



TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Pope says Christians must resolve to help others in 2009

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians should not fear what the continuing financial crisis will bring in 2009, but they should trust in God and resolve to help one another in the new year, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Leading an evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica Dec. 31 to thank God for his blessings in 2008, the pope said people must be grateful first of all for the gift of time, which is a "precious opportunity for doing good."

The prayer service ended with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the singing of "Te Deum," a traditional hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the gift of salvation in Christ.

"In our days, marked by uncertainty and concern for the future, it is necessary to experience the living presence of Christ," the pope said.

"This year closes with the awareness of a growing social and economic crisis, which now involves the whole world; it is a crisis that requires of everyone more moderation and solidarity, especially to help people and families in greater difficulty," he said.

THANKS, PAGE 2



CNS PHOTO/GIAMPIERO SPOSITO, REUTERS

Pope Benedict XVI visits the Nativity in St. Peter's Square following an evening prayer service Dec. 31. At the service in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope thanked God for his blessings in 2008.

What's your vocation?

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Bishop D'Arcy to lead group at March for Life in D.C.

Bishop John M. D'Arcy will lead a large contingent of young people from the diocese at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 22. Two bus trips have been organized, one on each end of the diocese, to make it possible for more young people than ever to attend from our diocese.

For high school students and chaperones in the Fort Wayne area, the diocese has arranged with Allen County Right to Life to add another 55-passenger bus onto their Friends for Life bus trip. (Bishop Dwenger High School will be taking their own bus full of students as they have for several years). For more information about the Allen County bus trip, please contact either Cathie Humbarger, (260) 471-1849, cathie.humbarger@ichooselife.org; or Amber Heimann, (260) 724-2534; aheimann@stmarysdecatur.org. The cost of this trip is \$95 and the deadline for registering is Jan. 16. The buses will leave from the Allen County Right to Life office on the evening of Jan. 20 and return there early morning on Jan. 23.

For high school students and chaperones in the South Bend area, the diocesan Office of Family Life has chartered a 56-passenger

Cardinal Bus, which will depart from Saint Joseph's High School on the evening of Jan. 20 and return there early morning on Jan. 23. The cost for this trip is \$95 (plus some meals) and the deadline is Jan. 18. For more information about the South Bend area bus trip, please contact either Lisa Everett, (574) 272-7423, lisanneverett@sbcglobal.net; or Helen Austgen, (574) 234-0687; haustgen@fw.diocesefwsb.org.

Participants in both trips will attend the Vigil for Life Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the evening of Jan. 21 as well as the Youth Rally and Mass at the Verizon Center the next morning before the actual march.

Bishop D'Arcy will concelebrate both of these Masses and meet with the whole diocesan contingent after the rally on the Washington Mall so as to be able to march together behind the diocesan banner. Bishop D'Arcy has also offered financial assistance for students who would otherwise be unable to attend — please contact Lisa Everett for more information at (574) 272-7423 or lisanneverett@sbcglobal.net

REPORT ON STATE OF VOCATIONS



SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

Father Bernard Galic, vocation director of the diocese, gives a report on the state of vocations in the diocese at the recent luncheon for Serrans, parents, priests and religious sponsored by the Serra Club held at the Franciscan convent in Mishawaka.

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Official newspaper of the
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
P.O. Box 11169
Fort Wayne, IN 46856

PUBLISHER: Bishop John M. D'Arcy

EDITOR: Tim Johnson

NEWS EDITOR and STAFF WRITER: Kay Cozad

Editorial Department

PAGE DESIGNER: Francie Hogan

FREELANCE WRITERS: Lauren Caggiano,
Ann Carey, Michelle Castleman, Karen
Clifford, Elmer J. Danch, Michelle
Donaghey, Bonnie Elbersson, Denise
Fedorow, Diane Freeby, May Lee
Johnson, Sister Margie Lavis, CSC,
Joe Kozinski and Deb Wagner

Business Department

BUSINESS MANAGER: Kathy Denice

AD GRAPHICS DIRECTOR: Mark Weber

BOOKKEEPING/CIRCULATION: Kathy Voirol
kvoirol@fw.diocesefwsb.org

Advertising Sales

Tess Steffen (Fort Wayne area)

(260) 456-2824

Jeanette Simon (South Bend area)

(574) 234-0687

Web site: www.diocesefwsb.org/TODAY

Published weekly except the fourth
Sunday in June, first and third weeks in
July, first week in August and last week
in December by the Diocese of Fort
Wayne-South Bend, 1103 S. Calhoun St.,
P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46801.
Periodicals postage paid at Fort Wayne,
IN, and additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort
Wayne, IN 46856-1169 or e-mail:
kvoirol@fw.diocesefwsb.org.

MAIN OFFICE: 915 S. Clinton St., Fort
Wayne, IN 46802. Telephone (260)
456-2824. Fax: (260) 744-1473.

BUREAU OFFICE: 114 W. Wayne St., South
Bend, IN 46601. Telephone (574) 234-
0687. Fax: (574) 232-8483.

News deadline is the Monday morning
before publication date. Advertising
deadline is nine days before publica-
tion date.

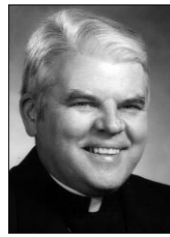
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Mail letters to: Today's Catholic,
P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN
46856-1169; or e-mail:

editor@fw.diocesefwsb.org

ISSN 0891-1533
USPS 403630

Pray for more vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life



NEWS & NOTES

BISHOP JOHN M. D'ARCY

Christmas week

You would think that Christmas week would be quiet. While I was able to find some time for quiet and prayer, the days were busy. Central to those days were our efforts to foster vocations. Three events in all.

Andrew Dinners

These have become a tradition for us. I remember the few young men who came out the first time we met. On the Monday after Christmas, I drove to Holy Family Parish in South Bend where there was a group of 30, of which about 20 were high school students and college students.

The name of "Andrew," as you know, was taken from the place in the Gospel of John, where we read that Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to the Lord. I send a letter to all priests suggesting they invite some young men to a dinner with the bishop and other priests — young men whom they think would be worthy candidates for the priesthood.

There were excellent questions, and I was especially grateful for the talks by two of our seminarians — Jake Runyon of St. Louis Parish, Besancon; and Andy Budzinski, a native of Holy Family Parish, South Bend. Andy, during the time of Lou Holtz at Notre Dame, was the leprechaun, who cheers on the Irish at football, basketball and other sporting events. Jake is a deacon, a parishioner of St. Louis Besancon and a member of the greatly famed Tippmann family. Both gave excellent presentations.

On Friday, we had a similar event in Fort Wayne with larger numbers. Altogether, there were 52 people present, including 31 who can be considered as possible candidates: high school students and college students. It was hosted by Msgr. John Suelzer of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Fort Wayne. A delightful evening. Once again, there were excellent questions. In both venues, we showed the video, "Fishers of Men." I have seen many videos over the years on vocations, but this is the best by far. It shows the priest as joyful and manly and hardworking. Quite central and always touching is the centrality of Pope John Paul II — whose biographer wrote: made the priesthood, "once again, a great adventure."

An event

On Wednesday, in between the two Andrew Dinners, the Serra Club of South Bend hosted a Mass and luncheon at Our Lady of Angels Convent, high on a hill in Mishawaka, overlooking Marian High School.

This was most encouraging. First of all, most of our seminarians were there along with some young priests. The novices of the Conventual Franciscans, who live at the former Marian convent, were present along with Father Robert, the novice master. Remember, these priests take care of three of our parishes in the northeastern part of our diocese. The Franciscan Sisters are attracting a number of young women, and they were all present. There is one candidate, Greg Eichman, for the Fraternity of St. Peter, which includes Father George Gabet, a native of our diocese, working now in two of our parishes.

It was a Mass of great hope, with so much youthful vitality. You could certainly see it as part of the "new springtime," which John Paul II as an act of faith expected across the new millennium. Our Vocation Office does many visible and transparent things. Priests and religious visit all four Catholic high schools every year, and the reception has been increasingly warmer and more positive. They also visit the fifth and eighth grades of all our Catholic elementary schools every year. In addition, something new — the seminarians themselves have initiated more visible efforts. In fact, I just accepted a young man — a junior in college — and he told me that one of the main human factors that drew him to apply was a retreat sponsored by the seminarians at Donaldson. The seminarians have done this now for three years on their own. They learn what other dioceses are doing, and bring them here and also develop their own initiatives.

I asked them to improve the effort on

the Internet for vocations; and I have already received their advice on this.

This week, they are visiting in an informal way, two Catholic high schools in South Bend: Saint Joseph's and Marian, making themselves known. And, I believe, at Easter time they hope to visit Bishop Luers, which will complete all four, as they visited Bishop Dwenger last Christmas.

Of course, we must do much more for public school students; and this can be done through religious education programs and youth ministry in parishes.

You know we are a sacramental church, which means we go from the visible to the invisible. This relates to the priesthood and the consecrated life, but it also relates to efforts to recruit priests and religious. It is important that these efforts be visible and to use a word that is common today, transparent. Also, to the extent possible, it is a work and a ministry that should be taken up by the whole church. This is made clear in "Pastores Dabo Vobis," the great document on priestly training and vocations.

So there are many visible things going on, but there can be so much more. In another place in this edition, I have a letter on vocations. Please remember this Sunday vocations are to be the focus in all our parishes as we observe National Vocation Awareness Week. It will be the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and I hope everyone will continue to pray intensely that more young men of good quality will come forward for the priesthood in our diocese and more young men and women for the consecrated life.

I am heading home for a week to the town where I was born — Brighton, Mass. — a place built by immigrants, including my parents. I intend to write about it some time, for it is the geographic area where my vocation was born. I hope to see you all next week.

THANKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Catholic parishes, organizations and aid agencies already are preparing to help record numbers of people in the coming year, the pope said, "but the collaboration of everyone is necessary."

"Even if on the horizon more than a few clouds are gathering over our future, we must not be afraid," Pope Benedict said.

"Our greatest hope as believers is eternal life in the company of Christ and the entire family of God," he said. "This great hope gives us the strength to face and overcome the difficulties of life in this world."

Pope Benedict asked the young adults present to "respond quickly" if God calls them to church work and to live lives that witness to the values of the Gospel.

The world needs people who are not focused only on their own needs and desires, "because, as I said on Christmas Day, if people look only to their own interests, our world will certainly fall apart," he said.

On the eve of the feast honoring Mary, Mother of God, the pope said Catholics were placing in Mary's hands "the expectations and hopes as well as the fears and difficulties that dwell in our hearts as we bid farewell to 2008 and prepare to welcome 2009."

Before going to visit the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square, the pope told people at the prayer service that, while "we stop to contemplate the baby Jesus, our gaze cannot help but turn with recognition toward his mother, who with her 'yes' made the gift of redemption possible."

Mary made it possible for the Word of God to be born on earth, to live among us and to show us that our final destiny is to be with God in heaven, the pope said.

"It is Mary, the star of hope, who leads us to him," the pope said.

Survey finds most people support some restrictions on abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A new online survey conducted for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops finds a majority of participants support at least some restrictions on abortion.

The survey conducted online Dec. 10-12 asked 2,341 people about the circumstances under which they would favor or oppose legal abortion and about what kind of regulations of abortion they would support or oppose.

Among its findings were that 78 percent favor requiring abortions be performed only by licensed physicians and that 72 percent favor requiring women seeking abortions be told of the potential physical and psychological risks and about alternatives such as adoption.

It found 11 percent think abortion should be illegal in all circumstances and 38 percent said it should be legal only under limited circumstances, such as in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother. Forty-two percent said abortion should be legal for any reason.

Among those who said it should be legal for any reason, 9 percent would place no limits on abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, while 27 percent would allow unrestricted abortion only in the first trimester, and 6 percent through the first six months.

Among possible restrictions or regulations on abortion about which participants were asked:

- 47 percent said they strongly or somewhat strongly favor laws prohibiting the use of taxpayer funds for abortion.

- 58 percent at least somewhat strongly favor laws protecting medical personnel from being required to participate in abortions.

- Of an assortment of laws such as those requiring parental notification for minors who have abortions, or making partial-birth abortion illegal, only 11 percent of the survey participants said they would not support any of the measures. Fifty percent of the participants said they would not oppose any of the six mentioned restrictions.

Between 5 percent and 9 percent of the participants in the survey declined to answer some of the questions. The survey questions on abortion were part of an omnibus questionnaire on a wide range of topics. Participants could click on "decline to answer" as they chose, said Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the USCCB's Office of Pro-Life Activities.

The news release from the USCCB noted that Harris Interactive, which fielded the

Support for Abortion Laws

U.S. adults in a recent online survey who said they support laws...

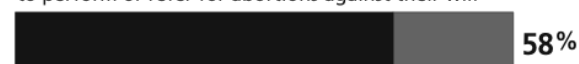
that require abortion providers to inform women of potential risks to their health and about alternatives to abortion



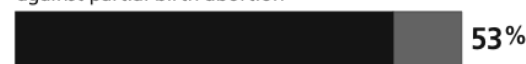
that require giving parents the chance to be involved in their minor daughter's abortion decision



that protect doctors and nurses from being forced to perform or refer for abortions against their will



against partial birth abortion



that prevent the use of taxpayer funds for abortions



Between 5 percent and 9 percent of the 2,341 people surveyed declined to answer these questions.

Source: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Harris Interactive

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CNS GRAPHIC/EMILY THOMPSON

A survey commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops says most Americans favor laws limiting and regulating abortion.

study for the USCCB, said the data was weighted using a propensity scoring system to be representative of the total U.S. population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity and propensity to be on the Internet. Harris said no estimates of sampling error could be calculated, according to the USCCB release.

David Krane, vice president for public affairs and policy for Harris Interactive, told CNS that Harris considers such surveys to be at least as accurate as the traditional phone polling of random samples of the public. He said the database from which the survey participants were chosen includes several million people who have agreed to be part of occasional surveys on a range of topics.

"We know quite a lot about them based on their demographic profiles," Krane said. He explained that Harris compares the results of their weighted method of choosing survey participants against other sources of information, such as census reports. Election results and exit polls also are used to compare whether Harris' online participants represent the range of demographic variety and opinions of the overall U.S. population, he said.

"We take the position that it

is as accurate as traditional surveys," he said.

The findings are generally similar to those of other polls conducted recently. The Web site, www.pollingreport.com, compiles data from major poll releases, where the following results were presented.

A September survey by NBC News and *The Wall Street Journal* found 25 percent said abortion should always be legal and another 24 percent said it should be legal most of the time. In that survey, 10 percent said it should be illegal without exception and 37 percent said it should be illegal with few exceptions.

A *Time* magazine poll released in August found 46 percent said abortion should be always legal in the first three months of pregnancy.

A 2005 survey by CNN/USA Today/Gallup found 69 percent favored laws requiring minors to get consent from their parents before an abortion. A 2006 Gallup Poll found 38 percent of Americans favored making abortion laws more strict; 20 percent wanted them to be less strict and 39 percent wanted them to be kept the same.

STATEMENT FROM BISHOP JOHN M. D'ARCY

Promotion of vocations to the priesthood, consecrated life

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Sunday, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, is a day to make known to our people with joy and hope, the importance — one might well say the pastoral urgency — of inviting young men to serve as priests, and young men and women to the consecrated life.

I approach this joy with great hope. I once told Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, that I believe in my last years as bishop, and after I have retired, God will send a significant increase of candidates to the priesthood. He grasped my hope immediately. "Of course," he said. "That is salvation history. One man sows, and another reaps."

One instrument under God's grace towards an increase in candidates for the priesthood lies in ordaining men of good quality, men who would also make good husbands and good fathers.

Such men who are joyful, well trained, approachable and prayerful, and who genuinely seek their own sanctification and holiness, will not only call men to the priesthood, they will call the right men.

Instrument two: Catechesis. How can one seek life as a priest, unless he is caught up in the truths of the faith? The work done by our parishes and our Office of Catechesis in the training of Catholic catechists is essential in building a church where there is a culture of vocations.

Youth Ministry: Under the priests' direction and guidance, but united with excellent lay leaders, is an instrument, which is necessary, as we are learning in this diocese every day. The best parish youth ministry includes: catechesis, personal prayer, service, and at times, eucharistic adoration. At the same time, we recognize more, and more, that a parish youth ministry, which is based only on athletics and social get-togethers, will not easily inspire young people to offer their lives to God.

Parents: A home where there is prayer every day and solid Catholic example, and where vocations are encouraged, and where young people are encouraged to seek God's will in their life, is also central to a program of fostering vocations.

A final point

When Pope Benedict came to this country, in addition to asking prayers for vocations, he asked for the teaching of young people to pray. He said that only when young people have a dialog with God from early in life can they be expected to choose a religious vocation. So this is central. We must initiate our children in a daily program of quiet, simple conversation with Jesus Christ the savior.

Let us be quite frank: The ability to cultivate vocations to the priesthood and the religious life is a sure sign of the health of a local church. There is no room for complacency in this regard. God continues to call young people; it is up to all of us to encourage a generous and free response to that call. On the other hand, none of us can take this grace for granted.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send workers. He even admits that the workers are few in comparison with the abundance of the harvest (cf. Mt 9:37-38). Strange to say, I often think that prayer — the "unum necessarium" — is the one aspect of vocations work which we tend to forget or to undervalue!

Nor am I speaking of only prayer for vocations. Prayer itself, born in Catholic families, nurtured by programs of Christian formation, strengthened by the grace of the sacraments is the first means by which we come to know the Lord's will for our lives. To the extent that we teach young people to pray, and to pray well, we will be cooperating with God's call. Programs, plans and projects have their place; but the discernment of a vocation is above all the fruit of an intimate dialogue between the Lord and his disciples. Young people, if they know how to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God's call. It has been noted that there is a growing thirst for holiness in many young people today, and that, although fewer in number, those who come forward show great idealism and much promise. It is important to listen to them, to understand their experiences and to encourage them to help their peers to see the need for committed priests and religious as well as the beauty of a life of sacrificial service to the Lord and his church.

— Pope Benedict XVI, visit to the U.S., April 2008.

Thus, we see that the work of fostering vocations is a work for the whole diocese. But, let us begin anew by our ardent prayer and by helping our young people to a habit of conversation with Jesus Christ.

With every best wish and prayer, I remain
Sincerely yours in our Lord,

John M. D'Arcy

Most Reverend John M. D'Arcy

Cardinal Maida, Bishop McRaith resign; Detroit successor named

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI accepted the resignations of Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit and Bishop John J. McRaith of Owensboro, Ky., Jan. 5 and named Bishop Allen H. Vigneron of Oakland, Calif., as archbishop of Detroit.

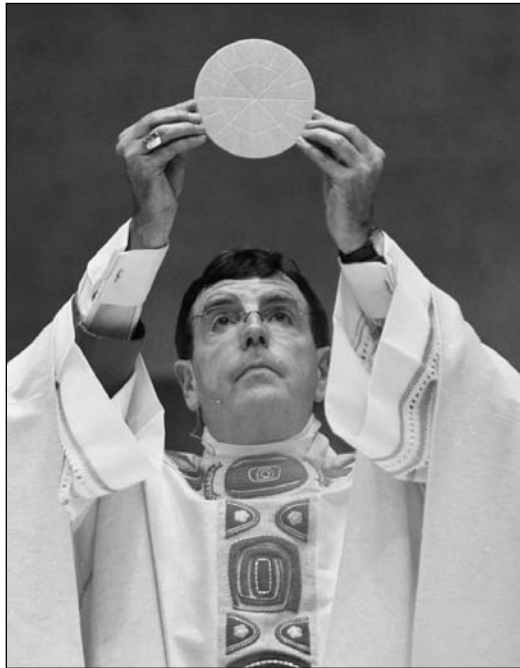
In addition, Father Cirilo B. Flores, pastor of St. Norbert Parish in Orange, Calif., was appointed an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Orange. No successor to Bishop McRaith was immediately named.

The resignations and appointments were announced in Washington by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

The appointment of Archbishop Vigneron, 60, allows a native son of the Detroit Archdiocese to return home. His return to southeast Michigan comes at a time of severe economic recession in the heavily industrialized region.

Cardinal Maida addressed concerns about the economy twice in recent months, urging Catholics to support each other, especially those in need, and to seek solace in God during the current crisis. He also was quick to praise the \$17.4 billion loan package to American automobile manufacturers passed by Congress in December.

During a Jan. 5 press conference in Detroit Archbishop Vigneron recognized the pastoral and social challenges both the church and the wider community are facing as the economy struggles to regain its footing.



CNS PHOTO/GREG TARCZYNSKI

Bishop Allen H. Vigneron of Oakland, Calif., elevates the host during the dedication Mass for the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland, Calif., in 2008. Pope Benedict XVI accepted the resignation of Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit and named Bishop Vigneron as archbishop of Detroit. The resignation and appointment were announced at the Vatican.

"To that challenge, as I begin my service as archbishop, I want to bring all the riches of grace which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on the church," he said.

In an interview with *The Michigan Catholic*, the archdiocesan newspaper, Archbishop Vigneron said he was surprised by his appointment because no native of the archdiocese had ever been appointed to lead the Detroit church. Most of all, he said he looked forward to "being able to, day by day, be of service to people who I know very, very well. And returning to being involved in the lives of people who mean a lot to me."

The new archbishop will be

installed Jan. 28 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

Archbishop Vigneron has led the Diocese of Oakland since 2003. A native of Mount Clemens, Mich., he originally was named an auxiliary bishop of Detroit in 1996. He was ordained in 1975 and was rector and president of the archdiocese's Sacred Heart Major Seminary until his appointment to Oakland six years ago.

The archbishop also worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State from 1991 to 1994. He was named a monsignor by Pope John Paul II in 1994.

Under his tenure the Oakland Diocese built the \$190 million

Cathedral of Christ the Light, which was dedicated Sept. 25. The opening marked the first time the diocese had a cathedral since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake irreparably damaged St. Francis de Sales Cathedral.

Cardinal Maida, 78, has been archbishop of Detroit and its 1.4 million Catholics since 1990. He was elevated to cardinal in 1994. He submitted his resignation to Pope John Paul II in March 2005, according to the archdiocese. But Pope Benedict invited him to continue in his position until his resignation was accepted.

Ordained a priest in the Pittsburgh Diocese in 1956, Cardinal Maida was serving as vice chancellor of Pittsburgh when he was appointed bishop of Green Bay, Wis., in 1983. Seven years later he was named to lead the church in Detroit.

Bishop McRaith, 74, has served the Owensboro Diocese since 1982. He was born in Hutchinson, Minn., and was ordained a priest in the Diocese of New Ulm, Minn., in 1960. He was chancellor and vicar general of the diocese prior to his appointment as bishop.

As a priest, Bishop McRaith was president of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference from 1971 to 1978. After becoming a bishop he authored the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops'

1992 pastoral letter, "Stewardship: A Disciples' Response."

Bishop-designate Flores, 60, was ordained in 1991. The Corona, Calif., native said his appointment came as a shock, especially because he had just been installed as pastor of St. Norbert Parish in Orange in December.

"With the help of God and the intercession of his Blessed Mother, I will try to do my best to take on these new responsibilities," he said during a Jan. 5 press conference at diocesan offices where he was introduced by Bishop Tod D. Brown of Orange.

Bishop-designate Flores will be ordained by Bishop Brown March 19 at St. Columban Parish in Garden Grove, Calif. He is the second priest from the diocese to be appointed a bishop. He will assume the responsibilities of Bishop Jaime Soto, who was appointed coadjutor bishop of Sacramento, Calif., in October 2007.

A graduate of Stanford Law School in California, the bishop-designate worked as a lawyer in private practice for 10 years before entering St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, Calif., in 1986 to study for the priesthood.

The Orange Diocese was created in 1976 and has more than 1.2 million Catholics.

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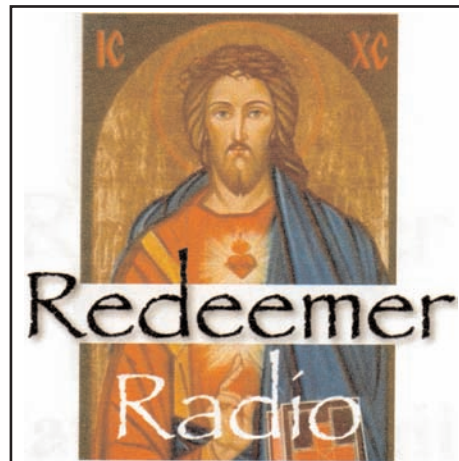
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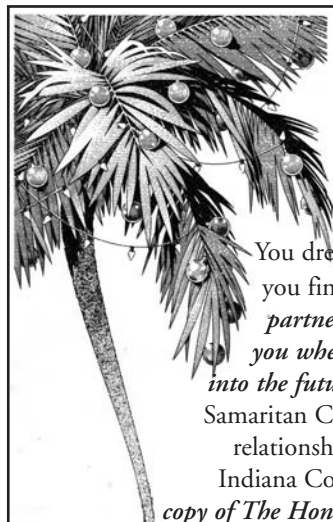
•2 pm: Christ Is The Answer

•3 pm: Kresta in the Afternoon

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and Reconnecting with Your Spouse

by Tony Garascia

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St. Mary-of-the-Woods freshmen tied to St. Mother Theodore Guérin

BY JOHN SHAUGHNESSY

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS (CNS) — For cousins Jena Thralls and Ashley Vermillion, it's just a short walk from their college dorm room to the site of their family's special place in American Catholic history.

At night on the campus of St. Mary-of-the-Woods College west of Terre Haute, Thralls and Vermillion sometimes walk to the rock that memorializes a historic October moment 168 years ago, when St. Mother Theodore Guérin ended a three-month journey from France and arrived in the Indiana wilderness in 1840 with a dream to open an academy for girls.

Standing by that rock, the two college freshmen at times have imagined what it must have been like for Mother Theodore and the five other Sisters of Providence who traveled with her. Even more, the 18-year-old cousins have tried to imagine what it was like for their great-great-great-grandparents as they welcomed into their home the woman who in 2006 would become an American saint.

"If I could time-travel, I'd go back to that time," said Thralls, as Vermillion nodded in agreement.

Both are thrilled to have earned scholarships that let them continue their education at St. Mary-of-the-Woods and continue the story that connects the saint and the Thralls family.

Since they were small children, the cousins have heard their grandfather's stories about the connection. They know that the religious travelers arrived in the deep western Indiana forest on a rainy night, the end of a journey that included 40-degree days in a boat crossing the Atlantic Ocean and an even longer trip by train, ferry and stagecoach across the American wilderness.

They know Mother Theodore was stunned when she finally reached her isolated destination, a reaction she captured in her journal: "To our utter amazement, there was nothing in sight, not even a house. We went down a deep ravine and up on the other side, and through the trees we could see a farmhouse."

Thralls and Vermillion also know that the farmhouse belonged to their ancestors, Joseph and Sarah Thralls, the parents of 13 children. The Thralls family wel-

comed the sisters into their small, primitive home, letting them use half of its rooms. The sisters and the family shared the home until the Diocese of Vincennes, Ind., eventually purchased the Thralls property for the Sisters of Providence.

The connection with the Thralls family is still celebrated by the order.

"We will owe the Thralls family forever for what they did," said Providence Sister Barbara Doherty, director of the shrine dedicated to St. Mother Theodore on the grounds of the college. "The attachment between the Thralls family and the Sisters of Providence is gigantic. It's a wonderful thing that (Ashley and Jena) are here."

The cousins weren't sure they would be able to attend their "dream" college when they were seniors at West Vigo High School in Terre Haute. They knew they would need scholarships. They sweated through the application process before learning that Vermillion had earned a Top Ten scholarship, and Thralls had received a scholarship named in honor of Mother Theodore.

Thralls' scholarship cements her bond with Mother Theodore, a bond that began for her and Vermillion when they were 6 and performed in a Bible school play at their parish, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. The play was about the saint and their ancestors.

"It's comforting to me knowing my family was that close to a saint," Thralls said. "It's comforting to know she walked these grounds with my family. I take random walks out there. I try to imagine what it looked like then, what it felt like, what she could see. It's a blessing."

Vermillion and Thralls have tried to follow Mother Theodore's example in sharing their blessings. They are committed to community service, especially helping families in need and children in hospitals.

There's one other connection that ties the cousins to the saint. In coming to Indiana, St. Mother Theodore made educating others her life's mission. Vermillion hopes to become an elementary school teacher while Thralls is considering becoming an English teacher.

After 168 years the connection between the saint and the family remains strong.

"I always think about her when



CNS PHOTO/COURTESY OF ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS COLLEGE

Cousins Ashley Vermillion and Jena Thralls stand by a marker on campus at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, outside Terre Haute. The rock memorializes the time in 1840 when St. Mother Theodore Guerin ended a three-month journey from France and arrived in the Indiana wilderness, where she was given shelter by the ancestors of freshmen Vermillion and Thralls.

"I'm having struggles," Vermillion said. "She went through a lot. I think about her strength and that helps me be strong."

"It's really important to me, knowing that our family helped a saint," she added. "Not many people can say that."

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Pope makes new appeal for peace, end hostilities

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As Israel continued its ground and air assault on Gaza, Pope Benedict XVI renewed his appeal for an immediate end to hostilities and offered prayers for the numerous victims. “The dramatic news arriving from Gaza demonstrates how the refusal of dialogue can lead to situations of untold suffering for populations that are once again the victims of hatred and war,” the pope said at his noon blessing at the Vatican Jan. 4. His comments came as Israel sent troops and tanks into Gaza while continuing air and artillery shelling against targets in the Palestinian territory. Palestinian medical officials said more than 500 Palestinians, including at least 100 women and children, had been killed in the offensive. Four Israeli civilians and one soldier were reported killed in the first 10 days of fighting. Israel began its offensive Dec. 27 in an attempt to stop Hamas rocket attacks into southern Israel. Hamas is the Palestinian paramilitary organization that runs the Gaza Strip.

Coalition pushes debt relief for poor countries as economic stimulus

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With all that President-elect Barack Obama has facing his new administration regarding the economy, a coalition of religious, human rights and labor advocates hopes that one concern won't be relegated to the bottom of the list: debt relief for the world's poorest countries. The Jubilee USA Network recognizes that debt relief's profile has declined dramatically from its high point just a few years ago. But the 80 organizations that make up the network know just as well that their advocacy work has kept the issue in front of Congress, the Bush administration and the World Bank, if not in the headlines. The coalition takes its name from the Jewish tradition of forgiving debt every 50 years, as told in Chapter 25, Verse 10, of the Book of Leviticus: “This 50th year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you.” Neil Watkins, Jubilee USA's national coordinator, said the network will be encouraging U.S. officials in the new administration and in Congress to continue their commitments to poor countries at a time when funds for international aid may almost disappear.

Farmers donate to Foods Resource Bank

WAUKON, Iowa (CNS) — On a typical crisp fall day in November, a group of farmers gathered in a ridge-top cornfield between Waukon and Churchtown to harvest a ripe field of corn. A combine donated by a local farm implement dealer rolled its header like a giant electric razor through more than 15 acres of corn, leaving stubble in its

PALESTINIANS TAKE PART IN PRAYER PROCESSION FOR PEACE



CNS PHOTO/DEBBIE HILL

Palestinians take part in a prayer procession for peace outside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, Jan. 4. Dozens of people processed around Manger Square calling for an end to the current conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

wake and stopping occasionally to unload its hopper into one of a continuous stream of grain trucks. After bringing their grain to market, the farmers deposited the earnings into a bank — but it's no ordinary bank to help pay bills or mortgages. Rather, it's one that will help pay down world hunger. The group of farmers in the field that day represented Corner of Hope, a growing project organized under the aegis of the humanitarian agency Foods Resource Bank. With members of participating area churches — including St. Patrick Catholic Church in Waukon — Corner of Hope has raised almost \$70,000 for various overseas agricultural programs since 2005, with \$32,000 of that from the 2008 harvest alone. Begun in 1999, Foods Resource Bank has been providing funds for agricultural programs in the developing world through the donations of farmers, businesses and churches in the U.S.

Vatican agency says at least 20 church workers killed in 2008

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — At least 20 church workers were killed in 2008, demonstrating that Catholic men and women — bishops, priests, religious and laity — continue placing their lives at risk in order to proclaim the Gospel and serve the poor, said the Vatican's Fides news agency. Publishing its annual list of missionaries killed

during the year, the agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples said all Catholics have an obligation to remember those who sacrificed their lives, to thank God for their witness and to resolve to be more courageous in demonstrating their own faith. “In profoundly different situations and contexts, according to their own talents, attitudes and with their own limits, all of them consecrated their lives to the unique mission of proclaiming and witnessing to the love of Christ, who died and rose again for the salvation of mankind,” said a Dec. 30 Fides statement. “Without heroics or solemn proclamations, they did not hesitate to put their lives at risk each day in many different contexts of suffering, poverty and tension,” Fides said.

Bishop Barry Knestout ordained new auxiliary bishop for Washington

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Follow the apostles' mission of bringing the “saving power of Christ into this world” by teaching the faith to others, Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl urged new Auxiliary Bishop Barry C. Knestout Dec. 29. The Washington archbishop also offered words of inspiration during Bishop Knestout's episcopal ordination Mass at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, as 1,200 guests listened. Archbishop Wuerl noted that Bishop Knestout, 46, had

chosen “Christ Our Hope,” the theme of Pope Benedict XVI's April 2008 U.S. visit, as his episcopal motto. Then-Msgr. Knestout served as co-chairman of the papal visit committee in Washington. “As Pope Benedict XVI taught us in his encyclical, ‘Spe Salvi’ (on Christian hope), and as he repeated here in our archdiocese at the Mass at Nationals Park on April 17, ‘the one who has hope lives differently. The one who has hope has new life,’” the archbishop said. The new bishop is a native of the Washington Archdiocese, having grown up in Pope Pius X Parish in Bowie, Md. Bishop Knestout became the first native of Prince George's County, Md., to be ordained a bishop for the archdiocese, which includes Washington and five Maryland counties.

Father Neuhaus, First Things editor, hospitalized with cancer

NEW YORK (CNS) — Father Richard Neuhaus, founder and editor in chief of the journal *First Things*, has been hospitalized with “a serious cancer,” the publication announced Dec. 31. A message sent to e-mail contacts and posted on the magazine's Web site said Father Neuhaus is in a New York hospital after being diagnosed with cancer in late November. “The long-term prognosis for this particular cancer is not good, but it is not hopeless, either, and there is

a possibility that it will respond to the recommended outpatient chemotherapy treatment,” said the message. But over Christmas, Father Neuhaus became dangerously ill with a systemic infection and was hospitalized, the note added. There had been some signs of improvement in the last few days, the message said, “and there is a reasonable expectation that he will recover from this present illness — sufficiently, we hope, that he will be able to begin the chemotherapy for the cancer.”

Second Helpings group rescues food to feed hungry in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — There's no such thing as wasted food at Second Helpings, a 10-year-old agency that offers free, nutritious meals and second chances to low-income people. From food rescue — recovering unused food that would ordinarily be thrown away — to job training, Second Helpings has built its reputation around its work to eliminate hunger and empower people, just as its mission statement says. As chief executive officer of Second Helpings, Cynthia Hubert has seen many successes in the organization's day-to-day operations — from generous corporate support and enthusiastic volunteer groups to a former prisoner's employment at a restaurant after completing the culinary job training program. “We save the (social service) agencies almost \$2 million a year because we're providing food and they don't have to run a kitchen or buy food,” she said. “We bring it in and it's all free.” Every Monday through Saturday, staff members, culinary students and volunteers work together to prepare and deliver 2,900 meals — which are hot and ready to eat — to more than 50 social service organizations that feed hungry people in central Indiana.

Galileo's jubilee: Vatican takes part in star-studded celebrations

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As more than 130 countries celebrate the International Year of Astronomy, the Vatican also turned its gaze toward the heavens. The year, which began Jan. 1, was established by the United Nations to coincide with the 400th anniversary of Galileo Galilei's first use of the telescope to observe the cosmos. The Vatican also is celebrating the star-studded jubilee year, as the Vatican Museums, the Vatican Observatory and other Vatican offices participate in several special initiatives. In late December, Pope Benedict XVI rang in the year of astronomy early by sending his greetings to those participating in the yearlong celebration. The pope repeatedly has praised Galileo, calling him a man of faith who “saw nature as a book written by God.” The pope also has said the discoveries of science and astronomy can help people better appreciate the wonders of God's creation.

Vigil for Life Mass and other events announced

The 2009 Vigil for Life Masses will take place at both cathedrals in Fort Wayne and South Bend on Jan. 18. At the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the Mass will begin at 5 p.m. and the main celebrant will be Father Robert Schulte.

At St. Matthew Cathedral, the Mass will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the main celebrant will be Msgr. William Lester. These Masses mark the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade and will be followed by an hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction.

Come and pray for a greater respect for the lives of all human beings from conception until natural death.

The South Bend area Knights of Columbus will hold their annual Right to Life March and Meeting on Sunday, Jan. 25, from 2-4 p.m. at the Council 553 headquarters on Hill Street at Washington Street. The gathering begins with a short march from the council to St. Joseph Parish on Hill Street at 2 p.m., followed by a prayer service. Back at the council, Notre Dame law professor Carter Snead, a leading expert on pro-life and bioethical issues, will be speaking on the upcoming legal and political challenges to pro-life principles. The event is free of charge and all faith communities welcome. For more information, contact Bill Schmitt at (574) 232-6777.

In Fort Wayne, the Allen County Right to Life 35th Annual Rally and March for Life will be at 12 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24, beginning at the Scottish Rite Center. David Bereit, the national campaign director who led the 40 Days for Life campaign, will be the guest speaker. The march will be held at 1 p.m. through downtown Fort Wayne to the Federal Building.

Ask Clinic closed for reorganization

FORT WAYNE — ASK Health Clinic, a free clinic offering health-care services to the uninsured, will be temporarily closed during a reorganization period. The ASK Health Clinic board of directors decided last week to extend the holiday closing period in order to make necessary changes for an improved, quality-focused model of care. The clinic will reopen in early 2009. The clinic is located at 2513 S. Clinton St.

Student Nurses' Association at USF to host blood drive

FORT WAYNE — The Student Nurses' Association at the University of Saint Francis (USF) will host a blood drive during their "Acting on a Dream" week, celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., on Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Hutzell

AROUND THE DIOCESE

SERVICE TO THE POOR THROUGH ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



MARK WEBER

At a District Council meeting of Fort Wayne's St Vincent de Paul Society, 175 members attended Mass and breakfast at St. Joseph Church, Fort Wayne. Bishop John M. D'Arcy reminded those present that "the same Christ you meet in the Eucharist is the same Christ you meet in the face of the poor." Bishop D'Arcy urged members to pray with thanksgiving for being called to the ministry of the society and for being allowed to participate in its ministry of charity. Shown here with Bishop D'Arcy are Donna Brook, council president, and Vincent Wirtner, Jr., treasurer.

gymnasium.

USF will also be competing with Bethel College to see which higher-learning institution receives the most blood donations during the drive.

For information contact Rene DePew at (260) 399-7700 ext. 8512.

Ancilla receives grant from Starke County Community Foundation

DONALDSON — Ancilla College has been awarded a grant from both the Northern Indiana Community Foundation and the Starke County Community Foundation in the amount of \$5,000 towards the purchase of the iStan human simulator.

A next-generation patient simulator, iStan is capable of mimicking the anatomical workings of the human body to a level of realism beyond all previous simulators.

College representatives Todd Zeltwanger, Ann Fitzgerald and Ancilla College President Dr. Ron May were all on hand at a recent luncheon hosted by the Starke County Community Foundation to receive the grant.

"Ancilla College serves a large rural area with higher education

and our nursing department serves a large area with education for health care," said Fitzgerald, the director of nursing. "Individually, no one in the area can afford iStan and the accompanying equipment. But together we can. Anyone involved in any health care or rescue operations field can utilize iStan to improve their capabilities."

With the grant, Ancilla is over half way towards their goal of raising the necessary \$100,000 to purchase the simulator.

Zeltwanger, the executive director of institutional advancement, expressed his appreciation to both foundations for their generosity.

"As a result of this gift, we are inching towards the total amount of money needed to buy iStan, and we are extremely grateful to both organizations," said Zeltwanger.

"They saw how this was going to help not only our nursing students, but that it was going to be a resource utilized by other entities that could be used for training purposes. To have this particular simulator as a training tool will help improve the overall health care in the area. Those who get to practice with iStan will be better equipped."

Financial Peace University offered at St. Vincent

ELKHART — Financial Peace University is a 13-week program to help families, couples and singles get out of debt, learn how to save for the future and give.

The cost is \$100 per family. The next class preview will be at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 14, in the conference room at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

The first class will be Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Elkhart.

Each class is two hours long. The first hour is watching Dave Ramsey make common sense about financial topics. The second hour is group discussion. No personal financial information will be shared unless you want to share it in a safe environment.

The average family makes a net change of approximately \$8,000 during the 13-week class. In these difficult times, the information in the classes will change your life. No matter what one's current financial situation is, he or she will find nuggets of information in each class to help you reach your financial goals.

For more information, please call the rectory at St. Vincent's, (574) 293-8231, or the class facilitator, Molly Prime, at (574) 293-8949.

Sunday Mass at Notre Dame's basilica televised live by CatholicTV

NOTRE DAME (CNS) — Sunday Mass celebrated in the University of Notre Dame's Basilica of the Sacred Heart at 10 a.m. Eastern time is now being televised live weekly on CatholicTV, a television ministry of the Archdiocese of Boston.

"We are pleased to partner with CatholicTV to provide the basilica Mass each Sunday morning," said Holy Cross Father Richard V. Warner, director of campus ministry.

"CatholicTV has strong East Coast distribution and a strategy for growing its cable audience on a nationwide scale. We are firmly committed to bringing quality Catholic liturgies to a national and global audience," he said in a statement.

CatholicTV, formerly Boston Catholic Television, can be found on Comcast, Verizon, Full Channel and RCN cable providers in New England. It also can be viewed nationally on Sky Angel IPTV, which is Internet protocol television that uses a broadband connection. The Web site www.skyangel.com specializes in Christian and family-friendly television and radio programming.

The Mass from Notre Dame is also streamed live and archived online at www.CatholicTV.com.

The Mass was broadcast on the Hallmark Channel on cable from 2002 to June 2008 and also on DIRECTV in 2007. Since June, according to a news release, the basilica staff has received thousands of letters and messages urging that the Mass continue to be available on television. Many viewers are housebound or otherwise unable to attend Mass at their local parish.

Information on the Basilica of the Sacred Heart — including instructions for downloading the Mass on the Internet, viewing liturgical readings and music texts online, and taking a virtual tour of the basilica — is available on the Web at <http://basilica.nd.edu>.

Deadline extended

FORT WAYNE — The Father Tom O'Connor Light of Christ Award committee is seeking nominations of persons of faith, high school age or older, whose activities serve as an example and encouragement to youth through education. The committee may, should it so desire, defer selecting a winner in any given year. Application information is available online at www.diocese-fwsb.org, as well as from the St. Mary's Catholic Church office at (260) 424-8231.

For the 2009 award, the deadline has been extended to Jan. 23. The committee is seeking nominations in the area of education.

The power of light

BY GINNY KOHRMAN

Opening prayer

"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. And we have seen his glory, the glory of an only son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love." — Jn 1:14

Scripture reading: Jn 1:1-5

Modern conveniences have spoiled me. During the recent local ice storm and three days of "no electricity," I cannot tell you how many times I walked into a room and automatically reached for the light switch ... even in the daylight. I have discovered that my eyes have grown lazy as I constantly supply them with artificial light and all sorts of environmental and technological stimulation. My appreciation of the great minds who modernized light and light sources is darkened or perhaps nonexistent as I trudge through my daily attempt at rugged individualism. The first day of darkness was a bit of an adventure and the gentle flickers of candlelight romanticized me.

By the third day of limited light, my heart and soul began to react to the darkness and my mood changed. The anticipation of Christmas and the planning of traditional family gatherings and meals were mysteriously affected by the impact of the darkness that I now allowed to enter my spirit. Nevertheless, in the darkness of the storm, the Lord's presence was manifested in unexpected ways.

Shepherds in the night

"Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over the flock."

In the darkness of the living room, with several candles aglow to give her eyes sufficient light, my daughter Anne began to read aloud St. Luke's infancy narrative,



Sharing Faith

telling the story of Christ's birth. When she got to the part about the shepherds, my mind vanished from the room and was once again in Bethlehem, overlooking Shepherd's Field.

Through my imagination and the memory of my summer visit to this sacred Holy Land, I found myself overlooking the poor and humble shepherds who were "keeping the night watch," tending the sheep. In the darkness, now surrounded by shepherds and their silent lambs, my eyes shifted to the bright star that reflected "the glory of the Lord." In that moment, I found solace in the shepherds who too were gazing at the heavens, looking for light in the darkness of their lives. Back in the darkness of our home, staring into the light of the candle's flame, I wondered why, even those who profess their belief in Jesus, our infant savior, still struggle with moments of spiritual darkness.

Visible and invisible — the dark night

St. Hippolytus, a priest, quoted in the Office of Readings for Dec. 23 writes, "When the Word was hidden within God himself he was invisible to the created world, but God made him visible. First God gave utterance to his voice, engendering light from light, and then he sent his own mind into the world as its Lord. Visible before to God alone and not to the world, God made him visible so that the world could be saved by seeing him. This mind that entered our world was made known as the Son of God."

By God's grace, the Light of the World is given to us. In the day-to-day work of our lives, the God now made visible can seem invisible once again and we are

drawn into what appears to be times of darkness.

The great mystics, particularly St. John of the Cross, called this time the "dark night of the soul." He spoke of two types of dark nights, the "dark night of the senses" and the "dark night of the spirit."

The "dark night of the senses" refers to a period of painful trials in which we learn to be less selfish and egocentric.

In the "dark night of the senses," God's presence is felt and we are consoled by our faith in God. Like the shepherds, we can feel that God is near, although we are fearful of what God is asking us to change in our lives.

The "dark night of the spirit" is a greater trial and test of faith. During this time of darkness, it is as if God has disappeared. The consolations of God are no longer felt in the same way as before. All of the securities of faith, ways of prayer, former faith practices that once grounded us in faith; no longer assure us of God's presence. God almost seems unreal, and we begin to wonder if we still believe. However, under this surface of darkness, God is at work helping us to rivet ourselves more firmly to God and the spiritual life.

The "dark night of the spirit" shakes up our complacency, exposes our false illusions and romanticism about God and invites us to a deeper level of intimacy with Christ who is always present and visible in our spirit.

We, as mere humans, tend to think of the "dark night" as a time of trial and pain, which it is. St. John of the Cross saw the "dark nights" as God's purifying action in the hearts and spirits of those who loved the Lord.

The shepherds who keep watch in the night remind us that even in the darkness, our attitudes, thoughts and feelings must remain open to receive the "glory of God" manifested and made visible through the Child Jesus.

Like the fearful shepherds, we need to trust in the message and the Light that has come to us in the night. With wonder, innocence, forgiveness and even peace and joy, we too look for our savior in the darkness of our souls, knowing that God is with us through Jesus, not just at Christmas but in each and every moment and trial of our lives. The darkness is not so dark, when we believe that God's light shines forth in everything that happens to us.

"My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people." — Liturgy of the Hours, Mid afternoon Antiphon, Dec. 30.

Catholics called to political action beyond voting booth

INDIANAPOLIS — Catholics have citizenship responsibilities beyond the voting booth that they must exercise says the U.S. Catholic bishops. And there will be plenty of opportunity to do so in the coming months as a new presidential administration takes the helm in Washington, D.C., and as newly-elected federal and state lawmakers head to their respective capitol buildings to resume business.

In Indiana, every January, 150 state lawmakers, better known as the Indiana General Assembly, descend upon the state capitol in Indianapolis to conduct some of the state's most important business — passing a new two-year state budget this year will be one of them.

Every year the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the church's official public policy watchdog and advocate, gears up to bring Catholic principles to the public square by sharing a consistent life ethic that every human being, created in the image and likeness of God, deserves dignity.

But the Indiana bishops and the Indiana Catholic Conference staff can't do it alone. Catholics in the pew also have a role and responsibility in the public square as citizens. These responsibilities are outlined in a November 2007 statement called "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States." It says, "This obligation to participate in political life is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do." The statement is available at www.faithfulcitizenship.org

How does a Catholic in the pew begin to exercise his or her moral obligation to participate in public life? The ICC has made political engagement — this seemingly daunting task — simple, fast and effective through numerous resources they offer including a new, electronic Legislative Action Center available on the ICC's Web page.

"When the Indiana General Assembly is in session, getting input from constituents in a timely manner on legislation is vital to the process," said Glenn Tebbe, executive director for the Indiana Catholic Conference. "When Catholics contact their representatives in unison with the work of the Catholic Conference, it allows the church to be more effective in shaping morally sound public policy. The use of this software by Catholics has the potential to significantly impact the church's role in the public policy arena," said Tebbe. "It is my hope that our faith community will seize the opportunity to take advantage of this online tool."

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY BRIGID CURTIS AYER

Tebbe said, "Catholics that have a particular interest in pro-life, social justice, education, immigration reform, healthcare or family life issues will be able to stay connected and be counted when important legislative decisions are made on priority issues the church is following."

Visitors to the ICC Web page (www.indianacc.org), can join the Indiana Catholic Action Network and through an electronic Legislative Action Center can engage in a variety of grassroots political activities by a few simple keystrokes. One of the key features of the software allows visitors to quickly identify and contact their elected officials.

In addition to passing a two-year budget, the primary issues expected to be addressed by the Indiana General Assembly include: protection for the unborn; school choice tax credits; constitutional protections for the institution of marriage; improving access to basic needs for the elderly, disabled, lower income and immigrant families and children living in Indiana.

While the role of the Indiana Catholic Conference is to serve as the official voice of the Catholic Church in the public policy arena primarily in Indiana, those visiting the ICC Web page will also be notified about important federal legislation that the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops is concerned about, and offers the means to contact members of Congress. Since 1967, the ICC has worked to bring a consistent life ethic to Hoosier public policy making.

Other resources on the ICC Web page include background information on the ICC, its mission and purpose; public policy statements, which outline the church's teaching and support for particular moral issues the church is concerned about; legislative updates; and links to other Catholic entities of importance.

The Indiana General Assembly, the Hoosier state's legislative body made up of 50 state senators and 100 state representatives, began legislative business Jan. 7.

To explore the ICC's new, online, public policy tool and join the ICC network go to the ICC Web page at www.indianacc.org and click "Legislative Action Center."



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Brother of Holy Cross to take final vows this week

BY BROTHER CHARLES
MCBRIDE, CSC

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross Brother Christopher Torrijas, CSC, 41, will make his final profession of the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on Friday, Jan. 9, in St. Joseph Chapel of Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. Brother Robert Fillmore, CSC, provincial of the Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross will accept his vows.

A dinner in the great room of Andre Place, Holy Cross Village, will be held in his honor for invited guests after Mass and final vows. The following is Brother Christopher's story in his own words.

I was born and raised in Michigan City. I'm the seventh of eight children and was taught early on by the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

After graduating from Indiana University with a degree in elementary education, I taught fourth grade for one year at a public elementary school. I then accepted a position as a prefect and teacher at LeMans Academy in Rolling Prairie, which was a boarding school for boys in grades 5-9 and run by the Brothers of Holy Cross. I worked there for 12 years, and, during that time, I was a prefect, religion teacher, athletic director, activities director, assistant resi-

dential director and director of discipline.

For my initial formation, I was sent down to St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, to study theology for one year before entering the Holy Cross Novitiate in Cascade, Colo. I entered the Brothers of Holy Cross on Aug. 15, 2004, and made first vows on July 30, 2005. I will be making my final vows on Friday, Jan. 9.

Why did you choose to become a Brother of Holy Cross?

Upon reflecting back, I believe I always had a calling to serve and help others. In college, I volunteered at homeless shelters and various other institutions; but it wasn't until after I graduated and began teaching and living alongside the brothers at LeMans Academy that I felt the initial stirrings of being called to religious life as a brother.

Working and living alongside the brothers allowed me the unique opportunity to be a part of their lives in a much more intimate and authentic way. I was able to not only see ministry in action, but how the brothers interacted with each other on a personal level, too. I saw them in good times and in difficult times, and through it all at the end of the day their ability to serve and love the church and each other was most inspiring for me.



Holy Cross Brother Christopher
Torrijas, CSC

At what point did you feel that you had a vocation to be a religious?

At LeMans Academy, every so often I would hear comments from lay and religious that "You should become a brother." For a long time I brushed their comments aside because for me that was an intimidating thought. It was never my intention to work with the brothers for more than a couple of years. It wasn't until I decided to move on that I began to take an honest look at my life and question what my reasons for leaving actually were. During this time I made a list of the pros and cons of me staying or leaving, and as the pro list became longer and longer. I started to real-

ize maybe God had bigger plans for me. Instead of making a hasty decision to leave, I stayed and that has made all the difference.

Two brothers, in particular, who were very influential and inspirational in my decision to join Holy Cross are Brothers Shaun Gray and Paul Kelly. Long before I decided to join Holy Cross, they treated me like a brother and, in their own ways, invited me into a deeper relationship with God. Their genuine interest in my life allowed me to reflect more significantly on a possible vocation. It took serious spiritual and emotional development on my part to be able to make an honest assessment of the direction I wanted my life to take, but once I came to the realization that joining Holy Cross was not taking anything away from my life, but adding to it, did my decision and vocation become clear.

What is a typical day like?

Working as the director of residence life at Holy Cross College, Notre Dame, I can honestly say there's no such thing as a typical day when you're dealing with college age students. Each day brings new challenges and opportunities.

As the director, I'm responsible for overseeing the implementation of all the school's policies and regulations as they pertain to student life, and making sure the residence life staff has the necessary training

and support in carrying out those policies. A lot of my time is spent handling disciplinary matters. Although this can be very challenging, even at the best of times, I look forward to the opportunity to help young people grow and learn from their lapses in judgment. When I find myself dealing with any student conduct issue I always like to refer back to the words of our founder, Blessed Basil Moreau, to guide and inspire me. "We will always place education side by side with instruction; the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart."

Tell us about the community.

I live with other brothers in Holy Cross Village, which is an interdependent community created to help fulfill our ministry to older and retired individuals, especially seniors. The community is energized by Holy Cross spirituality and hospitality and provides a nurturing environment focused on dignity and respect. As a member of the village, my interactions range from social gatherings to spiritual ones like praying the Office. I'm fortunate to be in a location where there are a number of different brother's communities in close proximity, which allows for a variety of opportunities to engage in leisure or ministry pursuits.

Holy Cross priest finds a home far away from his native Vietnam

BY ANN CAREY

NOTRE DAME — When Holy Cross Father Martin Lam Nguyen entered the seminary in his home country of Vietnam, he had no idea that he would wind up fleeing his country and making a new life far from home. Yet, his persistent desire to be a priest overcame the great obstacles he faced, and now he is one of several priest-professors at the University of Notre Dame who regularly assist our diocesan priests at weekend liturgies.

The sacramental and pastoral aspects of the priesthood are "fundamental," Father Nguyen told *Today's Catholic*. So, even though his major time commitment is to Notre Dame, he makes a point of staying in priestly ministry, too.

Without that persistent call to the priesthood, however, Father Nguyen would probably have wound up being a psychologist in Portland, Ore. Yet his own determination and many helping hands made his vocational dream a reality.

Catholics make up only between 6 and 8 percent of the Vietnam population, which is predominantly Buddhist. Both his parents were Catholic, so Father Nguyen and his siblings regularly attended Mass, and he came to know and admire his parish priest.

It was the common practice in

Vietnam for boys interested in the priesthood to start seminary studies early, so at the age of 11, Martin joined 300 other boys studying for the priesthood in the minor seminary. South Vietnam fell to the communists two years later. The communists allowed the seminary to remain open, but admit no new students.

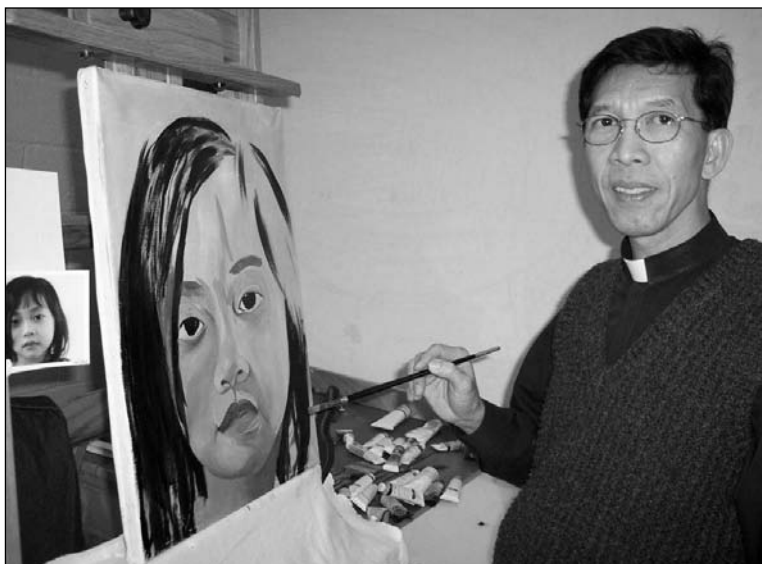
The communists felt the seminary was a waste of time, Father Nguyen explained, and allowed no support from the outside. Thus, the seminarians had to grow their own food, working in the fields by day and studying at night.

"The Vietnamese communists want you to die, but they don't want to kill you," he explained.

The seminary enrollment fell to 30, and the remaining students and priest faculty members were required to carry identification papers that listed their occupation as Catholic religious, a precarious identity. Martin had to get permission from three government offices to travel to the next province to visit his father.

Father Nguyen's mother and five siblings were able to flee Vietnam in 1975 in the "boat people" movement, and eventually made their way to Portland, Ore.

"When I first came to the states, the priesthood was always in mind, but I didn't have control of the situation," Father Nguyen said. "I



ANN CAREY

Father Martin Nguyen enjoys drawing and painting human faces because he finds in this work an encounter with the human person.

didn't know the language. I didn't even have my high school diploma with me; I walked off the boat practically barefoot in Hong Kong. I had one small Bible, which I still have, and that's about it."

Nevertheless, Martin went to work immediately for Catholic Charities and studied English. When he had a moderate command of the language, he applied to the University of Portland, a Holy Cross school. With no documentation of his nine years of academic work in the Vietnamese

seminary, admission to college was problematic. However, he made a list of all the classes he had taken in Vietnam and asked a Vietnamese priest who also had escaped to verify that those classes were taught in the seminary.

Martin graduated from Portland in three years with a degree in psychology, and his dream of the priesthood suddenly became more possible. The Holy Cross priests at Portland proposed that Martin study for his Master of Divinity degree at Notre Dame and consid-

er becoming a Holy Cross priest. While studying for the M.Div., he also took art classes at the university, for he had always enjoyed drawing, calling it "a deeply human experience."

Indeed, Father Nguyen found his vocation with the Holy Cross congregation and was ordained in 1989. A year after ordination, he was asked to study art, with the prospect of being an art professor at Notre Dame.

He says it was "the providence of God" that he had studied art at Notre Dame and had learned the system there, and he was enthused about the prospect. After two years of study with the art faculty at Yale University, he went to the University of California at Berkeley, where he obtained a master of fine art degree, the terminal degree in his field. He has been teaching drawing and painting at Notre Dame since 1995.

All through his academic career, however, Father Nguyen made certain that he continued his priestly work. He has helped in parishes in this diocese since his return to Notre Dame.

"It's natural for me to function that way," he explained. "I need that; it's part of the whole one vocation. I think by committing myself to do the pastoral work, it helps me to approach teaching and art in a whole different way."

CALLED AND CHOSEN TO SERVE

Jim Tighe, candidate for the permanent diaconate, named co-director of the Office of Catechesis

BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

FORT WAYNE — Sometimes you have to step back and see the big picture God has laid out for you.

That's the philosophy Jim Tighe has adopted lately. After a successful career in radio sales at WOWO, Tighe has decided to consider a different path: the permanent diaconate.

Tighe is a part of a group of about a dozen candidates across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend considering the vocation.

Tighe said he first gave the vocation serious thought a few years ago when his wife Pat asked him if he'd be interested in pursuing the ministry. Tighe had been active at St. Jude Church, Fort Wayne, assisting with the RCIA program and a presenter at the 2007 Eucharistic Congress.

It was through chance (and his commitment to the church) that his pastor at St. Jude's, Father Tom Shoemaker, nominated him for permanent diaconate candidacy. Tighe was approved by Bishop John M. D'Arcy and soon began a new chapter in his life.

Preparation started in September 2007 with classes, and he has since been immersed in study. The five-year program



LAUREN CAGGIANO

Jim Tighe, a candidate studying for the permanent diaconate and the new co-director of the diocesan Office of Catechesis, is shown with his wife Pat. Tighe, a former general sales manager of WOWO and WKJG in Fort Wayne, joined the diocese Jan. 5.

includes a concentration in church tradition, law and doctrine, similar to seminarian curriculum, he said. For this reason alone "it's important to go that slow," he said. "You need the

time to understand what this is and accept it."

Tighe said many Catholics have an inaccurate view of the permanent diaconate. Many view deacons as glorified assistants to the priest, but they serve a vital role in the church as unpaid, ordained servants of God. A deacon can administer all sacraments except reconciliation and Mass. The time commitment varies, but averages out to be about 10 hours a week.

Originally, he said deacons were responsible for social work in a community and that tradition has carried over today. In fact, as he noted the word "deacon" stems from the Greek word "to serve." Permanent deacons often work in hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare institutions. Tighe said he's not sure what setting he will find himself in, but will remain open to wherever the bishop needs him.

"What you like or (what you want) is not necessarily what you're called for," he said.

Tighe noted the vocation has reemerged in the past few years, partly to the shortage of priests. In our diocese, he noted, Bishop D'Arcy recently reinstated the permanent diaconate program.

Tighe is quick to emphasize that this life change is not a career move, rather it's part of a bigger picture. "You have to trust in the Holy Spirit to lead you, even when it's not especially easy," he said.

As permanent deacons are allowed to remain married, wives play an important role in the man's journey into the diaconate.

"My role is being supportive and a prayer partner to him," Pat said about her involvement. She noted that her role hinges on Jim's choice of work, although Jim is quick to reiterate that the husband and wife are not a team in this case.

"Wives have to find their own way," he said.

Tighe said he hopes to be an impetus for other men consider-

ing the ministry. His advice — above all, pray and be open to God. Also, being active in the parish is a great way to show a sincere commitment.

"You have to be on the pastor's radar," he said.

Tighe is not yet midway through the five-year program, but he has plans in the interim. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend recently announced that Tighe will be the co-director of the Office of Catechesis. He will assist Sister Jane Carew who also directs the office with various duties. The effective date was Jan. 5.

Bishop D'Arcy said, "I am most grateful to Jim Tighe for his willingness to accept this important position, and I especially appreciate the enthusiasm with which he is approaching it.

"He is well qualified to work with Sister Jane Carew," he added. "He brings much experience in management and administration.

"I take this opportunity, also, to thank Sister Jane for her extraordinary leadership over these past 22 years." Bishop D'Arcy added. "Her extensive work in the formation and training of catechists and in rooting the program in church documents, has been a blessing on our people.

"Working together, and with their fine staff, the work of religious instruction, so central to the kingdom of God in our midst, will grow and prosper," Bishop D'Arcy said.

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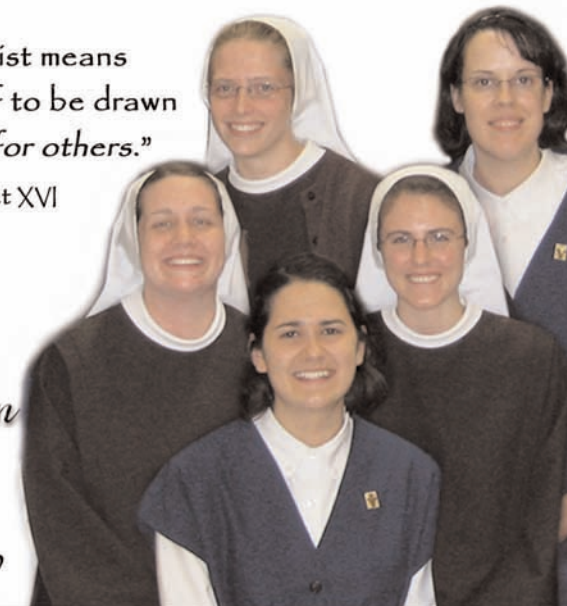


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Fourth Year Theology
Fernando Jimenez
St. Patrick, Fort Wayne Pontifical College
Josephinum
Columbus, Ohio



Fourth Year Theology
Jacob Runyon
St. Louis, Besancon, New Haven Pontifical College
Josephinum
Columbus, Ohio



Third Year Theology
Andrew Budzinski
Holy Family Pontifical College
Josephinum
Columbus, Ohio



Second Year Theology
Matthew Coonan
St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne Pontifical College
Josephinum
Columbus, Ohio



Second Year Theology
Terrence Jr. Coonan
St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne Pontifical College
Josephinum
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First Year Theology
Jacob Meyer
St. Pius X Pontifical College
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First Year Theology
Benjamin Muhlenkamp
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Heart of Mary
Winona, MN



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Joseph Becker
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Jonathan Norton
Our Lady of Good Hope Immaculate
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Second Year College
Brandon McCaffery
Our Lady of Good Hope Immaculate
Heart of Mary
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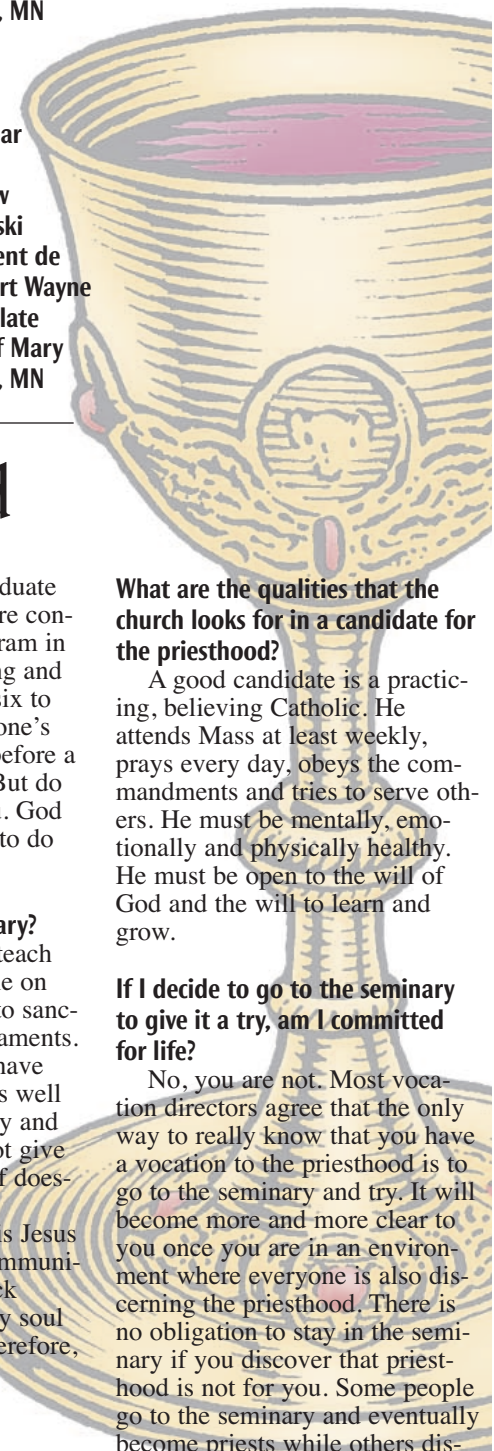
Third Year College
Christian Reyes
St. John, Goshen Immaculate
Heart of Mary
Winona, MN



Third Year College
Matthew Soberalski
St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne Immaculate
Heart of Mary
Winona, MN



First Year College
Keith Welch
St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne Immaculate
Heart of Mary
Winona, MN



Frequently asked questions about the priesthood

What is a priest?

A priest is a Christian, a member of the church, called and anointed by God to proclaim the Good News of salvation to the world and to lead God's people in sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross in the Eucharist. He is also privileged to bring Christ to people in the sacraments; he gives the life of Christ to people in baptism; he forgives their sins in reconciliation; he anoints the sick; he officiates at weddings. In general, the priest brings Jesus Christ to people in their spiritual needs.

What exactly is a vocation?

A vocation is a call from God to do something specifically for God and for his kingdom. The primary vocation of every person is to be holy. It is the divine calling to love and serve God, to obey his commandments, and to cooperate with Christ in the work of redemption by loving and serving others. Everyone is called to live the vocation of holiness, but everyone lives it in a special and unique way according to the plan of God.

Why be a priest?

Everyone looks for meaning and fulfillment in life. For Christians, life's meaning is related to serving God. Many people serve God and find meaning and joy in the vocation of marriage. But some young men, even though they see married life as a way of serving God, feel the Lord calling them to a different kind of service and life style in the church. Instead of marriage vows, they take the vows of obedience and celibacy. Priesthood is a special way of serving the Christian community as a leader in prayer and service.

Who is a diocesan priest?

Call him a parish priest. "Diocesan" comes from a Greek word meaning "to keep house," and "parish," (also Greek word) means "a dwelling beside or near." A diocesan priest is the priest involved in the day-to-day lives of people. He "lives near them" in every way, and helps the local bishop to "keep house" in the family of God, either as an associate pastor or as a pastor — and sometimes in ministries like

teaching, or serving as a campus minister, or as a chaplain in a hospital, a military base or a prison.

I'm not all that holy. Can I still be a priest if I'm not very holy?

Holiness (to be like Jesus) is a lifetime endeavor for every person in every vocation. Don't worry if you don't see yourself as very holy right now. God will form you slowly, day by day and week by week, so that you will be ready to be his instrument when the time comes. But for now, use the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a month. Repent of your sins, receive the sacraments and pray every day. You will be surprised at how Christlike you can become.

How does someone become a priest?

After being accepted as a candidate by a diocese, a man who wants to become a priest will go to the seminary. In the seminary he will receive the preparation, both spiritual and academic, for priesthood. If he enters right after graduating high school, he'll

work towards an undergraduate degree in philosophy before continuing in a graduate program in theology. Seminary training and discernment ranges from six to nine years, depending on one's educational background, before a man is ordained a priest. But do not let this discourage you. God always gives us the grace to do what he asks us to do.

Is all this education necessary?

A priest is ordained to teach the truth, to lead the people on the way to salvation, and to sanctify them through the sacraments. It is necessary for him to have well-balanced education as well as a deep grasp of theology and the spiritual life. He cannot give his people what he himself doesn't possess. He must be immersed in truth, which is Jesus Christ, and effective in communicating this truth to the flock entrusted to his care. Every soul is precious to God and, therefore, to the priest.

What are the qualities that the church looks for in a candidate for the priesthood?

A good candidate is a practicing, believing Catholic. He attends Mass at least weekly, prays every day, obeys the commandments and tries to serve others. He must be mentally, emotionally and physically healthy. He must be open to the will of God and the will to learn and grow.

If I decide to go to the seminary to give it a try, am I committed for life?

No, you are not. Most vocation directors agree that the only way to really know that you have a vocation to the priesthood is to go to the seminary and try. It will become more and more clear to you once you are in an environment where everyone is also discerning the priesthood. There is no obligation to stay in the seminary if you discover that priesthood is not for you. Some people go to the seminary and eventually become priests while others discover different ways of serving the Lord.

Religious women carry out diverse ministries

BY SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

When most Catholics think of sisters in the church, schoolteachers come to mind. It is true that religious women have contributed much to the education of many people and continue to do so. However, sisters are engaged in other activities.

Religious orders are founded to address the needs of the church. At first, in this country, education and health care were primary. As time went on, other pressing needs arose and, where possible, congregations have answered the call to serve.

Today members of religious congregations work in a variety of ministries. Many have administrative roles in colleges, hospi-

tals, dioceses and other organizations, both church related and otherwise.

For example, in our own diocese a sister is vice president for mission integration for Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center in South Bend and another has a similar role at St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne. A sister serves in the same capacity at Saint Mary's College. Since schools and hospitals no longer have the large numbers of sisters in serving as managers, healthcare workers, classroom teachers, etc., there is a need to make sure the mission of the institution continues to be implemented.

Religious women also run healthcare organizations and are administrators of colleges and universities.

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has had sisters at various times serving in administrative and other diocesan positions in campus and young adult ministry, religious education, worship and spiritual development.

In some dioceses where there is a grave shortage of priests, one can find religious women administering parishes with all the responsibilities of a pastor except

for conferring the sacraments. Some sisters minister in parishes in other capacities such as liturgists, religious education directors, parish visitors, etc.

Other sisters work directly with the poor. This takes many forms. One sister in this diocese has a jail ministry whereby she helps women get bail, among other things. Another teaches literacy to people to help them better support themselves and their families. Others work in social service agencies.

Religious women also serve as chaplains in hospitals, prisons and so forth. A good example is Sister Helen Prejean who works with people on death row. The book, "Dead Man Walking," is about how she got into her ministry.

Some members of congregations minister full time as educators and advocates of justice. One congregation in this diocese has three members who are immigration and civil rights attorneys. All three got their law degrees as sisters because their community saw the need to help, especially the poor.

There are sisters who serve as spiritual directors. Some give

retreats and run retreat houses.

A sister in this diocese uses her creative gifts as a member of a media company that produces religious and educational films. For the past several years, her company has done the film for the Annual Bishop's Appeal.

Anyone interested in the various ministries of religious women today can learn a lot by going to their Web sites.

Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ — www.poorhandmaids.org
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters — www.olvm.org
Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration — www.ssfpa.org
Sisters of the Holy Cross — www.cscsisters.org

A seminarian reflects on what led him to seek the priesthood

BY BEN MUHLENKAMP

Before I became a seminarian, I actually sold cars, and enjoyed a little success in that business. However, I was left with a deep sense of dissatisfaction. I did not feel like I was really offering a valuable service with my time, but rather that I was just working for a paycheck. It was easy to see that the coworkers and customers who would come in had larger problems than their need for money or finding a car.

During the same time I was selling cars, I began to help with a youth ministry program. Serving the youth led me to become less self centered — always arranging for my own happiness — and directed me to be more interested in seeing these young people live happy, holy, healthy lives.

Soon I began spending time in St. Jude's adoration chapel praying for the lives of these teens, and also that God would make me a better instrument to serve him and his people.

The thought of becoming a priest had never crossed my mind, but after a few months of visiting the chapel, the thought of priesthood just began going through my mind. I fought this thought for about six months because I really cared for the girl I was dating, and I didn't want to let go of the plans which I had made for my life. Yet, I knew what I had to do, so we broke up, and I agreed to meet with Father Galic, the vocations director.

Since the time we sat down and talked, I have enjoyed a deep down peace I have never experienced before. Although seminary can be difficult, and I have had many struggles on the surface, deep down the peace remains.



Celebrate the Dignity of Vocations

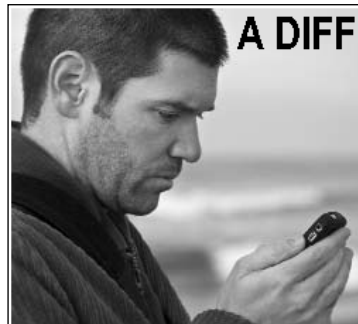
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Parents are called to foster religious and priestly vocations

BY SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

SOUTH BEND — An important role of parents is to nurture the faith of their children. Children need to learn that the sacrament of marriage, although the primary vocation of most men and women, is not the only way to live out God's call. Some people are called to dedicate their entire lives to God in service to the church as brothers, sisters or priests, and others have a vocation to live a dedicated life as a single person.

Educating the young these days concerning church vocations is a great challenge because the numbers of brothers, sisters and priests are dwindling. How, then, can a parent help a child consider a way of life that he or she knows little or nothing about, except, perhaps, from an often inaccurate betrayal of priests and religious on television or in the movies? The following are a few suggestions.

First and foremost, parents must teach children the value of



SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

Serrans, parents, priests and religious, and those in formation enjoy the annual luncheon sponsored by the Serra Club held at the Franciscan Convent in Mishawaka. This year, sisters in formation were invited for the first time.

prayer in their own lives and of having a strong relationship with the Lord. Parents must show their sons and daughters that God loves them and has a special role for their lives. Children must be taught that when they were baptized they received a call from God to love and serve him. It is up to each to discover how God wants him or

her to live this call in life.

Father Glenn Kohrman, who assists Father Bernard Galic in the diocesan Vocation Office, puts it this way, "Parents must let their children know that their most important desire for them is for them to get to heaven. These were the sentiments of my mother."

The vocation director for the

Midwest Brothers of Holy Cross, Brother Chester Freel, emphasizes how essential it is for sons and daughters to know that their parents will support them in whatever vocation they feel God has chosen for them.

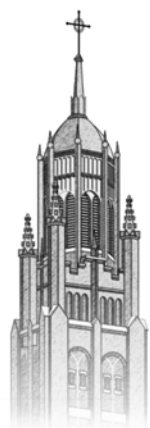
Another thing parents can do is to help their children, and perhaps themselves, learn about the life of priests and religious men and women. One practical way is to take them to visit motherhouses or headquarters of congregations. In this diocese there are four motherhouses of sisters and many religious brothers and priests who serve here. You can also look up Web sites of various religious orders. These give factual information about religious life in general and each group in particular.

Another excellent way to get to know priests and religious is to invite them into your home for dinner or for other occasions. Children learn a lot by developing relationships with priests and religious. They soon discover that they are people just like everyone

else. Many religious and priests today can testify to how important relationships with religious were to their own vocation.

Service is an integral part of the life of a sister, brother and priest. It is important to let children know what ministries they are involved in for the church and the world and that there is more to life than making a lot of money. Children, from a young age, should be encouraged to participate in their parishes and in organizations that serve others.

Finally, it is extremely important, although sometimes difficult, to avoid the temptation to steer children in a particular direction and to help them look at all the options. You might want your son to be a priest or brother, or a daughter to become a sister, or to give you lots of grandchildren, but it is what God wants that matters the most. And the same goes for marriage. The main thing is for parents to show openness to all possibilities and not be stumbling blocks. Parents are to help children to make decisions, not decide for them.



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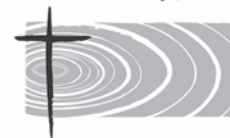
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EDITORIAL

Vocations — God's call to us all

Father Glenn Kohrman is a friend to the area of vocations and serves as chaplain of the Fort Wayne Serra Club, an organization that promotes and supports religious vocations. Father Kohrman, who is pastor of St. Mary of the Lake, Culver, shares a few thoughts about his own vocation and how he encourages vocations in this week's editorial.

Never underestimate the impact you can have on other people's lives. I was told at a very young age to pray that I do whatever God wants me to do. I am convinced that this is the real path to fulfillment and happiness. I believe that if we do God's will we will be happy. If we strive to do God's perfect will, we will just be more perfectly happy. It is a challenge to know God's will.

Never underestimate how prayer can help in the discernment process. In our youth, we should pray to know our vocation. When we find ourselves on our chosen path, we must pray for the grace to remain faithful to that call.

There are many different ways to look at a vocation. A priest once told me that there are basically four vocations:

- A dedicated married person — pledging your love and your life to your spouse.
- A dedicated single person. Sometimes by choice and other times as the result of circumstance, there are people who are called to walk this world in the single state. This life affords the person the ability to focus their energies towards ministry in the world without the great demands of marriage.
- Consecrated religious — a brother, sister, nun or monk, who is not a priest.
- Priesthood — whose role is fundamentally to offer sacrifice for the world through the Mass and the way he lives his life.

The Second Vatican Council encouraged all the lay people to recognize the universal call to holiness.

Father Dan Scheidt encourages people to pray for their future spouse. I modify that request slightly. I always try and encourage young people to pray for the love of their life.

My conversation goes something like this: "How old are you?" The young boy responds, "Eleven." Then I say, "Okay, every night before you go to bed, say a prayer for the love of your life. Now think of this. Chances are you are not going to marry someone who is 11 years younger than yourself. Just think that person is walking the earth somewhere right now. Now after you live a good holy life and live purely and chastely, and after you have a beautiful Catholic wedding and after the reception, you can say: "I have been praying for you since I have been 11 years old."

Then I assure the young man that will score him lots of points. I point out that if he would become a religious or a priest, or if it is a little girl, and she would become a sister or a nun, then the love of their life would be the church, and their prayers would not be wasted.

I think it is most important for people to just ask the question: "What is God calling me to do?"

For my part, I was slow to listen. I finished a master's degree in mechanical engineering before I entered the seminary. I was dating a girl at the time. A priest gave me what I consider to be sage advice, and I have come to give it myself on occasion. The priest told me that if the person I was dating somehow seemed to complete who I was and if I could not imagine myself being happy without her, then I should marry her. But if I could imagine myself being happy without her, then God may be inviting me to be his priest.

None of us are perfect, but with God's grace we can respond to his invitation. He will never abandon us. If we take the leap of faith, rest assured that he will be there to catch us. We must never be afraid of God's will. He always has our best interest at heart.

Pray for vocations. If you are discerning, pray for his will. If you are living your vocation, then just pray for the grace to be faithful to it. God bless you and know that he loves you!

Today's Catholic editorial board consists of Ann Carey, Kay Cozad, Fred and Lisa Everett, Father Mark Gurtner, Father Michael Heintz, Tim Johnson and Vince LaBarbera.

COMMENTARY

TODAY'S CATHOLIC welcomes letters from readers. All letters must be signed and include a phone number and address for verification. Today's Catholic reserves the right to edit for clarity and length. Address letters to: Today's Catholic • P.O. Box 11169 • Fort Wayne, IN • 46856-1169 or e-mail to: editor@fw.diocesefwsb.org

President-elect should ban torture, cruelty

On Jan. 20 President-elect Obama will finally have the opportunity to bring the change he has promised by signing an executive order that bans torture and cruelty. In doing so, he would end the ambiguity clouding U.S. interrogation policy and send a clear message to all Americans that torture and ill treatment of detainees will not be tolerated. Immediate presidential action would also signal to the rest of the world that the U.S. is making

a clear break with the mistakes of the recent past.

The National Religious Campaign against Torture, Evangelicals for Human Rights and the Center for Victims of Torture have crafted a Declaration of Principles that calls for a presidential executive order ending the use of torture and cruelty. This executive order would provide the basis for a new standard for U.S. interrogation policy that is both effective and lawful; a standard that will allow us to defend our country from terrorists, while preserving our shared American values. The declaration had the support of a broad bipartisan coalition of over 200

American leaders, including three former secretaries of defense, three former secretaries of state, four former national security advisors and numerous religious leaders.

You can help ensure that President-elect Obama knows that the American people will support him if he strengthens our security and restores our adherence to our values by instituting an interrogation policy based on a commitment to the rule of law. Please visit www.campaigntobantorture.org and join your voice to the call to end torture.

**Sister Angeline Walczyk, OLV
Victory Noll, Huntington**

The Indiana Knights and the family

Did you know that it's okay for the man of the house to be the spiritual leader of his family? There was a time when that role fell on the woman of the home, but then, men were not supposed to cry either.

This idea isn't supposed to supplant the mother's role in raising the family but the unique influence of the male as protector and provider as well as leading the way to the steps of the church. There was a time when a greater number of our children went to Catholic schools or attended instruction of the faith on the weekends.

Our society today is pulling at the very fabric of the family in ways our fathers would never have imagined. When was the last time your family sat down and had a meal together and talked about the day's activities? How many after-school activities do you as a parent feel compelled to involve your child in? Does your parish still support religious education classes or have a youth group? If not, why not? What happened? Are you old enough to remember your mother or father insisting you attend catechism classes, serve as an altar server or learn Latin? These are not old fashioned ideas but basic faith foundations — maybe not the Latin.

The real question is: Who is going to carry the torch when you are gone? Who will communicate the Word made flesh? If no one remembers the faith, how will the faith prevail?

Indiana Knights of Columbus fully understand the absolute necessity of a Catholic education, beginning in the home. Knights believe the formation of the faith can only succeed in the



THE INDIANA KNIGHTS

BY ROBERT HARTENSTEIN

family unit with full cooperation of the father and the mother leading the way setting the example of Mary and Joseph.

Members of the Knights are constantly seeking ways to involve the family in their activities that set values and encourage togetherness. Knights recognize a Family of the Month for their Catholic example to the parish community; pro-life activities that absolutely supports the growth of the family in a culture that brushes aside a life as an irritation; family picnics; bowling night out; family prayer at home; visiting relatives as a family; having a family cooking contest; volunteering as a family for some parish activity and being very involved with their children's education.

In short, the Knights focus is on what the family unit can do together, not what can the family do apart. There isn't anything new here. Can you remember a time when Sundays were reserved for the family and only the family? Can you remember the phrase, "a family that prays together, stays together?" If you have to think back that far, then maybe new traditions need to be made while you still can.

The whole reason for having family activities is setting the stage for communicating faith ideas and making time to do it. We need to be their first teachers of the faith through being together and interacting with

each other, respecting and communicating ideas.

Members of the Indiana Knights of Columbus seek to strengthen the family unit in every way possible and, in turn, strengthen the faith of the family. There are many opportunities for a Catholic man to serve their family in new ways through membership in the Knights of Columbus. Every one of us has a talent of some kind that we can share with our fellow Knights. That idea can be passed down to another and another.

The end result is to strengthen the faith of us all and reestablish the foundation our society is tossing aside. The man being the spiritual leader of the family reinforces that foundation with the needed manly strength of protector of the faith. He confirms the importance of the spiritual person in each family member. As Knights, we are responsible to lead our families to heaven. It's okay to be a man who prays — a man of faith.

Robert Hartenstein is the director of communications for the Indiana Knights of Columbus.

Can't teach an old dogs new tricks?

All of us have heard this cliché about dogs. People of all ages buy it. Those who accept this adage as fact, instead of challenging it, settle into a comfort zone in life. They know, but forget, that humans and dogs don't equate — especially when faced with maturing or not. Dogs have no choice; people do.

We know that attitude is the primary predictor of maturing. What follows from this outlook is either creativity or stagnation. It depends on our free choice. God told Jeremiah to choose life, then added the promise quoted above. Choosing life takes grace and courage, but God said he'd always be with us.

Our choices, even insignificant ones, feed our decision either to create or stagnate. These daily choices determine our life and formulate our basic option; toward God's plans for us, or away;

toward a future full of hope, or to one that holds gloom. In order to nourish our resolve, we make choices that either feed it, or let it wither. All the daily choices we make either help or hinder the care we give to our body, mind and spirit. Each one affects the next — for better or for worse.

In our adult-maturing process, we who choose creativity and hope must tackle what follows. Because of our decision to become the best person we can become, we move on to actualize this life-giving choice by taking the necessary steps to put vision into action.

"Every choice is a renunciation." — "A Medieval Philosophy." All changes demand choice; all choices demand change. In pursuit of God's urging to choose life, we must renounce some things for the greater good. Yet, what we give up actually nurtures us in ways we couldn't possibly have known at the time. These may not reap harvest until later,

but the results will be a priceless response to God's hope-filled plans for our life. Positive, life-generating, healthy choices may not necessarily "add years to our life," but are certain to "add life to our years." Our ability to make these choices is God's gift. We can choose this gift through self-control; or, we can refuse it through laziness and procrastination. Change is essential to life; we learn from our choices-

SPIRITUALITY OF MATURING ADULTS

SISTER ANGELITA FENKER

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Jesus reconciles us to God



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Baptism of the Lord Mk 1:7-11

This weekend the church invites us to celebrate the great feast of the Baptism of the Lord, great because it commemorates a very important event in the life of Jesus and in the unfolding of salvation. It draws our attention to marvelous and fundamental aspects of our salvation.

Jesus, the son of God, the redeemer, very much is the centerpiece of all three readings, although of course the Book of Isaiah, from which comes the first reading, only prefigures Jesus. The Lord obviously was not yet born as a human when this first reading was written.

Isaiah mentions no one by name. However, the reading describes a faithful servant of God who will suffer unjustly, but who will be steadfastly faithful to God.

Over the centuries, this section of Isaiah, along with three others quite similar in literary construction and in reference to the figure that Christians have called the "Suffering Servant," has been very popular among the pious. Poetic in style, these four similar sections are cited as the "Songs of the Suffering Servant." These "songs" also provide readings for Holy Week, precisely for Good Friday.

In the second reading, from the

Acts of the Apostles, Peter stands as the principal figure. Peter appears before Cornelius, whose name indicates Roman origins. In itself, this encounter with Cornelius is greatly revealing. Peter did not limit his interest to Jews, whose heritage Peter shared.

Rather, Peter preached the Gospel to pagans, and indeed to the despised Romans, who were responsible for the military conquest and occupation of the Holy Land, a circumstance detested by the Jews.

Peter's message is crisp but profound. Salvation is in Jesus. The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus as the savior. God was with Jesus as the Lord went about "doing good works" and healing the sick.

St. Mark's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the story of the Lord's baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

Ritual washings, or baptisms, had become popular in certain Jewish circles in the first century A.D. Homes were even built with ceremonial baths. The idea was that a person could visibly state the desire to be rid of sin, as if sin literally soiled the body, by washing in water.

John the Baptist acknowledges Jesus as the redeemer. John insists that he himself is not the Savior, John's great holiness. John confesses his own unworthiness. He is "not worthy to loosen" the sandals of the Savior.

The Gospel is clear. Jesus is the perfect, innocent and absolutely sinless Lord. Yet Jesus assumes the sinfulness of humankind. Furthermore, God identifies Jesus as the savior, and moreover as the Son of God. To make this declaration clear, God speaks, and gestures, in ancient Old Testament words and symbols that no Jew would have misunderstood.

Reflection

This feast is great in the church's calendar because it reveals to us the Lord's identity. He is the Son of God. Not even a prophet of John's holiness and tenacious faith was the Lord's equal.

Secondly, Jesus assumes the sinfulness of us all. In this sense, as stated elsewhere in the Scriptures by St. Paul, Jesus is a new Adam, a new and perfect representative of the human race. But, Jesus is a representative, and creator, of union with God, rather than a sign and cause of estrangement from God, as was Adam.

Using as its own the words of Peter, who spoke for the other apostles, for the Christian community, and most importantly for Jesus, the church calls us to the Lord our Savior.

We are sinners. However, Jesus, the son of God, has assumed our sins, reconciling us with God. Reconciliation through Jesus is perfect, unbroken and absolute. This reconciliation brings eternal life.

READINGS

Sunday: Is 42:1-4, 6-7 Ps 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10 Acts 10:34-38 Mk 1:7-11

Monday: Heb 1:1-6 Ps 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9 Mk 1:14-20

Tuesday: Heb 2:5-12 Ps 8:2a, 5-9 Mk 1:21-28

Wednesday: Heb 2:14-18 Ps 105:1-4, 6-9 Mk 1:29-39

Thursday: Heb 3:7-14 Ps 95:6-11 Mk 1:40-45

Friday: Heb 4:1-5, 11 Ps 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8 Mk 2:1-12

Saturday: Heb 4:12-16 Ps 19:8-10, 15 Mk 2:13-17

CATEQUIZEM

By Dominic Camplisson

Of course, for the first of the year, this quiz takes a look at firsts.

- The first book of the Old Testament is:**
a. Exodus b. Genesis c. Leviticus
- The first woman was**
a. Eve
b. Salome
c. Sethia
- The Pentateuch is composed of**
a. the index and contents page of the Old Testament.
b. the first five books of the Old Testament.
c. the first five books of the New Testament.
- While not the first Hebrew to visit Egypt, this man was the first to hold high office there:**
a. Potiphar b. Moses c. Joseph
- When things turned sour, the first plague inflicted on the Egyptians was**
a. the death of the first born
b. the plague of blood
c. the plague of locusts
- The first king of the Israelites in terms of chronology was**
a. Saul b. David c. Solomon
- But the first king in terms of regard and prestige was**
a. Saul
b. David
c. Solomon
- The first of the two Jewish kingdoms to fall to the Assyrians was**
a. Galilee
b. Judah
c. Israel
- The first book of the New Testament, in the order traditionally listed:**
a. Luke
b. Matthew
c. Mark
- This New Testament book is thought by many scholars to have been the first actually written:**
a. Luke
b. Matthew
c. Mark
- The first public miracle of Jesus was at Cana, and involved**
a. changing water into wine
b. changing loaves into fishes
c. changing Peter into Simon
- This man was the first of the Twelve Apostles who was not from Galilee:**
a. Simon Peter
b. Judas Iscariot
c. Mary Magdalene
- This man is regarded as the first martyr:**
a. Stephen
b. Saul (Paul)
c. Cornelius
- This emperor was the first to scapegoat the Christians as a group:**
a. Augustus
b. Nero
c. Constantine
- And this emperor was the first to legalize Christianity:**
a. Augustus
b. Nero
c. Constantine

ANSWER:

1.b, 2.a, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b, 6.a, 7.b, 8.c, 9.b, 10.c, 11.a, 12.b, 13.a, 14.b, 15.c

Luther, Calvin, Zwingli removed Apocrypha from Bible

Why were the "Apocrypha" (the extra Catholic books in the Bible) taken out of Protestant Bibles? What was the justification on both sides? T.P., Leo

The books that you are talking about here are Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach and Baruch. These seven books from the Old Testament are in Catholic Bibles but not in Protestant Bibles. To understand the reason why this is so we need to have a little history lesson.

Most of the books in the Old Testament were originally written in Hebrew, but when Alexander the Great conquered the Mediterranean world around the year 350 B.C., Greek became the dominate language because that was what Alexander spoke. It was necessary then at that time for the Jews to translate the Old Testament (also known as the Hebrew scriptures) into Greek. After this was done God continued to inspire the writing of his word. However, these inspired writers, instead of writing in Hebrew first, just wrote directly into Greek. These Greek books were the ones just mentioned: Tobit, Judith,

Wisdom, etc.

After Jesus came, suffered, died and rose, many of the early Christian communities accepted as inspired Scripture all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures that were written in Hebrew as well as those newer books that had only been written in Greek. As the church progressed through history, church councils came to ratify all these books as part of sacred Scripture.

In the 16th century, Martin Luther, an Augustinian priest who broke away from the church, decided that the Old Testament should only have those books that were originally written in Hebrew. He still kept the Greek books in the Bible, but he put them in a special section. Church reformers named Calvin and Zwingli who followed Luther decided that these books were not sacred Scripture and should be removed all together. From this point then, Protestant Bibles have not included these Greek books.

So, as you can see, from the beginning of the church in the first century until now the Catholic Church has not considered these books "extra" but truly part of

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

Scripture, books which are inspired by God.

Gal 3:11 reads as follows: "Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because 'the righteous will live by faith.'" Isn't faith more important than "laws?" Yes or no? Explain. T.L., Auburn

This topic has been a bone of contention and a source of deep misunderstanding between Catholics and Protestants for several centuries. Let it first be stated clearly that the Catholic Church teaches that "by grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping

and calling us to good works" (see the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification). Catholics indeed believe that we are saved by God's grace.

However, being saved by God's grace does not mean that we do not have to do anything. God calls us to respond to the grace that he has given us. This grace must bear fruit in our actions, in our "works," if you will. In the Letter of James from the New Testament we read: "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." — Jas 2:14-17.

The "law" of the church helps us to know what the proper response of faith is. For example, the church teaches that, apart from a serious reason, every Catholic must attend Mass every Sunday. We are not saved just because we park ourselves in the pew every Sunday. We are saved by Jesus'

passion, death and resurrection. However, God has guided the church to understand that those who are "saved," God's holy people, are to worship him in spirit and truth every Sunday at Mass. If we deliberately choose not to attend Mass on Sunday, we are saying that we do not want to live as God asks us to. We are saying that we want to live in our own way. In this way, we are rejecting the grace that God has given us.

In other words, our "good works" help us to grow in God's grace. By not doing good works we do not grow in God's grace. In fact, we can even lose God's grace by not doing the things that the church tells us that God is asking us to do. So, rather than asking the question "Isn't faith more important than 'laws?'" — we should be asking "How does the law of God given to us through the church and the Scriptures help my faith to grow?"

Father Mark Gurtner, pastor of Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Wayne answered this week's questions.

A meal to be remembered

Sito was my late grandmother-in-law. No matter when my husband and I stopped by (or even, sorry to say, dropped in without calling), Sito would provide a feast for us. She spent almost every day cooking and filling her freezer with nourishing delicious meals and treats, betting on the chance that someone would stop by, if not this afternoon, then the next.

When you'd spill your troubles to Sito, she'd say affectionately, "Awww, Dino, go get yourself a plate." And she'd motion to the stove where a banquet that would feed an army sat hot and ready.

For generations, cooking food has been more than just about feeding one's body. It has been and still is a way to nourish a soul, a relationship and to provide companionship and sustenance in a world that is sometimes cold. A hearty meal with family and friends, complete with hot bread and smooth, creamy butter, sometimes topped off with a bit of wine and finished with a cup of steaming coffee, is the way women nurture those they love, and put material form to their feelings.

If they don't know what to do for someone, they cook. They cook after births of babies of their friends. They cook for funeral dinners. They cook at Christmastime elaborate fixings, not only to celebrate the holiday of Christ's birth with decorated cookies and homemade candy, turkey with orange sauce and cheesy potatoes ... but to put tangible life into their devotion for their family and express their love in a way they otherwise can't.

We live in the heart of Amish country. I've been blessed to have some Amish ladies occasionally



EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

TERESA A. THOMAS

help me with my cleaning. Once, I heard the ladies speak of Cousin Nettie's wedding. Everyone in the community, young and old, pitched in to make food for the special day. The cooking began several days in advance, and was truly a social event in itself for the members of the womenfolk. When the Amish women want to shower their blessings on someone, they start at the stove.

While interviewing World War II veterans some years ago, one thing that impressed me was the fondness with which each man spoke about his first meal home after the war. I imagine those wives and mothers of men, now long gone, standing at the stove, praying and preparing.

Yesterday, my husband and I spent the afternoon in the kitchen together, making sveha (Lebanese meat pies), stuffed grape leaves, lentils with onions and rice, and Arabic bread (recipes that Sito shared with us before she died).

It took us awhile to get in the groove of working together.

Apparently, I was folding the dough of the sveha wrong, and he was very definitely hogging the lemon juice. But once we found a rhythm, it was a very enjoyable endeavor. As the meat sizzled, cooking inside the oven, I felt pride in what my husband and I were creating — a meal yes, but more than that, a token of love for

our family. You see, what precipitated the entire afternoon of cooking was the knowledge that it was the last day that our college-aged sons would be home before going back to school. We wanted to prepare a meal for them that they would love... that they would miss... that they would seek and so return. And so, like generations of women before, my husband and I set up shop in the kitchen and started pounding dough.

Today, the boys will return to the university, with a carload of their things, new clothes from Christmas, some grocery items. Also in the back seat will be some Tupperware containers of Lebanese food and some miniature apple pies, the fruit of yesterday's labor.

For a million reasons, I prepared food for them. And in doing so I connected with not only my boys, my husband and my family, but with millions of women around the world alive today, and some who have passed on. We cooked and we cook simply because ... we love.

Theresa Thomas, parishioner of St. Matthew Cathedral Parish in South Bend, is the mother of nine children and wife of David. Theresa Thomas may be contacted at: theresathomaseveryday-catholic@gmail.com.

MATURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and-changes, then advance in our adult maturing and wisdom — more of God's gifts to us. Any change can be stifling or growth-filled; we can remain comfortable with old tricks or learn new ones.

Positive healthy choices for mind, body and spirit are vital for ongoing adult maturing. An optimistic attitude and healthy choices go hand-in-hand. The one virtue cannot exist without the other; they are interdependent. The healthy choices we make for ourselves, affects those we make for others. "Love your neighbor as yourself." — Mk. 12:31.

Christ pleads: "Live on in me as I do in you." — Jn.15:4. There are things we can do to help Christ's wish come alive in us through the care we give our body, mind and spirit because of daily healthy choices. I can choose to:

- Free myself from perceived limitations of a stale mentality;
- Embrace the age I'm in;
- Explore possibilities for maturing;
- Refuse to give myself negative messages;
- Honor my body, mind and spirit with proper care;
- Learn something new daily;
- Create fresh reasons for getting out of bed each morning;
- Reflect on my life; plan on leaving a legacy;
- Reach out; use my talents for others;
- Exert effort to keep personal morale upbeat and positive;
- Discover a fresh God-dream for this stage of life;
- Create a sacred space to be

alone with Christ daily; develop a maturing friendship with him, at the touch of the Spirit, for the Father, that wasn't possible at any other time of life;

• Above all: I'll do something to enrich my life's meaning and purpose.

With prayer for courage to respond to God's dreams for us, we create life-changing patterns in favor of healthy choices, and anticipate all the blest surprises God still has in store for us. Free, magnificent choices are in our control; but we must make them.

Reflect

In your quiet time with Christ, create your own life-giving resolves toward crafting healthy choices for your body, mind and spirit. Put this in the form of a prayer. Sign it.

Sister Angelita Fenker has been involved in education at all levels for over 60 years. Her doctorate is in spirituality with a focus on holistic family spirituality. She holds many postdoctoral certificates in the area of spirituality for maturing adults and gives seminars and retreats throughout the U.S. and Canada. Her book, "Grace-filled Transitions unto Transformation," was published in 2004 and is available at Barnes and Noble.

Sports

SPORTS FAITH HALL OF FAME TO INDUCT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES Sports Faith International, headed by Chicago Bears' Patrick McCaskey, has launched a Star Search for Outstanding Catholic High School Athletes, Coaches and Teams. The organization teamed up with Catholic Athletes for Christ, Relevant Radio and other media to highlight and promote excellence on and off the field. Thirteen winners will be inducted in the 2009 Sports Faith Hall of Fame in conjunction with the Professional Athlete induction ceremony. Nomination and contest information is available at www.sportsfaithinternational.org.

Regular season ICCL action resumes

SOUTH BEND — The Inter-City Catholic League (ICCL) jumped back onto the hardwoods with its regular season roster of basketball games played Jan. 4 at Saint Joseph's and Marian high schools.

In varsity games, Holy Family defeated St. Matthew, 40-25, with the winners being led by Dylan Hensley with 25 points. Duane Connor tossed in 10 points for St. Matthew.

St. Joseph, Mishawaka, beat Our Lady of Hungary, 56-29, with Michael Whitfield dropping in 24 points for the winners. Our Lady was paced by Dominique Sanders with 12 points.

In a close game, Corpus Christi narrowly beat St. Anthony, 28-26. Corpus Christi was led by Tim McNamara with 15 points. St. Anthony's Brendan Mischler tossed in 10 points.

St. Monica won, 34-29, in double overtime against St. Jude. Neal Eakin tossed in 15 points for St. Monica. Neal Dowling had 18 points for St. Jude.

St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart, beat Christ the King, 56-45. Christ the King was paced by Connor Edmonds with 16 points and Joey Speybrouck with 12 points. Andrew Shafer of St. Thomas contributed 13 points for the win.

Queen of Peace, Mishawaka, defeated St. Michael, Plymouth, 39-27. Nick Johnson tossed in 14 points for Queen of Peace. Davis

Payne had 13 points for the St. Michael team.

St. Joseph of South Bend beat Holy Cross, 38-35, paced by Tommy Favorite with 21 points, and Mike Madden of Holy Cross with 16 points.

St. Pius beat St. John the Baptist, 63-13, with Denton Gillis of St. Pius tossing in 16 points.

In boys Colors division basketball action, games resumed regular season play Jan. 4.

Christ the King Blue beat St. Pius X Green, 41-27, with the aid of Patrick O'Conner who tossed in 10 points for the winners.

Christ the King Gold beat St. Monica Purple, 26-24. Christ the King's Bailey Sexton had 13 points. St. Monica was led by Chris Coulter with 14 points.

Christ the King White beat St. Joseph, South Bend, Gold, 29-25. Matt Gergerly had 16 points to pace Christ the King.

St. Joseph, Mishawaka, Green, beat St. Matthew Black, 35-20. St. Joseph was paced by Connor Bilancio with 10 points. Luke Gaboury had 11 points for St. Matthew.

St. Joseph, South Bend, Blue defeated St. Pius X Gold, 28-23. St. Joseph's Josh Kachmarik had 14 points. Jackson Estick had 10 points for St. Pius.

And St. Pius X Gold beat St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart, 22-16.

Hoopfest pits CYO and other teams

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) teams performed well at the 2008 Hoopfest held over the break. Coordinator Denny Jamison was pleased with the success of the tournament and that the weather cooperated for the event held at both the University of Saint Francis and Queen of Angels School.

In the eighth-grade girls' bracket, Herb Widner's St. Charles Cardinals came up just a point short of the championship, falling to Memorial Park, 36-35, in their fifth game of the tournament.

The Lady Cardinals opened with a win against St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth, 43-32. They went on to beat an undefeated Canterbury team by a narrow margin of 33-32, then fell to Memorial Park in their third game, 33-38.

In the loser's bracket the Cardinals pulled off an unprecedented feat in their CYO careers beating Gold League foe and third-place finisher, St. Jude, 41-35, which created another chance at Memorial Park to dual for the first-place ribbon. Cardinal Catherine Jenkins put her team up by one point with a clutch free-throw; but with a mere 3.9 seconds left on the clock, Memorial Park took the ball the length of the court to score on a winning shot at the buzzer. St. Charles' Alyssa Gibson led her team in scoring with double figures several of the games, while Rachel Peters paced the Cardinals with seven points in the championship.

After coaching over 30 years in Catholic schools, Widner returned to St. Charles where he got his start in 1976 to fill the varsity girls opening. With Bernie Ray at his



PROVIDED BY MARK EIFERT

The St. Vincent seventh-grade team won the boys' title for the 2008 holiday Hoopfest. The Panthers have a 9-2 record and represented the CYO well in the city showcase. St. Vincent had to battle out of the loser's bracket and beat Prince Chapman not once, but twice to win a championship. This rare feat was a first ever in the history of the Hoopfest tournament.

side, Widner has led the Cardinals to a 7-4 start. With just seven eighth graders on the roster, St. Charles picked up three seventh graders to fill in over the break.

"It was great. We made some big improvements and played some of our best games of the season during this tournament," concluded Widner. Looking ahead, the Lady Cardinals will host Memorial Park on Jan. 26.

The eighth-grade boys' title came down to Prince Chapman and Memorial Park with Prince Chapman winning, 53-44.

St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth finished 2-2 to take fourth place.

Mark Eifert's seventh-grade team from St. Vincent won the boys title for their bracket. With 12 players on his roster, Eifert's Panthers have a 9-2 record and represented the CYO well in the city showcase. The final came down to a fourth scuffle between

the Panthers and Prince Chapman. The two faced each other one week before the tournament when the Panthers won on their home court in overtime. Then in the tournament, Prince Chapman beat St. Vincent, 43-42, in the first round. St. Vincent then had to battle out of the loser's bracket and beat Prince Chapman not once, but twice to win a championship. This rare feat was a first ever in the history of the Hoopfest tournament.

Eifert, who is assisted by Todd Martin, Dane Campbell and Justin Martin this season, feels his team's strengths are defense and balance.

"We generally have 7-8 players who score every game," confirmed Eifert. The Panthers have a goal of going undefeated in the CYO league and winning the year-end tournament. Third place went to the seventh graders from St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth who finished with a 2-2 record.



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Heartwarming adaptation of Grogan's best-seller

BY HARRY FORBES

NEW YORK (CNS) — Though "Marley & Me" (Fox/Regency) is ostensibly about a dog — a big, rambunctious and unruly one at that — this heartwarming adaptation of John Grogan's best-seller is, essentially, the story of a marriage and family, and one of the most positive ones produced by Hollywood in recent years.

Deceptively plotless, its rambling pace seems designed to mirror life itself in charting the true story of John (Owen Wilson) and his wife, Jenny (Jennifer Aniston), who leave snowy Michigan at the start of the film for sunny West Palm Beach, Fla., where they each land jobs with the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*.

John's reporter friend, Sebastian (Eric Dane), recommends him to the paper's gruff but good-hearted editor, Arnie Klein (Alan Arkin). John gets the job, but soon envies his friend's plum assignments, because he himself is saddled with routine stories.

When John confides to Sebastian his apprehensions about starting a family, the latter suggests a puppy to ease the transition to



CNS PHOTO/FOX

Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston star in a scene from the movie "Marley & Me."

parenthood.

The cute little Labrador the couple adopts quickly grows into a 100-pound monster, lovable yes, but destructive and uncontrollable in the extreme. There are plenty of

scenes of Marley running amok, most of them more wince-inducing than funny.

Yet throughout all this — including a disastrous interlude at a dog obedience school run by the

martinet Ms. Kornblut (Kathleen Turner) — John and Jenny accept Marley for all his faults, their tolerance emblematic of the movie's compassionate worldview.

At work, John reluctantly accepts Arnie's suggestion that he write a human interest column — a sorry detour, John thinks, from his serious aspirations — but it develops that the columns he writes about Marley become hugely popular.

Eventually, John and Jenny decide to "try" for a baby, and she does indeed become pregnant, but loses the child. This poignant moment finally gives the film the momentum that sustains it to the end.

Another child, the first of three, will come, and Marley will remain — against all odds — an integral part of their household through the joys and vicissitudes of family life.

Director David Frankel's adaptation really captures the essence of life in a most natural way. Scott Frank and Don Roos' script is to be commended for not loading the story with melodramatic incident.

Wilson and Aniston are perfectly cast, and make a most believable and engaging couple. The affirmation of marriage and parenthood is overwhelmingly positive. The cou-

ple rarely even quarrel until Jenny becomes understandably overwhelmed with the double burdens of motherhood and a hyperactive dog, but their union is only momentarily jeopardized.

John's playboy friend, Sebastian, whom John so envies for his career success, is shown to have an ultimately empty life in a sharp comparison with the chaotic but fulfilling richness of the Grogans' life.

The bittersweet ending will speak powerfully to anyone who's ever had a deep emotional connection to a pet. At a recent press screening, a roomful of hard-bitten critics fought a losing battle with their tear ducts.

The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

Harry Forbes is director of the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. More reviews are available online at www.usccb.org/movies.

CALLED TO SERVE



Fathers Kevin Bauman and Andrew Curry with Bishop John M. D'Arcy on their ordination day, October 25, 2008

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-Pope John Paul II

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send in your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. Mail to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46856; or e-mail: fhogan@fw.diocesefwsb.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.

Trivia night
Fort Wayne — St. John's Home and School Association will have a trivia night Saturday, Jan. 17. Doors open at 6 p.m. Game begins at 7 p.m. Entry fee is \$100 per table (teams of 8-10 people). Must be 21. Bring tailgate-style snacks. Cash bar available. Cash prizes for top two finishing teams. Reservation form needed by Friday, Jan. 9, to the school office.

Hospice in need of volunteers
South Bend — The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care, Inc. will have volunteer orientation on Tuesday, Jan. 13, from 9-10 a.m. Learn about the volunteer opportunities available, requirements, and benefits of becoming a hospice volunteer with no strings attached. Contact Jackie at (574) 243-3127 or boyntonj@centerforhospice.org for information, location and registration.

Holy Name Society sponsors fish fry
New Haven — A fish fry will be held Friday, Jan. 9, at St. John the Baptist Church from 4-7 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3.50 for children 5-12. Children under 5 free.

Day of Reflection
Mishawaka — A Day of Reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is "The Master Weaver." Please bring your Bible. The cost of the day is \$15 and includes lunch. Register by Friday, Jan. 23, to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at (574) 259-5427.

Knights plan spaghetti dinner
South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a spaghetti dinner on Friday, Jan. 16, from 5 to 7 p.m. Adults \$7, children (5-12) \$3. Dinner includes spaghetti, salad, garlic toast and coffee. Carry-out available.

Casino night supports men's club
Fort Wayne — St. Vincent de Paul's men club will have a casino night Saturday, Jan. 31 from 5:30-11 p.m. at the parish hall. Notre Dame football players featured. Tickets are \$15 pre-sale or \$20 at the door and include food by the Window Garden. Refreshments available. Must be 21. Contact Todd Martin at toddm@cse-nh.com for tickets.



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Edward C. Ehinger, 91, St. Mary of the Assumption | Granger
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- January 28, 2009 ■ 6:30-8:30 p.m. ■ St. Jude and All Others
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Sunday, January 18, 2009

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne

The Reverend Robert Schulte, Main Celebrant

Mass at 5:00 p.m. • Benediction - 7:00 p.m.

Cathedral of St. Matthew, South Bend

Msgr. William Lester, Main Celebrant

Mass at 5:30 p.m. • Benediction - 7:30 p.m.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
(immediately following Mass)

The Mass will mark the 36th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision of *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion in our country. With the new Obama Administration beginning on January 20, please come and pray for a greater respect for the lives of innocent human beings from conception until natural death.

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