Faith Alive!) †

Discussion Point

Trust God, who is always faithful

This Week's Question

Discuss in a few words what you believe is the "lesson" that Christian history should be for us today.

"That God is always faithful and always comes through for us. So we have to trust and depend on him at all times." (Betty Abler, Pierce, Neb.)

"The lesson is that 'creation continues, Incarnation continues, revelation continues' [to borrow from Karl Rahner], and we live each moment in the presence of God—in ourselves and in each other ... despite our mistakes and wounds. We share one Creator, one human family and one journey." (Susan Sullivan, Atlanta, Ga.)

"I believe the lesson ... would be the rosary in itself. ... That meditation helps me to remember what

happened to Christ, and makes my eyes widen and see more around me." (Kevin Kuklok, Foley, Minn.)

"It tells us, with all the killings in neighborhoods and in wars in other parts of the world, that there will be a time of peace for all our people if we pray to God and try to be at peace with each other. The Bible shows that there were wars, but Jesus came to the world to show us what peace is." (Jean Hinds, Brooklyn, N.Y.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What are some questions you've heard from children that reveal their curiosity about God?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cgreen@catholicnews.com or write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



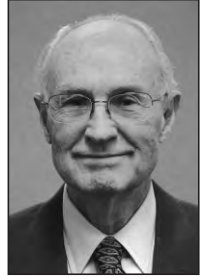
CNS photo: J.D. Long-Garcia, Catholic Sun

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Biblical women: Mary, mother of Jesus

(Thirtieth in a series)

This week, I'll continue the story of the greatest of the biblical women—Mary, the mother of Jesus.



Last week, I noted what the Bible tells us about Mary through the Annunciation and the Visitation, and Joseph's acceptance of the word of an angel that Mary's baby had been conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a town in Judea, so Joseph and Mary again had to make a weeklong journey similar to that which Mary took when she visited Elizabeth—from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, down the east side of the Jordan River to Jericho to avoid traveling through Samaria, then up to Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

As we all know, Bethlehem was crowded, and Joseph and Mary found shelter in a

cave, where Jesus was born. I need not go into the details of the visit of the shepherds, and later the magi from the east. Both groups were inspired to recognize that God had come into the world.

Mary is present next during Jesus' Presentation in the Temple when he was 40 days old. She and Joseph were following the Mosaic Law that required a woman who gave birth to a son to be purified 40 days after the birth. Until then, she was forbidden to touch anything sacred or to enter the Temple area.

During this visit, Simeon was inspired by God to recognize Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. But he also warned Mary that she, too, would suffer—"you yourself a sword will pierce" (Lk 2:35). The Church considers this as the first of Mary's seven sorrows.

Although Luke tells us that the Holy Family returned to Nazareth, Matthew's Gospel tells us about their flight to Egypt to escape the wrath of King Herod. This is the second of Mary's seven sorrows. Matthew says that they remained in Egypt until after Herod's death, when they returned and settled

in Nazareth.

There's nothing more about the Holy Family until Jesus was 12 years old, although Luke says that each year they made the long trip to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. Mary and Joseph were raising Jesus in the traditions of Israel, as a faithful Jewish boy.

When Jesus was 12, though, he stayed in Jerusalem when his parents joined the caravan for the return trip. We can imagine Mary and Joseph thinking that he was with his friends. What 12-year-old boy would stay with his parents? When they realized that he was not in the caravan, they returned to Jerusalem, where they found Jesus in the Temple in the midst of the teachers.

"And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:51).

The loss of the Child Jesus was the third of Mary's sorrows. The last four sorrows involve her son's Passion and death—his carrying his cross to Calvary, his crucifixion, his being taken down from the cross and laid in her arms, and his burial, which we will consider next week. †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

When the Eureka! moment goes on forever

The coming of Easter makes us think about what it promises, namely the



opportunity to meet God one day when our life ends, and to be with God forever thereafter.

Because of Christ's sacrifice, we may spend eternity enjoying God's glory in what's called the Beatific Vision. We shall see

God as he is. Wow.

The question for most of us is, if we're lucky enough to make it into the presence of God, what will that entail? What will heaven be like?

Sometimes, reading the Old Testament, we get the impression that an afterlife would involve blowing rams' horns and cavorting around as the Jews did when celebrating earthly events, such as weddings. Of course, not all Jews believed in an afterlife so maybe they just hadn't given it much thought.

Old movies often portray heaven as a place floating on cumulous clouds, all white and puffy and soft-looking. The inhabitants wear white, flowing robes, something like the dress worn in Jesus' time. Sometimes they have halos over

their heads.

Sometimes they even have impressive wings, although those are mostly assigned only to angels. St. Peter is depicted as a semi-comical old guy with a gray beard and a kindly expression. If God appears, it is usually as a resonant voice from above or a majestic figure sitting upon a dazzling throne.

Some folks seem to picture heaven as a place where fun reigns. It's a big, continuous party, which they can enjoy without any earthly stresses, such as having to get up for work the next day or not knowing how to dance. It's the sum of all the happy vacations and nights on the town that they have enjoyed on Earth.

Personally, I can't believe heaven is not a place filled with music. This would be organ and choral music along the lines of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Virgil Fox at the mighty pipe organ. Come to think of it, this scenario might annoy some people and even I might tire of it after a few thousand years. In human time, of course.

I think we catch glimpses of heaven here on Earth during our lifetimes. They are the times we can feel something happening, which is not only important but thrilling, something which has no human explanation. The longer we live, the more we discover such insights.

One of them is surely when a mother is nursing her baby and the infant gazes trustingly into her eyes, resting a tiny dimpled hand on her breast. Another is the moment we know we are loved by someone, the instant we sense a mysterious connection, which really can't be named.

And we've all had a Eureka! moment when the evening sun blazes up for an instant before dropping beneath the horizon. We've experienced dramatic storms and idyllically peaceful moonlights, which stir in us an indefinable recognition.

Intellectually, it will be so satisfying to know the reasons for everything: why this or that happened, why we met certain people, why our lives turned out the way they did because of a decision we made. Then again, maybe we'll be so spiritual that those kinds of concerns won't even come up.

Meeting those we loved who have gone to God before us is probably tops on my list of what-I-hope-heaven-to-be. It fills me with love even to think of "seeing" my parents, children and friends, and to praise God forever with them. Easter is the answer.

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

How to get your husband to listen to you

Ever since Adam and Eve, men and women have interacted poorly because of different listening abilities.



A good example of poor communications is when phonetics Professor Henry Higgins, in the musical *My Fair Lady*, tried to turn a poor young peasant woman, Eliza Doolittle, into a

proper English lady acceptable in high society.

"Why can't a woman be more like a man?" he asked his fellow linguist friend, Colonel Pickering, who helped him understand.

Recently, just about the time I was wishing I could see that musical again, I was also wondering why my husband and I are often on different wave lengths despite good efforts to communicate with each other.

Then, serendipitously, a book came along that enlightened me. *How to Get Your Husband to Listen to You: Understanding*

How Men Communicate was written by Nancy Cobb and Connie Grigsby.

These Nebraskan wives and mothers host a weekly radio program called "Lifewalk" in Omaha, and they have co-authored two other books titled *How to Get Your Husband to Talk to You* and *The Politically Incorrect Wife*, which was a Gold Medallion Award finalist.

I reluctantly began reading the "listening" book. After all, I had already heard and read so much advice about marriage through the years. What could these women have to offer that is new? Well, I found out! Never before have I been led to write anything about this subject—not even a letter.

The basic problem between men and women is that the two sexes react, listen and communicate differently. Why can't a woman be more like a man—or a man more like a woman? Because that's how God made us: We are "wired" differently.

The back cover of the Cobb-Grigsby book promises to "help your husband value what you say and how you say it, understand what your husband really wants [not what you think], rebuild love and respect in your marriage, become a wife whose husband wants

her insights, strengthen communication in marriage through communication with God, and give your husband the desire to listen to your needs, your words and your heart."

Initially, after reading that, I was leery. However, the suggestions move gently yet candidly forward with insights that I had not considered before.

What is even more amazing is how the authors share a deep sorrow that occurred during the writing of their book. The husband of one of the authors became ill and died during the week the book was finished. The couples' Christian faith shines throughout, and how his illness and death was handled is perfect testimony to Christian love.

The wisdom in this book could help any male-female relationships during engagement and marriage, in the workplace or within friendships.

For information on Multnomah Books, log on to www.mpbooks.com or Internet booksellers.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faith, Hope and Charity/David Siler

Law of love is greatest

Since Congress failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform last year, states have been scrambling to write their own legislation.



Lawmakers in Indiana have been doing so this legislative session, and I have been saddened to see that the bills put forth for consideration are

hostile to immigrants here.

I continue to remain perplexed by the response of many of our citizens, and most perplexed by the hate-filled responses by many Catholics.

Members of *The Criterion* staff tell me that never has the newspaper received such vicious letters aimed at the Church's efforts to lead us in a love-filled response to the immigration dilemma.

I sense incredible fear, and I simply cannot figure out the source of this fear. The only conclusion that seems to make any sense is that this is more of racism rearing its ugly head.

Racism is all about separation—looking at what is different about us and using this to separate ourselves from that which is different.

This "separation theology" flies in the face of the Catholic principle of solidarity—that we are all members of the same body of Christ. I am not separate from you, and you are not separate from me. No man-made law can change this principle.

In the immigration "debate," we have a number of laws converging. I most often hear people cry that immigrants have broken our laws.

It seems to me that when many laws converge, we must look to the greatest of all laws—the law of love.

Should we not ask, "What would love have us do?" Or to borrow a phrase started several years ago, "What would Jesus do?"

My wife, Cathy, and I have five children, and if my own country's laws, conditions, etc., did not allow me to provide adequately for my family, I would do whatever it takes to provide for them—unless my doing so infringed upon others' rights. I don't believe I am unique in this regard.

Immigrants to our country do not infringe upon us, but rather add tremendous value to our country. Our current laws are simply not responsive to our own country's need for workers nor are they kind to those who desire the life that our country affords.

Catholic Charities' programs in our archdiocese serve as an example of a loving response. We serve anyone who comes to us in need, regardless of their race, religion, sex or residential status. Our staff and volunteers seek the face of Christ in those they serve, hoping to hear the voice of Jesus say, "When I was a stranger, you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35).

Our own Indiana bishops wrote a beautiful pastoral letter to our local Church in 2007 that outlines how we can compassionately respond to the law of love with our world's immigrants.

You can find "I Was a Stranger, and You Welcomed Me: Meeting Christ in New Neighbors" at www.archindy.org/immigration/files/pastoral2007.pdf.

I invite you to read this response, and the response of our U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.usccb.org, to make a decision based on love, compassion and the desire for each individual to lead a dignified life.

(David Siler is executive director of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries. E-mail him at dsiler@archindy.org.) †

Fifth Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 9, 2008

- Ezekiel 37:12-14
- Romans 8:8-11
- John 11:1-45

One of the major Hebrew prophets, Ezekiel, provides this Lenten weekend's first biblical reading.



Ezekiel lived and wrote during the period of history called the Babylonian Captivity. Many Hebrews who had survived Babylonia's conquest of the Holy Land were living in exile in Babylon,

the imperial capital, located in today's Iraq.

While these exiles were not enslaved, life for them was miserable. They yearned to return to their homeland. Years passed. Four generations passed, and their exile did not end. Their yearnings grew in intensity. Surely, many prayed for relief. Likely, many others scorned God for not rescuing them.

Speaking for God—and calling the people to renewed devotion to and trust in God—was no easy undertaking for Ezekiel. Nevertheless, he promised the people that if they were faithful to God then a new day would come for them.

In this reading, Ezekiel uses the imagery of death and resurrection. He equates life in Babylon with being in a grave. He describes God's rescue as opening the graves and bringing the dead back to life.

Ezekiel forcefully declares that God will rescue the people. God will be true to the Covenant, as always.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the source of the second reading.

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians of Rome. When he wrote it in the latter part of the first century A.D., Rome literally was the center and heart of the western world. Its population then is now estimated to have been at least 1 million people, a number far exceeding any other community then known to exist.

It was the world capital. The emperor resided in Rome. The governments and major courts were seated in Rome. It was the world's commercial center. It was also

the center of the pagan Roman religion.

Christians in Rome had to face challenges rushing at them from all sides. Paul encouraged them and urged them to be even more loyal followers of Christ in the midst of all these challenges.

In so doing, Paul reassured the Roman Christians that earthly life passes. Only the spiritual endures. Paul urges them to be strong now and earn an everlasting reward.

St. John's Gospel tells the story of the Lord's visit to Bethany.

In the first century A.D., Bethany was a community just a few miles from Jerusalem. Now it is a community completely enveloped by metropolitan Jerusalem.

The Synoptic Gospels often present Jesus as the healer. Here the Lord confronts death. His friend, Lazarus, has died.

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, tells Jesus that had the Lord been present earlier then Lazarus would not have died. Seeing her faith, Jesus restores Lazarus to life.

The death of Lazarus, the faith of Martha and the final raising of Lazarus by Jesus are the key parts of the story. Jesus controls all things, even death. He offers life. However, humans, such as Martha, must respond by giving themselves fully to Jesus in faith.

To accept Jesus is to accept God. To be with Jesus is to be with God.

Reflection

Next Sunday, the Church will celebrate Palm Sunday then lead us into Holy Week, commemorating the Last Supper, the Passion and death of the Lord, and the Resurrection.

However, these events are much more than anniversaries or memorials. Jesus lives! He is in our lives now if we permit him to be with us. The Church calls us to allow the Lord into our lives.

The Church invites us to participate in Holy Week with great personal commitment. Using Paul's lesson to the Romans, it calls us to realize that all that is earthly will die. Earthly life will end. But we can live if we truly accept Jesus.

The model of faithfulness presented by Ezekiel, as well as Martha's example, teach us what we must do to attain life in Christ. †

Daily Readings

Monday, March 10
Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30,
33-62
or Daniel 13:41c-62
Psalm 23:1-6
John 8:1-11

Tuesday, March 11
Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 102:2-3, 16-21
John 8:21-30

Wednesday, March 12
Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
(Response) Daniel 3:52-56
John 8:31-42

Thursday, March 13
Genesis 17:3-9
Psalm 105:4-9
John 8:51-59

Friday, March 14
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 18:2-7
John 10:31-42

Saturday, March 15
Joseph, husband of the Blessed
Virgin Mary
2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a
or Luke 2:41-51a

Sunday, March 16
Palm Sunday of the
Lord's Passion
Matthew 21:1-11 (procession)
Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20,
23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66
or Matthew 27:11-54

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

The Eucharist is the center of liturgical life and worship

QThe lady in charge of our parish Scripture program claims that Christ is equally as present in Scripture as he is in the Eucharist.



She cites parishes where the Bible is given a special place with lighted candles on either side.

I'm confused. I was always taught that Christ is uniquely present, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist.

Besides, isn't the Eucharist our focal point as Catholics? (California)

APart of the problem you raise is one of terminology. When speaking of the Eucharist or anything relating to the mystery of God, the words we use are critical.

Any presence of God, of the Trinity or of Jesus in the Bible or in the Eucharist or anywhere else is "unique" in the sense that it is different from all other presences. There's nothing like it. Unique does not necessarily mean that it is better or superior, just that there is nothing more perfect of its kind or class.

We also cannot speak of there being "more" of Jesus in one place or another. God is indivisible. His presence cannot be weighed by pounds or by any other category. Thus, one cannot correctly say that there is "less" of God in one location than there is somewhere else.

The tradition and teaching of the Church is that in the sacraments, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, our Lord is present in several ways.

The following explanations and quotations are from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council* (#7-#8), and are repeated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1084-#1090).

Jesus is present, first of all, with his power so that when someone baptizes, for example, it is Christ himself who baptizes.

He is present also in his Word. As I hope we know, when the Scriptures are proclaimed in the church, it is Christ himself who speaks to us.

Christ is also present in the person of the priest or other minister of a sacrament.

And he is present especially ("maxime") in the eucharistic species of bread and wine. It is important to note that when the

Church speaks of the Eucharist in this context it does not mean primarily the simple presence of Christ in the eucharistic species as it is in the tabernacle, for example. It means most directly and essentially the sacrificial liturgy of the Eucharist, the celebration of Mass by the Catholic community. It is in this sense that the Eucharist is the focal point of our lives as Catholics.

As the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* explains, "Every liturgical celebration, as an activity of Christ the priest and of his body which is the Church, is a sacred action of a pre-eminent kind. No other action of the Church equals its title to power or its degree of effectiveness."

This is what it means to say that the Eucharist is the center of life and liturgical worship for us Catholics.

It is why the altar, at which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered, is the focal point of our church buildings and where the center of our Catholic life lies.

It is what inspired the declaration of St. Pius X during his papacy early in the last century that "active lay participation in the celebration of the Eucharist is the foremost and indispensable font of the true Christian spirit."

As the Church's ritual for the worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass notes (#2 and #5), all other aspects of eucharistic worship and prayer are an extension and reflection of this truth.

The celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass "is truly the origin and goal of the worship which is shown to the Eucharist outside of Mass."

The "primary and original reason for the reservation of the Eucharist after Mass is the administration of *viaticum* [Communion to people who are dying]. The secondary reasons are the giving of Communion [in Communion services, for example] and the adoration of Jesus, who is present in the sacrament."

All the Church's provisions for the arrangement and conduct of liturgical worship are intended to respect and safeguard those essential doctrinal priorities.

(A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions that Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jjdietzen@aol.com.) †

My Journey to God

God's Winter Treasury

High above is a close grey winter sky.
The brown leaves of the beeches still hang.

Most trees are barren of life-giving leaves,
Branches covered with ice where birds once sang.

The snowflakes float gently downward.
They are God's blessing for us all.
Formed from water droplets high above,
God gave them symmetry and form as they fall.

No snowflakes are just like one another.
God wanted them to be that way.
He welded them together as in a blanket,
His gift of a white cathedral is for all to pray.

Under the blanket, all life slumbers deep.
The long winter night descends in cold splendor.

The cold winter moon forms patterns in the snow.
The winter wind blows sharp as a razor.

God's power sends the great winds blowing,
Sending misty veils of snow swirling upward,
God's might reflected in tree limbs snapping.
Lashing of ice pellets are like a sharp-edged shard.

God's gift of winter is an infinite treasure of beauty,
A gift from Him that is both majesty and apostleship.
The storm tones die away, revealing tranquil silence.
His gift is beauty incarnate and a thing to worship.

By Thomas J. Rillo

(Thomas J. Rillo is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington and a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. He said his inspiration for this poem came from "enduring the cold might of winter.")

Priest: Stand with Blessed Virgin Mary at foot of Christ's cross

By Mary Ann Wyand

Mary stood by the cross as Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, which means "the Place of the Skull," near Jerusalem.

With the Blessed Virgin were her sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, as well as Mary of Magdala and the beloved disciple, John.

That heartbreaking image is part of our collective memory of the Passion narrative recorded in the Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion, Father Jonathan Meyer explained in his "40 Hours Devotion" sermon on Feb. 20 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

But can you imagine, he asked, can you truly understand, how hard it must have been for her to stand there as her son died on the cross?

Most parents would collapse on the ground in grief as they watched their child die, Father Meyer said, or at least reach out for support of some kind.

Scripture tells us that the Mother of God stood there resolutely, he said, an incredibly strong woman of faith who is a model of devotion for all Christians.

Father Meyer serves as associate pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis and director of youth ministry for the archdiocese. He preached on the Crucifixion and the Blessed Mother's devotion on four nights during Holy Rosary Parish's annual Lenten observance of eucharistic adoration on Feb. 17-20.

"Both in the temple at the age of 12 and on the cross at

the age of 33, our Lord shows us that God's will must reign over all human wills," Father Meyer said, "over all human connections, over all human relationships, even the relationship with his Blessed Mother."

Mary understood that, he said, even as grief pierced her heart.

"Our Lord is willing to bring anxiety to the heart of his Blessed Mother to do the will of his heavenly Father," Father Meyer said, "to remain in the temple for three days at the age of 12 and at the age of 33 to die on the cross, knowing the hurt that it would bring to our Blessed Mother's heart, but also knowing the joy that it would ultimately bring."

Yet Mary stood in vigil at the foot of the cross, he said, knowing what would happen because Simeon had told her at the Presentation in the Temple that "the sword of sorrow would pierce her heart" (Lk 2:35).

Because of her Immaculate Conception, Father Meyer said, Mary was "a woman of faith, a woman of prayer, and a woman whose heart was completely and totally united to God."

Even from the moment of her miraculous conception of Jesus, he said, Mary endured great sorrow because she



Father Jonathan Meyer carries the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance in a procession during Benediction on Feb. 20 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis as part of a Lenten "40 Hours Devotion." He is the associate pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis and director of youth ministry for the archdiocese.

was scorned during her pregnancy then the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt to save the life of the newborn Christ Child while King Herod's soldiers searched for him and killed countless infant boys in the Massacre of the Holy Innocents.

Throughout Christ's life, Father Meyer said, Scripture tells us that "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:19).

In *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, he said, "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death. ... Thus, the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering ..." (#57, #58).

The cross was the greatest pulpit that Christ would ever preach from and which brought us our salvation, Father Meyer said, and the beloved disciple who stood with Mary at the foot of the cross of Christ represents all the faithful.

"Blessed Mother Teresa [of Calcutta] said, 'No Mary, no Jesus. Know Mary, know Jesus,'" he explained. "Mary is essential to our spiritual life. ... We need the Blessed Virgin Mary. We cannot know Christ without her. The Blessed Virgin Mary's role [in salvation history] allows us to grow in holiness and in grace."

When we surrender ourselves to our Blessed Mother and allow her to help us, Father Meyer said, she will perfect what we offer to the Divine Teacher and make it worthy.

"But we must go to the Blessed Virgin Mary," he emphasized, "she who stood at the foot of the cross, she who endured, she who witnessed, she who kept the faith of the Church alive for those three days in her heart. She is our hope. She is our life. She is our sweetness. ... We are to be people of the rosary. We are to be people of novenas. We are to be people of statues and prayers. Mary stood at the foot of the cross, and she will allow us to stand there as well. ... And she may win for us the graces necessary for eternal salvation." †

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Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BEARD, Alfred R., 78, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Feb. 22. Husband of Gigi Beard. Father of Candace, Cathy and Linda Beard. Brother of Joan Beard.

BUTLER, Joseph V., 64, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Feb. 18. Husband of Mary Elizabeth (Muller) Butler. Father of Marie Schelonka, Kimberly and Joseph Butler III. Brother of Patricia Carafa. Grandfather of 11.

CAITO, Margaret F. (Gerbeck), 81, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Feb. 8. Mother of Mary Ellen Jungels, Carol Jean Moran, Clara, Frank and Joseph Caito. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of two.

COURTNEY, Joseph W., 89, Holy Family, New Albany, Feb. 25. Father of Linda Atherton, Cindy Collins and Connie Stephenson. Brother of Stanley Courtney. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.

CROMWELL, Beulah Catherine, 86, Holy Family, New Albany, Feb. 22. Mother of

Sharon Stultz and Dennis Cromwell. Grandmother of two.

DOLDER, Lorraine (Isensee), 84, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Feb. 15. Mother of Mary Souza, Jan Weimer, Charles, Craig and James Dolder. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 16.

EBERT, Clara H., 78, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Feb. 19. Mother of David, Frank and Steve Ebert. Sister of Anniemerle Cook and Adrian Brown.

ELSNER, Luke Daniel, 2, St. Joseph, Jennings County, Feb. 1. Son of Andrew and Amber Elsnier. Brother of Lane Elsnier. Grandson of Oscar and Evelyn Elsnier and Alvin and Joyce McGuire. Great-grandson of John and Maxine Shipley.

GRIFFIN, Victoria M., 53, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Feb. 22. Mother of Chancemarie Persinger and Jonathon Griffin. Sister of Becky Pash, Suzie Tomlinson, Bobby and Tim Griffin.

KNARTZER, Dorothy, 63, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Feb. 8. Wife of James F. Knartzer. Mother of Kimberly Dinkel and Kurt Knartzer. Sister of Rosemary Boggs, Patti Graham, Marilyn McCurdy, Barbara Romaine, Susan Winn, James, John, Joseph and Steve Winn. Grandmother of one.

MARSHALL, Chester, 90, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Feb. 14. Father of Cheryl Schmelzel. Grandfather of one.

McCARROLL, John D., 87, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Feb. 21. Father of Rita Johnson, Beth Jones, Mary Limburg and Nick McCarroll. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 11.

McCLURE, Judith Ann (Waltman), 70, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Feb. 16. Wife of Philip McClure. Mother of Jennifer Baltes, Carrie Lynn Castelveter, Mary Ustanik, Amy Sarros, John and Philip McClure Jr. Grandmother of 14.

McGUIRE, Michael, 69, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Father of Andy McGuire. Grandfather of one.

MILLER, Glenn G., 87, St. Mary, North Vernon, Feb. 10. Husband of Linda (Good) Miller. Father of Suzanne Funke, Jane Harton and Dr. Glenn Miller Jr. Brother of Rosemary Ertel. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 10.

MUSSIO, Marian E., 73, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Feb. 19. Wife of Victor Mussio. Mother of Debbie Duke and Vicki Teverbaugh. Sister of Leonora Agnelneri, Sandra Bayless and Tina Myers. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

RILEY, Rosemary C. (McGuire), 85, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Feb. 19. Mother of William Riley. Sister of Kathryn Kimberlin. Grandmother of one.

SCHOENTRUP, Patricia Jo, 72, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Feb. 17. Wife of Al Schoentrup. Mother of Beth Schoentrup and Debbie Schoentrup-Cook. Sister of Peggy Thomas, Bill, Lawrence, Stephen and Tom Blackburn.

SCHROEDER, Ruth C. (Lauck), 92, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, Feb. 16.

Mother of Gerald Schroeder. Grandmother of three.

SMITH, Mary Carolyn, 84, St. Michael, Brookville, Feb. 18. Mother of Nancy Monroe, Christopher, Michael, Richard and Stephen Smith. Sister of Martha Ann McLaughlin and Thomas Dolf. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of seven.

TABARD, Renaud, 58, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Husband of Sharon Tabard. Father of Philippe Tabard. Stepfather of Lee Ann Andrews, Melissa Norton, Dawn Pritchett, Tracy and Scott Miller. Step-grandfather of 12. Step-great-grandfather of one.

THOMPSON, Betty Anne, 84, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Feb. 20. Mother of Colleen, George, Joe and John Thompson. Sister of Don Steimel. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

TOWNSEND, Mary, 90, Holy Family, New Albany, Feb. 20. Mother of Janet Harmeling and William Townsend Sr. Sister of Dorothy Roberts. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of seven.

YOUNG, Deborah A., 52, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, Feb. 1. Wife of Dale Young. Mother of Melissa Pavy, Lisa Ruble and Teresa Young. Daughter of Wallace and Betty (Dugle) Shafer. Sister of Penny Clift, Pamela Keller and David Shafer. Grandmother of seven.

YOUNG, Jonathan Thomas, 35, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Jan. 31. Husband of Diane (Fox) Young. Father of Jared and Nickolas Young. Son of Clarence and Janice (Reed) Young. Brother of Susan Dellarocco. †

Providence Sister Merry Marcotte ministered to people in need

Providence Sister Merry Marcotte died on Feb. 17 at the Marian Home in Louisville, Ky. She was 65.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Feb. 22 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery there.

Merry Elizabeth Marcotte was born on Oct. 10, 1942, in Detroit, Mich.

She earned a bachelor's degree at the University of North Carolina and master's degree at Duke University.

Before entering the Sisters of Providence, she served with the American National Red Cross at a military hospital in Vietnam.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on Aug. 23, 1974, professed first vows on Aug. 15, 1976, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1984.

During 33 years as a Sister of Providence, she ministered for two years as foreign student adviser at Immaculata College in Washington, D.C., from 1976-78.

She directed the United Southside Community Organization's Adult Education Program in Indianapolis from 1978-81.

Sister Merry served in parish ministry in Chicago and North Carolina for five years then ministered at St. Ann Parish in Terre Haute from 1986-91.

Sister Merry served as coordinator of volunteers for the Terre Haute Council on Domestic Abuse from 1991-94 then moved to southern Indiana, where she served in a variety of Church and community ministries in New Albany and Louisville.

From 1995-96, she served on the staff of Providence Self-Sufficiency Ministry in New Albany.

Sister Merry served on the board of trustees of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College from 2002-07, when she resigned for health reasons.

She is survived by a brother, Charles Marcotte of Houston.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

Providence Sister Raymond Hunter taught school for 53 years

Providence Sister Raymond Hunter died on Dec. 1, 2007, at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 100.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 5 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery there.

Margaret Veronica Hunter was born on March 1, 1907, in Tannochside, Lanarkshire, Scotland.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on Oct. 14, 1924, professed first vows on Aug. 15, 1927, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1932.

Sister Raymond earned a bachelor's degree in education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

During 83 years as a Sister of Providence, Sister Raymond ministered as a teacher for 53 years at Catholic schools in Indiana, Illinois, Maryland and Washington, D.C.

In the archdiocese, Sister Raymond taught at the former St. Ann School in Terre Haute from 1939-40, Our Lady of the Greenwood School in Greenwood from 1962-67 and 1968-82, and Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis from 1967-68.

Sister Raymond ministered at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish as a volunteer from 1982-92.

She returned to the motherhouse in 1992 and served in various capacities there until 1996 when she began her full-time ministry of prayer with the senior sisters.

Surviving are several nieces.

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For application packet contact:

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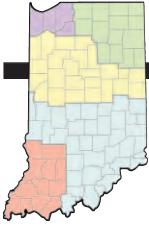
Saint Joseph Parish in Cold Spring, Kentucky is conducting a search for a principal to begin July 1, 2008 for its traditionally graded K-8 grade elementary school; current enrollment is 555 students. Cold Spring is a growing suburban community 10 minutes from downtown Cincinnati.

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DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

Local Church teen leads other youth volunteers in operating 'kiddie pack' program

By Caroline B. Mooney

The Catholic Moment

CARMEL—Needy children in Indianapolis have the chance to pick out their own food each weekend, thanks to the “kiddie pack” food program run by 16-year-old Stephen Champlin as an offshoot of the Lord’s Pantry.

The food pantry was started 20 years ago by Lucious Newsom, 93, a retired Baptist minister who converted to Catholicism in Indianapolis.

Each Saturday morning, the Lord’s Pantry is open at “Anna’s House,” named in honor of a young girl who helps Newsom feed the poor from her wheelchair.

Ten years ago, Stephen, his parents and two older sisters moved to the area and became members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carmel. Newsom spoke

at the parish, asking for volunteers at the Lord’s Pantry, and the family began working there regularly.

“Lucious has become like a family member to us,” said Mary Champlin, Stephen’s mother. “He is such a wonderful person. For anything we do to help him, we get back 100 times.”

The family has helped Newsom serve the needy each week and on holidays.

“Stephen is like any other kid,” she said. “He doesn’t always want to do what you say, but he’s really faithful to Lucious. I know where he’s going to be every Saturday.”

“I used to go on fishing trips with Lucious,” Stephen said. “We’re pretty close. In September, he came up with the idea to get the kids food and to have kids serve them. He chose me to run it—he came up to me and talked to me about it.”

“Stephen’s the boss down there,” Newsom said, “and we don’t like to interfere. I told Stephen to run the kiddie packs. He’s a good kid, kind of laid back, so I gave him a job and put him in charge.

“We give the kids a job, and boy, do they do a job,” he said. “My kids [volunteers] are the best. I always tell them—you’re Catholic, you are the best. They really work hard. There is no adult supervision of the kids’ line. It’s just kids helping other kids.

“It’s good for my kids to help,” he said. “It’s the only way they know they are blessed—their parents are providing for them; they have food at home.”

Before anyone is given food each Saturday, Newsom gathers his volunteers together to remind them why they are there. It is not to serve the needy, he says, but to serve Jesus.

Normally, between 30 and 50 children receive kiddie packs each week. Some come as their parents wait in line for food upstairs, and others are neighborhood children. Adults aren’t allowed in the basement with the kiddie pack line. Instead, the children choose what they want to eat by themselves.

“For most of them, it’s the only food they get for the weekend when they’re not in school,” Stephen Champlin said. “If they’re not in school, lots of them won’t be eating.”

On a recent Saturday, the children could select English muffins, jelly, peanut butter, crackers, pretzels, canned ravioli, pudding, cereal, packs of celery sticks with peanut butter, and drinks.

“When we first started the kiddie packs, every



Stephen Champlin, center, and other teenage volunteers arrange tables with “kiddie pack” items on a recent Saturday morning in Indianapolis.

week Lucious would tell me to go find helpers, and I would ask any kids who were helping at Anna’s House to come down to the basement to help serve,” Champlin said. “Now that it’s been going on for a few months, the kids come find me. I have anywhere from 10 to 20 helpers each week.”

“I’ve known Stephen for years,” said Susan McIntosh, a St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner. “I have worked with Lucious for about 20 years, and in October I happened to go by on a Saturday. I heard about the kiddie pantry and saw tables that high school kids had set up.

“My heart was touched when I saw it, and I asked Stephen if I could help in any way, if I could get him some resources,” she said. “He thought a notice in our parish bulletin would be great.”

A list of needed foods was printed, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioners donated everything that was asked for. However, the kids’ pantry doesn’t yet have consistent donations.

“We have to ration our food according to what we have on the shelf each week,” Stephen said. “When I come in each Saturday morning, we might be missing some aspect of a meal so I will go out and buy things before the kids come in.

“I am there every Saturday that I can go,” he said. “It feels really good helping there. I’m sure as long as I’m in town I’ll keep coming every week.”

“The dedication and the commitment are great—and it’s such a wonderful idea,” McIntosh said. “After working with Lucious for so long, to see another portion of the program started is wonderful. The fact that a young person took it on is wonderful—Stephen is such a positive role model, and the program itself is such a positive thing.”

(Editor’s note: Anyone interested in volunteering at the food pantry can call the Champlins at 317-571-1470 or go to Anna’s House, 303 N. Elder Ave., in Indianapolis, any Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to noon.) †



Lucious Newsom, right, founder of the Lord’s Pantry in Indianapolis, asked St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner Stephen Champlin, left, to run a food program for children in need.

DIOCESE OF EVANSVILLE

Proposed Jasper Catholic high school plans move ahead

By Paul R. Leingang

The Message editor

JASPER—Two more steps have been taken by the board of directors of the proposed John Paul the Great High School in Jasper, according to Dr. J.R. Hoffman: The curriculum has been approved and a location has been determined.

The school is to begin in the fall of 2009 using leased space on the third floor of the St. Joseph Parish Center.

Details have not been finalized for using the building, but the St. Joseph parish council agreed to the plan in principle on Feb. 25.

“We’ll start the school with one freshman class,” Hoffman said in a telephone interview with *The Message* on Feb. 26.

Hoffman is president of the board for what is proposed to be a private Catholic high school, not dependent on parishes for its operation. The intention is to add to the enrollment year by year and eventually have two classrooms for each of the four grades.

“If we outgrow the building, then Glory to God! We’ll get a shovel and break ground,” Hoffman said. “If that’s our problem, what a terrific problem to have.”

With the anticipated opening of the school 18 months away, board members hope to recruit enough students to make a commitment. So far, with just a little over one month for meetings and discussion and publicity, three families have made a commitment and five more have expressed interest.

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Catholic University students pray the rosary with pope via satellite

WASHINGTON (CNS)—About 100 students at The Catholic University of America in Washington began their spring break by praying the rosary with Pope Benedict XVI via satellite from Vatican City on March 1.

Thousands more university students from other countries joined the satellite transmission in celebration of the sixth Day of Prayer for European and American University Students. Besides Washington, participants were in Havana; Mexico City; Toledo, Spain; Aparecida, Brazil; Loja, Ecuador; Naples, Italy; Avignon, France; Bucharest, Romania; and Minsk, Belarus.

"It was beautiful to have all the college students from all over the world to be united in solidarity," said Anne Funk, a senior majoring in social work at Catholic University, who prayed a Hail Mary that was broadcast around the world.

Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, who is chancellor of Catholic University, presided at the prayer service, joined by Vincentian Father David O'Connell, Catholic University's president. Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States, also attended the prayer service, which was held at Caldwell Chapel on campus.

Before the pope arrived to pray the rosary and deliver a message, students participated in a prayer vigil that included Gospel readings, passages from Pope Benedict's 2007 encyclical, "Spe Salvi" ("On Christian Hope"), and prayers and student testimonies of faith.

Students from each university greeted the pope, some by jumping, waving flags and with spirited applause, as he entered the

Paul VI audience hall in Vatican City.

A smile stretched across the pope's face as students from Catholic University applauded and held up banners that read "46 Days and Counting. See You Soon!" referencing the pope's upcoming visit to Washington in April.

Pope Benedict will be in Washington on April 15-17 then will be in New York City on April 18-20.

In his message to students after the rosary, the pope said, "Dear university students of Washington, D.C., I send warm greetings to you! With the help of God, I will be in your city in April. With your assistance, may America remain faithful to its Christian roots and to its high ideals of freedom in truth and justice."

During the prayer service, Alba Garcia Bellon, a 19-year-old student from the University of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain, said she found her faith on a pilgrimage to Fatima, Portugal, when she was 14 years old. She also thanked the pope for showing the students hope.

"We university students should invite all to the life of hope which comes from faith and commit ourselves to working toward a new synthesis between faith and reason," she said.

A student from the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, Daniel Fassa Evangelista, said although he grew up in a good Christian home he found it difficult to live his faith in college. But with the support of friends and professors with whom he could share his faith and pray, Evangelista said he came back to Christ.

"In our studies, at work, while we rest, in



Students at The Catholic University of America in Washington applaud Pope Benedict XVI after he spoke to them via satellite on March 1. The satellite hookup enabled the pope to recite the rosary with Catholic students at universities around the world. Also pictured are Vincentian Father David M. O'Connell, president of Catholic University, Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington and Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

our relationships, with our colleagues, in every one of our actions, we want to give God to the world and build a civilization of love," he said.

On April 17, the pope will visit Catholic University, and address Catholic university and college presidents and other Catholic education leaders from across the United States.

After the prayer service, Claire Bordelon, a junior at Catholic University, said when the pope comes, he will "be in the places where we spend most of our time." She told the *Catholic Standard*, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese, that she was looking forward to sharing "the same space

as he is."

Many students did not know if they would see the pope in April, but they were content to see him on the satellite transmission.

A freshman, Deirdre Lawler, noted the "beautiful sense of unity that we had with the satellite connection."

Catholic University students led other participants around the world in praying the fifth glorious mystery: Mary is crowned queen of heaven and earth.

Lawler, who said she has been in the presence of a pope before, called the experience "other-worldly" and "sort of mysterious." †

MIDDLE EAST

continued from page 1

policies are not effective, so they [Israelis] have to start looking at other options."

Palestinians say at least 10 people, including civilians and children, were killed by Israel on March 2, bringing the number of dead in six days to more than 100. Israel says most of those killed were armed militants.

Israeli civilians in the cities of Ashkelon and Netivot were put on alert after Palestinian rockets reached their cities. More than 150 rockets were launched into Israel in five days beginning on Feb. 27, said Israeli sources. Two Israeli soldiers were killed during the military operation in Gaza, and one Israeli was killed by a Palestinian missile, the first fatality from missile fire in nine months. Dozens of Israelis have been injured by the missiles.

Ramzi Zananiri, executive director of the Near East Council of Churches in Jerusalem,

said the constant tallying of numbers of wounded and dead ignored the fact that behind those numbers were real people suffering on both sides of the border.

"Just as the human life of an Israeli is important, so is the human life of a Palestinian," he said. "This is unacceptable. Human life is to be honored."

His real concern, he said, is the growing radicalization in Gaza.

"There is ongoing suffering here and a growing desperation and hopelessness. There is more radicalization, and this is not a healthy environment to look toward the vision of a two-state solution. We are being driven far from it," said Zananiri. "What is happening in Gaza is beyond imagination. Instead of moving forward, we are really moving backward into the circle of violence. It is very indicative of a dark future."

People are "being driven to the edge" by the continuing Israeli-imposed blockade, closures and roadblocks in Gaza and the West Bank, he said. Israel says these



Israeli first-graders sit under their desks during a drill simulating a warning siren for incoming rockets in the southern city of Ashkelon, Israel, on March 3. Israeli troops pulled out of the Gaza Strip on March 3 after days of fighting that killed more than 100 people, mostly Palestinians.


measures are necessary to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks.

Currently, most Israeli military action in Gaza is from artillery and airstrikes against areas from which missiles have been fired. The *Ha'aretz* daily newspaper reported plans for ground operations.

In late January, Israel instituted an embargo of supplies for Gaza in protest

of the missile attacks, with limited amounts of fuel, medicine and food entering the territory. However, in late February and early March, supplies continued to move through the border crossings in controlled amounts, and Israel announced on March 4 that it had allowed 62 trucks of food and medicine into Gaza. †

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