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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Keep track of blessings during Advent

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Advent should be a time when Christians keep track of the little blessings they receive each day, blessings that are signs of God's love, Pope Benedict XVI suggested.

"To keep a kind of 'inner diary' of this love would be a beautiful and healthy task," the pope said Nov. 28 as he celebrated evening prayer to mark the beginning of Advent.

God enters the life of each and every person, Pope Benedict said.

But in daily life, most people seem "to have little time for the Lord and little time even for ourselves. One ends up being absorbed in doing things," he said.

Taking a little time each day to recognize signs of God's love reminds people that "God is here; he has not withdrawn from the world; he has not left us alone," the pope said.

Pope Benedict said that if people live each day with their eyes open to the signs of God's presence, they will be filled with joy as they await the final coming of the Lord.

The pope spoke about waiting and about Advent hope during his noon Angelus address Nov. 29.

"The contemporary world needs hope above all; people living in developing countries need it, but those in economically advanced countries do, too," he said.

"Seeing so many false certainties fail, we become aware that we need a hope we can trust in and that is found only in Christ," the pope said. "Anyone yearning for freedom, for justice and for peace can stand tall and raise their heads, because in Christ freedom is near."

During the evening prayer service Nov. 28, the pope used his new pastoral staff, replacing a similar one that had been used by Pope Pius IX.

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CNS PHOTO/ALESSIA PIERDOMENICO, REUTERS

Pope Benedict XVI waves while holding his new pastoral staff after celebrating evening prayer Nov. 28 in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican to mark the beginning of Advent. The new staff is a gift from a Rome-based Catholic fraternal organization; it is 6 feet tall and weighs 5.5 pounds.

YEAR of our PRIESTS

BY MARK WEBER



FATHER TOM SHOEMAKER

The lingering thought was like a raspberry seed stuck in a tight place between the molars, and although

the owner of the molars was a dentist who probed, flossed and flicked his tongue at the proverbial seed, it wouldn't go away.

YEAR OF, PAGE 5

Catholic-Lutheran Advent Vesper Service at St. Peter's

BY DEB WAGNER

FORT WAYNE — The Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Committee sponsored the eighth annual Catholic-Lutheran Advent Vesper Service of Light held this year at St. Peter Catholic Church on Nov. 19, the first Sunday of Advent. Clergy from both communities participated in the procession and a combined adult choir comprised of area Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations provided beautiful music.

Catholics and Lutherans alike came to pray, sing and worship together on the dreary Sunday afternoon. Dan Krach, a parishioner of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, has

attended the vesper service each year and says that he enjoys starting the Advent season with the ecumenical service. Mary Kay Matasky, sacramental coordinator at St. Mary Church, previously attended the Catholic-Lutheran Vesper Service with a friend who attended Trinity Lutheran Church and now lives in Toledo. Matasky said, "I told her that I would come and pray for her today."

Presiding over the service were Bishop John M. D'Arcy and Rev. Rudy Mueller, assistant to Bishop James R. Stuck on the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bishop Stuck

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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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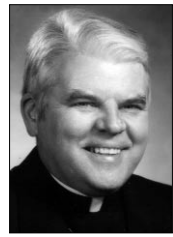
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At the heart of the ecumenical movement is prayer together



NEWS & NOTES

BISHOP JOHN M. D'ARCY

Catholic-Lutheran prayer together: Holy and beautiful, but painful, too

We gathered in the beloved old St. Peter Parish, Fort Wayne, for the annual vesper service between Catholics and Lutherans. It all started many years ago, when we had ecumenical conversations with the two Lutheran communities (Missouri Synod and also the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America). The dialogues were on marriage, prayer, the joint declaration of Catholics and Lutherans on justification, and the Eucharist. I remember them with appreciation. We usually had a Lutheran pastor and a Catholic priest who gave a talk, and there would be some discussion.

It has developed into a prayer service each Advent, and we alternate between a Catholic and a Lutheran church.

This year, my partner in ecumenism, Bishop James Stuck, had emergency surgery and could not be with us. He is a stalwart Lutheran pastor, and we dearly missed him.

Spiritual ecumenism, prayer together, is at the heart of the ecumenical movement.

But a tinge of sadness. Bishop Stuck was replaced by Pastor Rudy Mueller, one of his associates; and beforehand, we spoke about the recent decision in the Lutheran community. He explained to me that it was a nationwide decision, a decision of ELCA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. It seems they have given approval that those involved in life-long homosexual unions, whether male or female, may be ordained to the Lutheran pastorate.

He also said it has caused division among the Lutheran communities.

As graciously as I could, I indicated in my remarks that this was a setback to our efforts towards full communion. Pastor Mueller told me it might not have passed in every congregation in every synod, but it did pass nationwide. All relationships must be based on faith.

I spoke about it with sadness and promised my prayers for the Lutheran community.

The faith we share is rooted in the Scriptures, and the biblical teaching on homosexuality is clear (cf. Gen 19:1-29; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9). The teaching of the Catholic Church has always been clear on this matter. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says of homosexual unions: "Under no circumstances can they be approved." (ccc 2358).

Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran community in this painful moment for them.

Two important parishes

I continue with liturgical installations of pastors, and this past weekend it was first to Blessed Sacrament, Albion, on Saturday evening, and Sunday to Immaculate Conception, Kendallville.

Blessed Sacrament, Albion, was one of the first parishes I visited when I came. Traditionally, they were cared for by Oblates of

Mary Immaculate from Lowell, Mass. Two parishes were linked together, St. Patrick's, Ligonier, and Blessed Sacrament, Albion. Sadly, in recent years, Albion has had a very difficult time with priests from overseas, one after another, and none of them staying too long.

Also, the situation, which must go back 40 to 50 years with the two parishes under one pastor, is no longer as good a fit as it once was. St. Patrick's, Ligonier, is almost entirely Spanish speaking. Recently, the pastor, Father Wilson Corzo, a native of Colombia, has given excellent leadership in St. Patrick's, but that has become in itself a very demanding parish.

Albion, finally, is separated and has a full-time pastor, Father Lourdino Fernandes, a native of India. The people were delighted now to have daily Mass and a full-time residential pastor. I have been there many times over the years. I especially appreciate the efforts of Mike and Sue Curtis, and so many other devoted lay people to keep the parish together and strong. What a joy to be with them on a lovely Saturday evening and follow it up with some cherry pie. Father Dino, as he is affectionately called, will serve well as he has wherever he has been stationed.

Immaculate Conception, Kendallville

It is not often that you find a small town parish with signs all around the property welcoming the new pastor and with his picture, but that was the way it was as I arrived on Sunday morning at Immaculate Conception, Kendallville. There is great joy and delight with Father Jim Stoyle — delight on his part and on the part of the people. I got to know Father Jim much better because of the five years he served with the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Already, he has begun evening presentations on Scripture and church teaching; and it was a joy to be there with him in this lovely small town church.

One young man, currently a junior in high school and a parishioner in Albion, told me he hopes to enter the seminary after graduation. I was able to spend a few minutes with him, and he said that when he saw how very difficult it was for that parish without a full-time pastor, he began in his prayer to seek help from God about becoming a priest.

About Thanksgiving Day

For the 25th time, after celebrating the 9 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, I attended the Thanksgiving dinner at St. Mary's Soup Kitchen. Crowds larger than ever. They expect to serve 350, and then another 1,000 or more, by bringing the dinners to their homes.

How wonderful to see Hal and Andrea Thomas cooking in the kitchen, as they have done for many years, beginning with the beloved Father Tom O'Connor.

About our new bishop

He plays tennis, and I am told plays it very well. While here, he spoke with Msgr. Bob Schulte about buying a bicycle. Msgr. Bob rides a bike regularly and was heard telling the bishop about the bicycle path. Of course, this is not like a certain pastor who hangs around in the Granger area, who has been known to do 60-80 miles a day up through Michigan over steep hills, and ride ancient and holy trails in Spain. But the new bishop is both a tennis player and a cyclist. He is very devoted to Our Lady and to prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. He has experience in ecumenism.

He believes strongly in youth ministry as a source of vocation to the priesthood and the consecrated life, but also to the vocation of Christian marriage. He understands seminaries very well, and he does his own cooking and I think his own shopping as well. Ah, but he is a New York Yankee fan. He says it goes back to his appreciation of the great Mickey Mantle. A likely excuse. Well, no one is perfect. We have begun to prepare an office for him in the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center and a place to live as well. He will be a gift for our diocese.

Center for the Homeless

When I was an auxiliary bishop in Lowell, Mass., I was involved with the beginning of a center for the homeless under the title of St. Vincent House. Early on, I read about the need for such a center here. Sam Talarico, a teacher at St. Jude Parish and at that time on the city council, spoke about this need. I sent Sam, Father Tom O'Connor and two women from Saint Mary Parish, to Lowell. When they returned, we started Vincent House. It is a center for homeless families and has grown into Vincent Village where over 500 families have been sent. Through the generous help of John Tippmann and many others, including Otto and Jane Bonahoom, and Rev. Richard Frazier — a now retired Lutheran pastor, this wonderful program has been a blessing for the city of Fort Wayne; and I am scheduled to participate this week in its 20th anniversary. It now includes over 30 homes where people live after leaving Vincent House. These homes have been transformed, often by volunteers, and the whole area has been improved.

I am also preparing to dedicate the new Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center in Mishawaka.

How about the Luers Knights

The day after Thanksgiving, I was off to Bishop Luers High School to celebrate Mass for the football team and their families. Father Dave Ruppert who was doing excellent work at Luers as chaplain, teacher and member of the board, and also a wonderful pastor at St. Therese Parish, Waynedale, concelebrated with me.

This is a young Luers team. They lost five games in the regular season. It was thought that they would have no chance at a state title this year. To the surprise of everyone, they fought through the playoffs. I watched on television, and I think it was one of the best high school football games I have ever seen. Trailing 17 to 7, they came back, held the Monrovia Bulldogs with their powerful running game scoreless in the second half, and pulled it out to 24 to 20.

They have been to the state final 12 times in football, and have won eight. Congratulations to Mary Keefer, Matt Lindsay and his excellent staff. The staff consists almost entirely of former players at Luers.

Even as my days here as bishop dwindle down to a precious few, they are filled with joy. I look forward this week for the 25th time to celebrating our patronal feast, the feast of the Immaculate Conception at our Cathedral dedicated in her honor. I am also looking forward to a Day of Recollection with our priests on Dec. 10, and later an evening prayer service at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in honor of our new monsignors and Knight of St. Gregory. All are welcome.

See you all next week.

Charlie Weis will not be retained as Notre Dame football coach

Announcement made Monday afternoon by university director of athletics Jack Swarbrick

NOTRE DAME — University of Notre Dame head football coach CuUniversity director of athletics Jack Swarbrick announced Monday.

"We have great expectations for our football program, and we have not been able to meet those expectations," Swarbrick said. "As an alumnus, Charlie understands those goals and expectations better than most, and he's as disappointed as anyone that we have not achieved the desired results."

Swarbrick recommended the dismissal Sunday night to Notre Dame's president, Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins.

"We have established an evaluation process for all of our athletic programs that, in the end,



CNS PHOTO BY MICHAEL BENNETT, LIGHTHOUSE IMAGING

Charlie Weis is shown at a 2004 press conference as he was named head football coach of the University of Notre Dame.

results in a recommendation from Jack to me," Father Jenkins said. "I accepted Jack's decision and look forward to working with him on selecting a new head football coach who is the very best choice

possible for the university and especially for our student-athletes.

"I am most appreciative to Coach Weis for his service to Notre Dame and our community. He and his family have my prayers and best wishes."

Weis spent five seasons as Irish head coach from 2005-09, with his teams achieving consecutive records of 9-3 (Fiesta Bowl appearance) in '05, 10-3 (Sugar Bowl appearance), 3-9, 7-6 (Hawaii Bowl victory) and 6-6 in '09 — for an overall 35-27 mark (.564).

Swarbrick announced that Rob Ianello, the Irish assistant head coach/offense, wide receivers coach and recruiting coordinator, will assume responsibility for football operations until a new coach is hired. Ianello has spent the past five seasons on the Notre Dame staff and previously was part of football staffs at Wisconsin (1990-93, 2003-2004), Arizona (1994-2002) and Alabama (1987-89).

Pope appeals for rights of migrant and refugee children

BY SARAH DELANEY

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI urged governments and international organizations to give special attention to the rights of child immigrants, who often are victims of exploitation and abandonment.

Minors forced to immigrate for reasons of poverty, violence or hunger are the most vulnerable, he said.

The pope made the comments in his annual message for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees, which will be celebrated Jan. 17 in most countries. The papal text was released at the Vatican Nov. 27.

The pope said host countries must create policies that protect child immigrants and help them integrate into society. These children should enjoy basic rights such as going to school and being able to work legally, he added.

"I warmly hope that proper attention will be given to minor migrants who need a social environment that permits and fosters their physical, cultural, spiritual and moral development," he said.

Despite increased awareness of the need to help child immigrants, the pope said, "many are left to fend for themselves and, in various ways, face the risk of exploitation."

Pope Benedict referred to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes children's "fundamental

rights as equal to the rights of adults." But "unfortunately this does not always happen in practice," he said.

The pope's message was presented at a Vatican press conference by Archbishop Antonio Maria Veglio, president of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers; Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, secretary of the council; and Msgr. Novatus Rugambwa, undersecretary of the council.

Archbishop Veglio said children come to be migrants in different ways: the lucky ones are accompanied by their parents or a guardian. Others are sent alone, either to save them from a desperate situation in their home countries or to work to send money back to their families.

"This becomes a heavy psychological burden for a child who doesn't want to disappoint them," he said. The child is then "willing to suffer injustice, violence and mistreatment to obtain a worker's permit."

Archbishop Veglio pointed out that international convention prohibits the repatriation of minors, "but we know that that right, like many others, is not respected."

Archbishop Marchetto said internationally established rights for migrant minors to have access to school, health care, a home and food are often not respected in the host countries. Many children live isolated lives, staying in refugee camps or immigration centers. Often they have no money, he

said.

In many countries "there is a great divide between the stated objectives and real daily practice," he said, and many people still react to immigrants in their countries with prejudice.

"This behavior of discrimination, xenophobia and even racism must be addressed with policies aimed at protecting and reinforcing the rights of refugees," he said.

Msgr. Rugambwa emphasized the need for real educational opportunities for the children of immigrants, or minors who migrate alone, and the obligation to reject policies that segregate these children or don't encourage realistic integration into the school system.

Meanwhile, the Vatican's representative to United Nations agencies based in Geneva said the increase in illegal global migration shows that so far efforts to manage immigration have not worked.

Speaking Nov. 25 to the International Organization for Migration, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi said data from the United Nations and individual governments show that 15 to 20 percent of all immigration is illegal, amounting to 30 million to 40 million people.

Countries on every continent are trying to deal with illegal immigration. He called it "a reality that will remain with us as long as insecurity due to environmental degradation, violations of human rights, wars and lack of opportunity persist."

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM BISHOP JOHN M. D'ARCY

Prayer service honors recipients seven new monsignors, professor

Bishop D'Arcy has announced that there will be a service of evening prayer at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m. in honor of the seven priests and one Notre Dame professor who have received papal honors. All are welcome. It is especially to be hoped that every parish will be well represented. A reception will follow at the Grand Wayne Center.

Those honored include the following: Msgr. Robert Schulte, Msgr. Bruce Piechocki, Msgr. Bernard Galic, Msgr. Michael Heintz, Msgr. William Schooler, Msgr. John Kuzmich, Msgr. Raymond Balzer and Knight of St. Gregory, Professor John Cavadini.



DEB WAGNER

Catholics and Lutherans join for an ecumenical Advent vespers prayer service at St. Peter's Church in Fort Wayne.

VESPERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was unable to attend due to a recent hospitalization.

The first reading for the vesper service was from Isaiah, where on that day the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him where justice will prevail and all will live in peace. The second reading was from 2 Peter, which encourages lives of holiness and devotion.

Pastor Mueller commented, "Until we can celebrate the Eucharist together, we have to be Eucharist to one another by reaching out to one another." He also noted that when there is a divergence in beliefs, then Christ chooses current day believers to carry on the mission and God promises in sacred Scripture that divisions will cease.

Bishop D'Arcy remarked that, as he approaches retirement, the relationship between the Evangelical Lutherans and Catholics over the years "has been a source of great joy." He said that Lutherans and Catholics have mutual agreement on several issues and only a few disagreements, specifically marriage and different aspects of prayer.

Bishop D'Arcy recalled that Bishop Stuck and he walked the

streets of Auburn to bring the two faith communities together. He reminded those in attendance that both denominations proclaimed the same Scriptures, both recited the Apostle's Creed and engaged in prayer together. The two shepherds agreed that, "We will all be singing and praying in heaven. We won't be asking where we came from."

Bishop D'Arcy spoke of the wedding feast at Cana and suggested that Mary's advice to "Do whatever he tells you," should be heard by Lutherans and Catholics alike. He encouraged believers to "pray for the Light to hear his word and to give themselves as a gift to others in God's name."

Pastor Mueller addressed the congregation by saying that he remembers the area surrounding St. Peter Catholic Church because he grandparents lived just a few blocks from there. He went on to say that since Bishop Stuck has decided not to continue for another six-year term as bishop, he would want to thank Bishop D'Arcy and those present for the relationship established and the memories given him through this union of the two denominations. Bishop Stuck regards Bishop D'Arcy as "a good friend and partner in ministry."

Refreshments and fellowship followed the vespers service in the parish hall.

Youths converge on Kansas City to celebrate their faith

BY KEVIN KELLY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (CNS) — They clogged downtown streets, jammed restaurants, took up hotel rooms, ate up parking spaces and generally inconvenienced downtown Kansas City.

But the nearly 21,000 teens and their 3,000 adult chaperones and local volunteers also gave the city a three-day gift of faith.

They came to bring themselves closer to Christ. By the time they left the 2009 National Catholic Youth Conference Nov. 19-21, they showed Kansas City — and the world watching live on the Internet — what happens when Jesus Christ pours out of the hearts of thousands of believers.

The theme of the conference was “Christ Reigns.” It was co-hosted by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kan.

Participants heard from keynote speakers, were entertained by various musical artists and attended

dozens of workshops on such issues as social justice, the Bible, prayer, spirituality and social networking.

They spent time at a special conference theme park called the Reign Forest, a 200,000-square-foot interactive venue with more than 150 exhibits.

Mass was offered daily, and there were opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation, eucharistic adoration, meditation, recitation of the rosary, prayer through music and a labyrinth experience.

Ernie Boehner, in charge of the army of 1,100 adult volunteers whose job it was to make the conference run smoothly and safely, smiled through a face that could barely hide the exhaustion of days that began before dawn and ended after midnight.

“When you look at all these kids you don’t see all the politics that adults argue about,” Boehner told *The Catholic Key*, newspaper of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. “You just think about what

a great foundation this church has for the future in these young people.”

Just how well-behaved can thousands of teenagers be? Consider opening night, when nearly 20,000 of them, not knowing there was another entrance on the other side of the 20,000-seat Sprint Center, massed early at one entrance and waited for two hours for the doors to open and to undergo security checks of backpacks and purses.

The jam-up could have seemed interminable, but the youths started the conference a bit early outside the arena. They began meeting each other, partying and making new friends with other teens from other parts of the country.

“It’s a lot different than Altamont, Kan.,” said Seth Blackburn, who came with a group from Mother of God Parish in Oswego, Kan., in the southeast corner of the state. “It’s incomprehensible to me. It’s mind-blowing.”

A group from the Archdiocese



CNS PHOTO/JOE CORY, CATHOLIC KEY

Young people cheer during the closing Mass Nov. 19 at the 2009 National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City, Mo. Nearly 21,000 teens from across the U.S., 3,000 adult chaperones and local volunteers attended the Nov. 19-21 event.

of Chicago began dancing with a group of umbrella-wielding, bead-wearing teens from the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

“Mardi Gras!” said Ryan Erhardt. “We are young, spirited New Orleans Catholics, and we came to accept and spread God’s message.”

Bob McCarty, executive director of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry, said that three weeks before the conference began, registration had already exceeded the capacity of the main hall, the Sprint Center, where all the general sessions were scheduled.

That left organizers scrambling to prepare a “satellite” site for the overflow in the grand ballroom of the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center, with its own master of ceremonies. Both sites were linked with big screen, high-definition, closed-circuit television.

It worked so well that the masters of ceremonies at each site, musicians Steve Agrisano at Sprint and Jesse Manibusan at Bartle, were able to sing duets together across downtown Kansas City.

“We may be in two places, but we are one body in Christ,” Manibusan told audiences in both places by the TV linkup.

Groups of teens were rotated from both sites so that no group was in the Bartle ballroom for more than one general session.

For many of the teens, just showing up in Kansas City was a physical ordeal. They came from all corners of the continental United States, plus Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. One delegation even came from a military base school in Japan, streaming their reports back to the Land of the Rising Sun via the Internet.

Those who lived closer to an ocean were more likely to book an airline flight. But others endured hours on buses.

Andrew Finch and his peers from Fife Lake, Mich., in the Diocese of Gaylord, rode 13 hours. But it was worth it, he said.

“This is ridiculous,” Finch said as he joined the party outside the Sprint Center on opening night. “This is 20 times more people in my whole school.”

“It’s unbelievable,” said Hannah Miller, a member of St. Mary’s Parish in Albany, Ore., who came by plane.

“The speakers are just so amazing, and you learn so much about faith and how to share it,” she said. “There are just so many Catholic teens here and we all believe the same thing.”

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YEAR *of* PRIESTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dr. Thomas Shoemaker, 27, and practicing dentistry, began to wonder if the future meant that he would be digging an endless root canal or if there was something bigger he should be doing with his life. When the options included the priesthood, other possibilities on the list were scratched and he entered the seminary at Brighton, Mass., and was ordained Nov. 10, 1990.

After 19 years as a priest, Father Shoemaker, now pastor of St. Jude Parish in Fort Wayne, says, "I don't think that I could have found anything bigger to do with my life. A priest baptizes babies, pronouncing them children of God. A priest listens to peoples' sins and offers the prayer of absolution. A priest

prays with those who are dying, asking the saints to welcome them to the kingdom. And a priest stands at the altar, saying the words of Christ, as the mystery of salvation revolves around that act. I can't imagine anything bigger a person could do in life."

Father Shoemaker has plenty of hobbies outside of his priestly ministry. He enjoys gardening, carpentry, painting and reading. He also follows an irresistible urge to travel to offbeat destinations that interest him and has a passport stamped in Mongolia, Antarctica, Tibet, Easter Island, Iceland, Bulgaria and other odd locations.

And so this Midwestern pastor, this world traveler who at one time looked a person in the eye and said, "Open wide," now expands the phrase to "Open wide the doors to Christ."

ADVENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The new staff with a cross on top is a gift from a Rome-based Catholic fraternal organization; it is 6 feet tall and weighs 5.5 pounds. The paschal lamb, a symbol of the risen Christ, is in the center of the front of the cross and the four Gospel writers

— Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — are represented on its four points.

The Chi Rho — the X and the P from the first letters of Christ's name in Greek — are in the center of the back of the cross and the four points feature doctors of the church from the West and the East: Sts. Augustine and Ambrose and Sts. Athanasius and John Chrysostom. A ring around the base of the cross is inscribed with Pope Benedict's name.

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Swiss bishops criticize country's ban on construction of minarets

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The bishops of Switzerland said the country's ban on the construction of minarets, the Muslim prayer towers, represents an obstacle to inter-religious harmony. The ban aggravates interfaith tensions and could have negative repercussions on Christian minorities in Muslim countries, the bishops said in a statement Nov. 29. The prohibition was adopted by Swiss voters in a referendum that passed with a 58 percent majority. There are about 150 mosques in Switzerland serving 400,000 Muslims; only four have minarets and, unlike in Islamic countries, they are not used to call Muslims to prayer. The bishops said the referendum campaign, promoted by right-wing parties, had used exaggeration and caricature, and demonstrated that "religious peace does not operate by itself and always needs to be defended." "The decision of the people represents an obstacle and a great challenge on the path of integration in dialogue and mutual respect," the bishops said. Banning the building of minarets "increases the problems of coexistence between religions and cultures," they said. The bishops said the measure "will not help the Christians oppressed and persecuted in Islamic countries, but will weaken the credibility of their commitment in these countries." Swiss authorities said after the vote that the four existing minarets would be allowed to stand, and that there was no ban on the construction of new mosques.

Obama creates new bioethics commission, appoints top officials

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Barack Obama has established a new Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues and named two university presidents as its top officials. The commission is the successor to the President's Council on Bioethics created by President George W. Bush in 2001 and dissolved by Obama's executive order in June. Obama named Amy Gutmann, a political scientist who has served as president of the University of Pennsylvania since 2004, to chair the commission and James W. Wagner, an engineer who has been president of Emory University in Atlanta since 2003, as vice chairman. The commission will be made up of "not more than 13 members appointed by the president, drawn from the fields of bioethics, science, medicine, technology, engineering, law, philosophy, theology, or other areas of the humanities or social sciences," according to the Nov. 24 executive order creating the panel. The White House did not indicate when Obama would appoint other commission members. Members are to serve for two-year terms and be eligible for reappointment.

NEWS BRIEFS

MINNESOTA BOY CURED OF CANCER POSES WITH FAMILY



CNS PHOTO/JIM BOVEN, CATHOLIC SPIRIT

Joey Schwartz, 14, of Savage, Minn., poses in late September with mother Melinda, twin brother Derek and father Paul. In March 2008, Joey was diagnosed with midline carcinoma after having a walnut-size tumor removed from his chest. "This kind of cancer is so rare that, by all accounts, Joey's was the 14th case worldwide," said his father, Paul Schwartz. "It has been classified as highly lethal and aggressive." Joey's family says prayers to Blessed Francis X. Seelos led to the cure of his cancer. According to his doctor, Joey is now cancer-free and his family is eager to share the story of the apparent miracle.

Report on clergy abuse in Dublin church leads to calls for more action

DUBLIN, Ireland (CNS) — A report detailing failures of church leaders' handling of sex abuse cases in the Archdiocese of Dublin has resulted in calls for bishops' resignations and further investigations and prosecution. "The Dublin Archdiocese's preoccupations in dealing with cases of child sexual abuse, at least until the mid-1990s, were the maintenance of secrecy, the avoidance of scandal, the protection of the reputation of the church, and the preservation of its assets," said the report by the independent Commission of Investigation, headed by Judge Yvonne Murphy. "All other considerations, including the welfare of children and justice for victims, were subordinated to these priorities. The archdiocese did not implement its own canon law rules and did its best to avoid any application of the law of the state." The report said church officials and police colluded in covering up instances of child sexual abuse by clergy. The commission investigated the period from January 1975 to May 2004, during which time there were four Dublin archbishops: the late John Charles McQuaid, Dermot J. Ryan

and Kevin McNamara and Cardinal Desmond Connell, who retired in 2004 and is now 83. The report emphasized that the commission was established not to determine where child sexual abuse took place "but rather to record the manner in which complaints were dealt with by church and state authorities."

Vatican announces new round of Catholic-Anglican talks

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The formal theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion will continue and will focus on the relationship between the local church and the universal church, the Vatican announced. This third phase of work by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission "will deal with fundamental questions regarding the church as communion local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal church comes to discern right ethical teaching," said a Vatican announcement published Nov. 28. The announcement was made one week after Pope Benedict XVI and Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, met at the Vatican.

The question of the relationship of the local church to the universal church has been the subject of debate both within the Catholic Church and especially in the Anglican Communion, primarily as it relates to the authority of local bishops and the authority of local churches to make decisions on matters of church practice and on moral issues.

Pro-lifers vow to fight new requirements imposed on centers

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Pro-life leaders are vowing to fight a measure passed Nov. 23 by the Baltimore City Council that imposes new requirements on four pregnancy resource centers in the city. The bill, approved in a 12-3 vote, requires pro-life pregnancy centers to post signs stating that they do not provide abortion or birth control. Baltimore Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien had campaigned against the bill, arguing that it unfairly singles out pro-life centers for harassment. "To say I'm disappointed is too mild," said Nancy Paltell, associate director for the respect life department of the Maryland Catholic Conference. "I'm disgusted that lobbying organizations like

Planned Parenthood and NARAL hold such power over a governmental body like the City Council." Paltell was holding out hope that Mayor Sheila Dixon will veto the bill, and she urged pro-life supporters to let the mayor know they oppose the measure.

Pope urges Catholic-Orthodox cooperation in aid, ecology

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While Catholics and Orthodox struggle to come to an understanding of the role of the pope in the life of the church and other issues still dividing them, they must reach out together to help hurting people and a hurting planet, Pope Benedict XVI said. Pope Benedict made his comments in a letter to Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople on the feast of St. Andrew, the patron saint of the patriarchate. The letter was delivered by Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, who led a Vatican delegation to the Orthodox celebration of the Nov. 30 feast day in Istanbul, Turkey. The joint international commission for Catholic-Orthodox dialogue has been studying issues related to papal authority, looking first at how the bishop of Rome exercised his ministry in the united Christian church of the first millennium.

Chaldean church buildings targeted in bombings in Mosul, Iraq

LONDON (CNS) — A Chaldean Catholic church, rectory and convent in the northern Iraq city of Mosul were bombed in two separate incidents in late November, but no one was injured. Explosives were detonated inside St. Ephrem's Church Nov. 26, and the building was reduced to a "blackened shell," said a Nov. 27 statement by the British branch of Aid to the Church in Need, a charity working to help persecuted Christians around the world. It said the church rectory also was attacked. St. Ephrem's pastor, Father Youhanna Jajeka, was not in either building at the time of the attacks, the statement said. Hours later a bomb was thrown at St. Theresa's Convent in New Mosul, west of the city. At least five Dominican sisters who were in the complex at the time of the attack escaped unharmed. Most of the nuns have been transferred to another Dominican convent in a nearby village. A series of church bombings in Mosul in July left at least four dead and more than 30 injured. A flare-up in violence in October 2008 claimed the lives of 13 Christians and forced thousands to flee the city. In February 2008 Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahho of Mosul, Iraq, was kidnapped, and his driver and two bodyguards were killed. Two weeks later his body was recovered after kidnappers revealed where it was buried.

Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College support climate control with bells

NOTRE DAME — The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will be held on Dec. 7-18. It is hoped that some essential decisions will be made at this session to reduce carbon output, as it contributes significantly to climate change and dramatically affects many of the world's most vulnerable populations.

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Control and Caritas Internationalis urges "supporters of climate change to organize bell-ringing at 3 p.m. on Dec. 13. This is the time when climate negotiators in Denmark will be making crucial decisions about commitments to curb greenhouse gases and contributions to help protect those most threatened by climate change. Churches, mosques, temples and all houses of worship are invited to ring bells 350 times at that hour (350 parts per million of CO2 is considered by many a safe upper limit of greenhouse gases)."

Church bells on Holy Cross, Notre Dame and Saint Mary's campuses will ring at 3 p.m. on Dec. 13, in solidarity with these efforts. All parishes in the diocese are invited to join in this effort by arranging to ring bells at that time.

Pope Benedict XVI offers in "Caritas In Veritate, 50," that "We must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. This means being committed to making joint decisions ... aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God."

Father Mark Poorman to step down as student affairs vice president

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross Father Mark L. Poorman will be stepping down after 11 years as vice president for student affairs at the University of Notre Dame, to return to the theology faculty, effective June 30. He will be succeeded by Holy Cross Father Thomas P. Doyle, the executive vice president at the University of Portland.

Lindenwood holds New Year's Eve retreat

DONALDSON — Registrations are now being taken for the New Year's Eve retreat entitled "Praying with Life's Pressing Questions," which will offer a time of solitude, reflection, sharing and celebration. Bring a snack to share and join this New Year's celebration. Facilitator will be Poor Handmaid of Jesus Christ Sister Christine Styka, who has been a teacher for over 20 years, a

AROUND THE DIOCESE

BISHOP D'ARCY ATTENDS SOUP KITCHEN'S THANKSGIVING FEAST



MARK WEBER

Antonio King, a member of Free Love Baptist Church in Fort Wayne and a cook at St. Mary's Soup Kitchen for the Thanksgiving feast, poses with Bishop John M. D'Arcy who visited with soup kitchen volunteers and those enjoying the dinner. The soup kitchen served 1,600 Thanksgiving meals on Nov. 26. The kitchen now provides 35,000 lunches per month. Father Phillip Widman led the St. Mary Parish Prayer and blessing at the dinner.

pastoral associate and director of religious education for 10 years. She has previously led days of prayer at John XXIII Center in Hartford City. Registration deadline is Monday, Dec. 21. Fee of \$45 includes private room and breakfast. For information or to register, contact Lindenwood at (574) 935-1763 weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Expansion means new name for Notre Dame nonprofit program

NOTRE DAME — For more than 50 years, the University of Notre Dame has served the nonprofit industry by developing exemplary leaders through a specialized graduate business degree, the Master of Nonprofit Administration. Now the university is adding executive education to the nonprofit service mix offered by the Mendoza College of Business.

The expanded unit will be known as Nonprofit Professional Development. It comprises two arms of nonprofit education — the non-degree Nonprofit Executive Programs (NEP) and the Master of Nonprofit Administration (MNA) degree.

The Notre Dame MNA, estab-

lished in 1954, enrolls about 30 students annually and will continue to be the premier nonprofit program at the Mendoza College of Business, Harvey said. The MNA is designed to allow business professionals to complete the degree without leaving their jobs. It requires 42 credit hours taken during summer sessions on campus and through e-learning courses offered online during the fall and spring semesters.

More recently, the Notre Dame program has experienced an increased demand for executive programs, as nonprofit organizations face an increasingly complex service environment.

The NEPs include annual certificate education for national associations such as the Volunteers of America, the National Human Services Assembly, and Catholic Charities USA. In addition, due in part to a \$10 million foundation grant, the program provides other tailored educational offerings for both national and local communities. One of the national efforts, "Leaders in Transition," is held annually on the Notre Dame campus. It provides career training for returning Peace Corps and other service volunteers as they transition to other employment.

For information about Nonprofit

Executive Programs, contact the director, Marc Hardy, at (574) 631-1087 or mhardy@nd.edu. To learn more about the Master of Nonprofit degree, contact the program manager, Kimberly Brennan, at (574) 631-3639 or kbrenna1@nd.edu.

Web site offers resources for celebrating Advent, Christmas seasons

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Suggestions for daily prayer, reading, reflection and action throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons and other resources are part of a new Web site created by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The site, www.usccb.org/advent, features interactive online calendars with a menu of resources for each day of Advent, which began Nov. 29, and the Christmas season, which ends Jan. 10 with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Featured throughout the calendars are video clips of USCCB members and staff discussing their favorite Old Testament stories, passages and characters.

The site includes Scripture resources focusing on the Old Testament; recommendations on holiday-themed movies from the USCCB's Office for Film &

Broadcasting; selections from the USCCB publication "Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers"; and suggestions for remembering the needs of immigrants and the poor throughout Advent and Christmas.

Also available are printable calendars in English and Spanish with ideas for daily family activities to mark the two seasons.

The site is decorated with photos of sanctuaries adorned for Advent and Christmas from across the country, including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. There also are photos of seasonal events from several Catholic dioceses.

The U.S. bishops' Department of Communications created the site with funding from the Catholic Communication Campaign.

St. Vincent art club add creations to 2009 Festival of Gingerbread

FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent de Paul School's art club will have two creative structures displayed at the 2009 Festival of Gingerbread. The sixth-grade students made a "Starbucks" gingerbread house that lights up and has a drive through with an attendant. The seventh and eighth graders created a historical rendition of St. Vincent's old church.

The 2009 Festival of Gingerbread is on display at the History Center downtown on Berry Street, from Wednesday, Nov. 25 through Sunday, Dec. 13. On Tuesday, Dec. 1, the History Center is offering free admission from 5-9 p.m.

Lampen Lecture Series explores sustainability

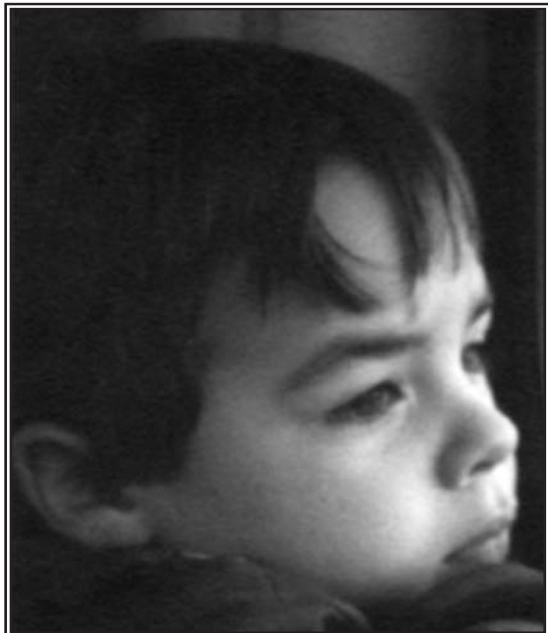
DONALDSON — Ancilla College President Dr. Ron May was the guest speaker for the latest edition of the Lampen Lecture Series, held at the PHJC Ministry Center in Donaldson.

His presentation, "Sustainability: What Can I Do," addressed various ways the resources of the earth can be preserved and carbon footprints reduced.

May's presentation addressed numerous areas, including what people eat, how they dispose of unwanted items, what they purchase, and how they use electricity — just to name a few. Throughout the presentation, May offered simple suggestions of how each person could minimize the use of resources without impacting the general comfort of their daily lives.

"The educational program provided by Ancilla College emphasizes critical thinking, creative problem solving and cultural understanding along with a commitment to social justice in the world," said May. "We try to prepare our students for life in the fast-changing world. We also try to foster a commitment to economic, social and environmental sustainability in our students, faculty and staff."

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Being the face of Christ: The future of Catholic education at St. Vincent School

FORT WAYNE — The Development Committee of St. Vincent de Paul School, Fort Wayne, has established a new program that was introduced at a dinner event in October, as a group of parishioners gathered to learn about the school's vision to "Build a Community in Christ for Today and Tomorrow." The goal is to fully introduce the program to as many parishioners as possible over the next year.

One objective is to keep tuition affordable to make a Catholic education available for all families. Msgr. John Kuzmich, pastor, recently said, "One of my biggest concerns is that our school be protected from the unpredictable changes of the economy and that the quality of its academic programs be preserved. With the current state of the economy and the uncertainty of the future, it is very important that we take serious steps now to protect our school. We cannot always count on the generous subsidy that the school currently receives from the parish, and we need to keep tuition as low as possible, so we are turning to F.A.C.E. as a third source of funding the operation of the school."

Msgr. Kuzmich, along with the parish finance council, is strongly committed to this effort and its vision.

Friends and Ambassadors of Catholic Education (F.A.C.E) is an endowment initiative planned and organized by Development Director Linda McCarthy and members of the school development committee. F.A.C.E. is comprised of a group of benefactors who believe strongly in Catholic education and the school vision.



McCarthy said, "This effort combines several years of planning and support by many people in leadership roles at our church. We are blessed to have many active, devoted families here, along with the leadership of Msgr.

John, who want to protect the future of our school".

People who join F.A.C.E. believe in sharing the gifts God has given to them by giving financially to one of the several school endowment funds. Individual families may contribute through a wide-range of gifting options that include a general endowment fund and other scholarship and tuition assistance funds.

Donors can make gifts of cash or securities, arrange a bequest through a will or estate, or make a pledge over a several year period. Financial support from benefactors helps the school keep tuition affordable for all families and is an investment in preserving the school's future. Growth and earnings from the school's endowment funds provides an unending source of income ensuring its continuance for generations to come.

Donors will be recognized. Members of F.A.C.E. will be remembered through student prayers, will be honored at an annual Mass and brunch and will receive regular information about school plans, in the form of newsletters and other updates.

For a brochure or more information, contact Linda McCarthy at (260) 489-3537, ext. 247.

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Happy New Year: Advent



THE CUTTING EDGE

SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

When you read the title of this column you probably thought I was several weeks ahead of myself or that a little dementia has set in. Well, I know what date it is and I am not losing my mind, yet! The new liturgical year began on Nov. 29 and, just like many people make resolutions to improve their lives at the start of the calendar year, the season of Advent presents us with an opportunity to reflect on the spiritual aspect of our lives.

To deepen one's spirituality and relationship with God takes time and patience. It can be a real challenge, particularly now, to set aside the time needed to develop our spiritual lives when we are surrounded by the materi-

alistic aspects of the holiday season. Taking some extra time to reflect on our relationship with the Lord takes a lot of discipline. It can be so easy to let shopping and Christmas parties and events fill most of the time we are not at work or school. Perhaps our culture has such a strong hold on us that we might as well wait until the holidays are over to work on our spiritual lives. That may sound like a good excuse, but I don't think so.

Try not to fall into the trap that many do on the first of the year and make too many resolutions that are unrealistic. It is better to concentrate on one or two behaviors that you can do. Here are a few of my suggestions:

Set aside 10 or 15 minutes a day to read Scripture. You might want to use the Mass readings of the day that can be found in a missalette or online. Find out the references and use your Bible. (You might have to find it first!) Or you may prefer to take one of the books of the Bible and read a little each day. The more we read the Scriptures the more we get to know God. This may require you to get up a little earlier or stay up later.

Try to find and use a book that gives a reflection for each day. If you don't know of

any, you might ask your pastor or one of the parish staff to suggest one. Also, some Web sites provide daily meditations. If you don't have time to read them on the computer, print and reflect on them sometime during the day.

Another possibility is to make the time to join a faith sharing or Bible-sharing group. If you can't find one, get a couple of friends and start your own. A good way to start is to read and share on the readings for the following Sunday. It is a good way to make the Scripture more meaningful to you at Mass.

Another suggestion is to spend a little time each evening reflecting on your day and how Christ was present to you in people or events, or how you reached out in love to someone. If you know you are going to do this it might encourage you to become more conscious of Christ's presence in your life.

You might think of other exercises that can help you come closer to the Lord and to deepen your faith. The main thing is to try something and not get discouraged if you break your "resolution" every now and then. It is like when someone is on a diet and slips up and eats a forbidden food. It's better to start the diet again rather than throw up



YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVES

one's hands and give up.

I don't think our God expects any of us to be perfect, but I would wager that it gives him a great deal of pleasure to see that we are trying to live good Christian lives.

It is a blessing that God gives us so many opportunities to live our faith. All we have to do is do our best and continue to respond to his abundant grace.

Celebrating life: The ultimate Christmas gift

The moment I uttered the words I knew they sounded silly: "What do you get the girl who has everything?"

Nothing, of course, suggests common sense. But the Pier 1 employee fielding my question saw I wasn't letting that pesky force stand in my way, as I milled through paper lanterns, artificial apples and \$3 bags of "mini river stones."

She suggested the very thing I had sworn off — a bottle of wine — then pointed out a \$22 walnut photo tray. This intrigued me: For someone with more pictures than walls, here was a new place to stuff snapshots.

I knew I was in a predicament, shopping for a friend who filled an entire bookshelf with Williams-Sonoma cookbooks. Years later not a dab of vegetable oil has stained

their pages.

I probably should've flipped through Sky Mall, the airplane magazine that showcases the weirdest stuff you never knew you needed (and can't afford): An electronic Feng Shui compass (\$159.99), a 3-day talking forecaster (\$41.99), a telekinetic obstacle course (\$99.95). Online you can choose from 44 alarm clocks — ones with MLB and NFL scores, ones built into robots and drum sets and, for the impossible to rouse, a runaway clock that rolls around your bedroom and forces a blanket severance.

It got me thinking about the gifts we give — the things we can wrap, tape and tie, and the intangibles that mean the most. It seems we're beginning to make that distinction, a hard-won lesson of the recession's tail-end. A new

Consumer Reports holiday shopping poll finds that Americans are planning to cut back on spending but expect no subsequent drop in yuletide cheer. Sixty-five percent of us plan to curb holiday expenses, while 87 percent await a Christmas that is "as happy or happier than last year."

Perhaps we're returning to the origin of the word "gift," which is Middle English for "talent." It pertains to a person's capacities, not her funds. This Advent I challenge you to determine what you are uniquely suited to give — thanks to your job, your neighborhood, your family or your skill set — and offer it to someone who could use a lift.

Looking back on 2009, I remember the gifts that took time, not \$20s. The neighbor who mowed my lawn. The Saturday morning mom cleaned my house,

readying it for company. Hugs from grandparents, voicemails I saved, e-mails I printed. And tucked in my journal, a stack of four thank-you notes from my soon-to-be sister-in-law, Jodie. "Thank you for the cutting board," one reads. "But thank you especially for just being the wonderful person that you are."

When Jodie's dad, Denis, died last month, we were devastated. The morning of his funeral, between "Ave Maria" and "Taps," our grief was heavy. Then we embarked on a tour of Busch Stadium, home of Denis' beloved St. Louis Cardinals. As a teen Denis had worked as a Cardinals change boy and he later got his cousin Mickey a job there. Fifty four years later, Mickey is now the manager of stadium operations, and he led our tour.



TWENTY SOMETHING BY CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

We stepped out of the dugout and onto the field, a technicolor scene: Green grass, red cardinals, silver arch and blue sky. It was one of those moments when heaven hugs earth. We all could feel Denis beaming down on us.

Mickey gave us an incredible gift that day: A deeper connection to Denis. We will cherish it with each passing year. That is the ultimate Christmas gift, begun by Mary's brave "yes" — to accept life, nurture it and honor it.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christinacap@gmail.com.

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St. Pius X honored as runner-up for stewardship award

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

GRANGER — The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) named St. Pius X of Granger as a runner-up for the Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award on Oct. 13. Julie Kenny, from Our Sunday Visitor and a member of the ICSC board of directors, accepted the award on the parish's behalf in Dallas, Texas.

According to Michael Murphy, executive director of the ICSC, this award recognizes parishes that give witness to stewardship in many areas of parish life. St. Pius X was one of only five parishes in the country to receive this distinction.

St. Pius X “demonstrated their commitment to exercising stewardship in pastoral areas such as prayer and worship, formation and education, offering hospitality, cultivating leadership, communications and promoting among their parishioners the stewardship of time, talent and treasure,” Murphy emphasized.

Scott Bader, vice president of the ICSC and director of parish stewardship for the Archdiocese of Seattle, explained that St. Pius X helps to set the standard in stewardship for parishes nationwide: “St. Pius X Parish is a superb example of how a parish can build up the individual and collective practice of faith through stewardship. The parish is one we defi-



KAREN CLIFFORD

Bishop John M. D'Arcy, center, congratulates St. Pius X Pastor Father Bill Schooler and Betsy Quinn, St. Pius X director of evangelization and stewardship, on the parish's selection as runner-up for the Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award.

nately suggest others consider emulating.”

In 2007, Betsy Quinn, the director of stewardship and evangelization at St. Pius X, oversaw the creation of a stewardship core team, which worked to develop a comprehensive, multiyear strategic plan for stewardship and development. Areas highlighted in the plan include volunteer apprecia-

tion, communication, education catechesis, outreach and welcoming and hospitality.

Specific programs that have resulted from the plan include development of an adult education program, enhancement of the parish welcoming committee, formation of a young adult ministry and expansion of youth activities.

“With a large parish, of over

3,000 families, we are challenged to keep a tight-knit, community feel. By having an ongoing and active stewardship program, we are creating a true Christian atmosphere founded on the pillars of stewardship: hospitality, prayer, formation and service,” said Quinn.

She added, “We are always striving for conversion in the

hearts of our parishioners, young and old, to embrace the stewardship message: from new parishioners to our founding families, at baptisms and at funerals, in our children's religious education programs and through adult education opportunities, at social events, and, most importantly, at Sunday liturgies. Through the leadership of Father Bill Schooler, Father Bob Lengerich, the parish staff, and the commitment of our dynamic Stewardship Core Team, we are continually finding ways to contribute to the conversion journey.”

Father Schooler credited Quinn's leadership as key to the recognition of St. Pius X by the ICSC. “Betsy Quinn is the reason we received this award from the national stewardship council. She has worked tirelessly to promote stewardship as a way of life at St. Pius and to educate parishioners on what it really means to be a good steward.”

Quinn, Father Schooler and the St. Pius X community were congratulated by Bishop John D'Arcy for their stewardship efforts. Father Schooler noted that St. Pius X gave the St. Vincent de Paul Society \$81,000 in food and direct grants last year. In addition, the parish gives 5 percent of its income to the parish school of St. Adalbert in South Bend and 2 percent to local, national and international needs of the poor annually.

“That truly is an act of faith by the parish,” Bishop D'Arcy stressed.

Generosity: Cause for pride?

Our understanding of humanity is complicated — without the eyes of faith — it appears as though we are on our own, abandoned by God, and it seems that God does not care about us. Has God spoken to humanity, or not? Our awareness of the Incarnation — Jesus Christ is truly a gift of revelation from God. And that gift expresses something profound about God and humanity, God is loving and generous, and he loves us and calls us to himself.

Christ is the expression and example of selfless generosity, and through him the Father communicates the type of relationship he wants to have with humanity — to be one within the life of the Trinity, which is a life of self-giving. In Christ, God has fully revealed himself to us; the Father holds nothing back in his revelation of himself through Christ.

Our invitation to dwell in the life of the Trinity is the reason for our existence, yet, we cannot fully embrace the Triune-life



HARRY VERHILEY

STEWARDSHIP—
A WAY
OF LIFE

because of pride and self-centeredness. The perfect and harmonious relationship shared within the Triune-life was lost with the fall of humanity; by our own choice we separated ourselves from this life because of our selfishness. This, of course, is the reason for Christ's coming and through his humility (opposite of pride) and selflessness (opposite of selfishness) we are drawn back to this life of the Trinity.

Christ is the perfect model of generosity. Our generosity is the work of the Holy Spirit — the work of God within us. Because

GENEROUS, PAGE 11

St. Pius X parishioner speaks on sacrificial giving

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

GRANGER — Like all faithful stewards, St. Pius X parishioner Chuck Ball knows the importance of sacrificial giving to one's church. But last year Ball, who became unemployed, was called to make a leap of faith in his commitment to giving despite his family's personal finances.

On the weekend of Sept. 26, Ball gave the parish's annual stewardship of sacrificial giving witness talk during all Masses. He stressed that the parish's stewardship prayer, which is recited at all Masses throughout the year, gives him strength in meeting life's challenges:

*Heavenly Father,
As you renew all things in Christ,
grant to our parish a fresh outpouring of your Spirit.*

Continue to form us into stew-

*ards of your generosity,
That our community will
always serve the growth of our
holy communion in you.*

Amen. St. Pius X, pray for us!

The words “Continue to form us into stewards of your generosity” have given Ball and his wife Ellen a new perspective into the meaning of stewardship. Despite his unemployment, he and his wife have not lessened their commitment to sacrificial giving.

“Whether it is through the (Annual) Bishop's Appeal, our building fund commitment or the weekly contributions to the parish; Ellen and I truly believe that God will take care of whatever physical needs we require no matter what difficulties may arise,” Ball stresses.

According to Ball, with changing employment conditions in the area, it was evident a new ministry was needed to assist those parishioners who lost their

jobs. This need was recognized by the creation of the Employment Resource Ministry at St. Pius.

“When we meet each Wednesday evening, we pray that our members will find suitable employment and have their physical needs met. The ministry helps participants focus on the right activities to move their job search forward. In the last three weeks many people have found jobs. We (the Employment Resource Ministry) would like to work ourselves out of a job in 2010,” Ball jokes.

Ball acknowledges that stewardship involves prayer, sharing of time and talent and sacrificial giving. “But the commitment of stewardship, through the giving of one's treasure, means each of us has the personal responsibility for care of the property, finances and the programs supported by the parish.”

GENEROUS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

of the fall, Christ is now hidden from human sight and we are only able to see him in faith, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also hidden. It appears as though we develop our generosity on our own, but this is not the case. The Holy Spirit brings forth our generosity. Our generosity appears to be our own doing; however, it is in truth the work of God within us.

Selflessness is a requirement of generosity, and because selflessness is exemplified by each person of the Trinity, it is characteristic of persons living in unity of the Trinity. This selflessness is most clearly expressed by Christ crucified. Only by the work of the Holy Spirit can a person gain understanding of selflessness.

To gain some sense of understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit is to overcome the notion that Christian generosity is some form of achievement. We are inclined to accept the illusion that personal advancement is achieved by being generous because we are a fallen humanity. We can only break from this illusion of achievement by way of "expropriation" (a term used by Hans Urs von Balthasar), which means

to deprive the self, to break away from the self — to "unself."

This "unselfing" is a matter of humility (renouncing the self is renouncing pride). Humility is what we come to understand from Christ. If not for Christ, we would see our prideful, selfish living as a means of attaining our own glory. In Matthew 5, Christ taught that we should oppose our passions — be humble, meek, poor, least among others, to turn away from things that satisfy and take on burdens. To the world, this is ridiculous because it is at odds with the world's perspective which values: self-love, self-reliance, self-centeredness. If we are completely honest with ourselves, this is the way we are prone to be.

If left unrestrained, our self-centeredness will inevitably lead to nothingness, the nothingness from which we came, before God created us. In other words, to be self-centered will lead to loss, misery and loneliness. Why would anyone continue down a path that leads to self destruction? Pride. It is pride that pushes us to stubborn pursuits of things that will not matter in the end. Yet, we do not have the resources to save ourselves from ourselves. So, we are inescapably doomed to the hopelessness of our destiny of nothingness — the hell of our own self-centeredness. And to make matters worse, we are too proud to reach out for God's saving hand, because we are too

proud to humble ourselves to be saved. There is no peace in this mindset. There is something about us that is not right and needs to be changed — and Christ came to change it. It is his work, but we have a part to play too; the "expropriation," the "unselfing" is our part — revealed through Christ. Through unselfishness, God reveals his love for humanity and we are called to imitate.

Our "unselfing" is our surrender to God. God is the one who set us free from selfish pursuits. God sets us free from the pursuit of the self because he sets us free from the desire for more, and more and more. He gives us what we truly desire, the gift of himself, in whom all happiness is contained. We will never completely understand this process

because it is the work of God and our "unselfing," our conversion, our surrender, is the work of the Holy Spirit. This means that it is not our achievement, but rather it is a gift, which is cause for us to be grateful to God. It is by God's grace, not our own achievement that we surrender. This is cause to be grateful, not proud. Our contribution is to surrender to God; this is a matter of humility, not pride.

Generosity is a disposition of "unselfing," of surrender; it is not a skilled method to be accomplished. Generosity must be one with the Holy Spirit, God in us, a submission to God's movement in us. It is a matter of releasing the desires of this temporal world so that we may connect with God. Since we originate from God, we are reliant on God.

Our generosity is a matter of

our character and desire to empty ourselves of all that is not God so that we will not be occupied by anything other than God. Generosity is a means for us to release what we think we are, (according to what we possess, or have acquired as a result of achievement) and know what we truly are — God's.

Harry Verhiley is the director of the Development Office for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

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The January 10, 2010 issue of Today's Catholic will include a special pull-out section with a glossy cover and full coverage of the installation ceremonies of Bishop Rhoades at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, presided by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein with many bishops, priests, and dignitaries in attendance.

Individual ads are also available...sizes and prices are shown here. Ads are black and white. For color, add \$150.00

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For information on how to place your ad, please call:

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The clock is ticking on IRA charitable rollover

BY ELISA M. SMITH

Extended charitable IRA legislation allows you to make gifts by transferring funds from your IRA without incurring tax consequences. However, you must complete your gift by Dec. 31, 2009.

The IRA charitable rollover allows donors who are age 70 1/2 or older to transfer funds up to \$100,000 per year directly from their individual retirement account (IRA) to a public charitable organization without including the transfer in gross income for federal income tax purposes. The IRA charitable rollover was originally included in the Pension Protection Act of 2006 for transfers in tax years 2006 and 2007. Last year, Congress reenacted the legislation but only for tax years 2008 and 2009. Thus, it is scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, 2009.

Before the IRA charitable rollover came about, if a donor wanted to use IRA funds for a charitable contribution, he/she would have had to withdraw the funds from his/her IRA account and then contribute the money to the charity. The amount withdrawn was taxable income and reportable on the individual's income tax return. Depending on whether the donor qualified to itemize deductions, he/she could take a charitable deduction for the amount given to charity, but only up to 50 percent of adjusted gross

income.

Currently, for tax year 2009, charitable gifts from IRAs can be accomplished simply and free of federal income tax. With these tax benefits, you can make gifts from your IRA while you are living and witness the good works which your gifts can provide now to your parish, school or other diocesan agency. You can also make gifts from your IRA to satisfy pledges from the Legacy of Faith campaign and/or the Annual Bishop's Appeal campaign.

Certain limitations apply to these nontaxable IRA charitable transfers. First of all, the donor may contribute IRA funds if he/she is age 70 1/2 or older on the date of the

distribution, the qualified charitable distribution must not exceed \$100,000 in the aggregate in the tax year, and funds are transferred directly from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA to a public charity. Funds from a SEP-IRA or Simple IRA can be transferred only if the employer is no longer making contributions to the plans.

Moreover, these gifts can only be transferred to one or more public charities but not private foundations, supporting organizations or donor advised funds.

Also, the gifts must be outright; for instance, they cannot be used to establish a gift annuity or charitable remain-

der trust. And the transfers cannot be from employer-sponsored retirement plans, such as 401(k)s, and 403(b)s.

Another benefit of this legislation is that the funds transferred from your IRA to a charity count toward your mandatory withdrawal or required minimum distribution you must take each year after reaching age 70 1/2. However, please note that for the calendar year 2009, required minimum distributions are waived from IRAs and other qualified retirement plans.

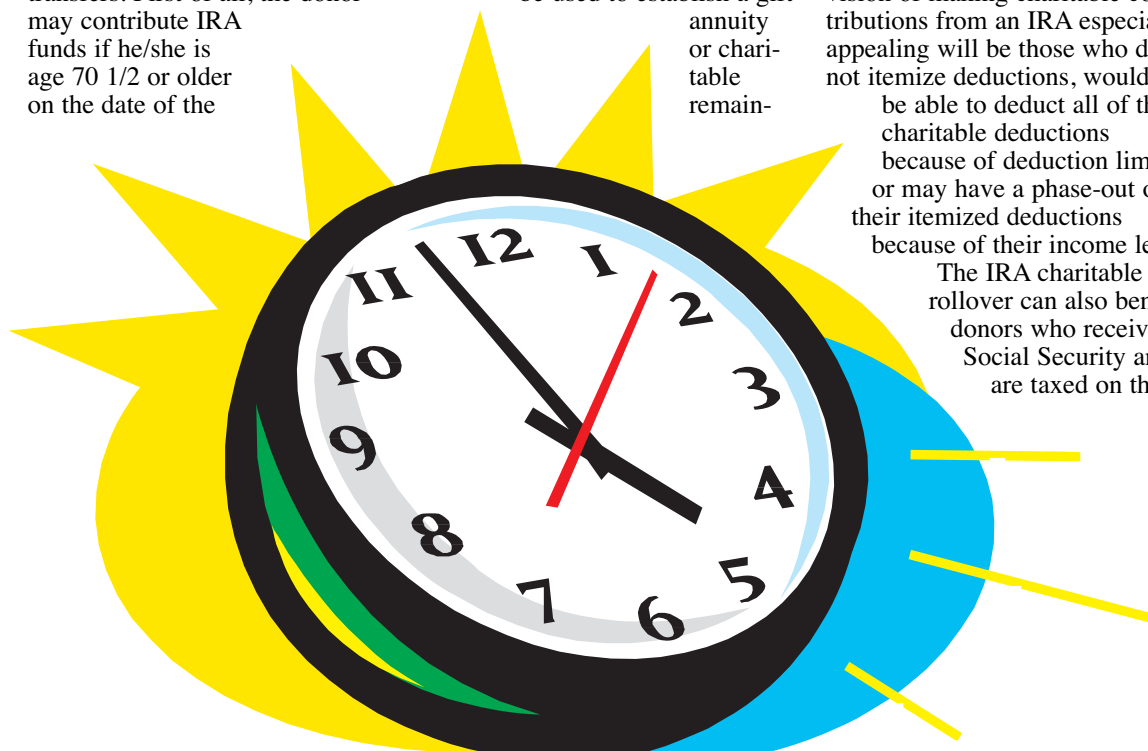
Donors who may find this provision of making charitable contributions from an IRA especially appealing will be those who do not itemize deductions, would not be able to deduct all of their charitable deductions because of deduction limits, or may have a phase-out of their itemized deductions because of their income level. The IRA charitable rollover can also benefit donors who receive Social Security and are taxed on these

benefits depending on how much taxable income they receive from other sources, including withdrawals from IRAs. Accordingly, money in an IRA that is rolled over to a charity, rather than first withdrawn and then contributed to the charity, can have the effect of reducing taxes on social security payments.

The first step in making a charitable gift from your IRA is to contact your IRA custodian to transfer your desired gift amount directly to your parish, school, or other diocesan agency. If the funds are distributed to you followed by a contribution to the charity, you will still have to report the withdrawal as income.

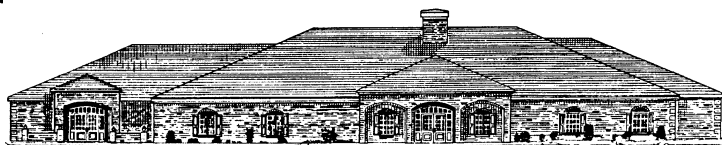
And remember, the clock is ticking away to complete your gift by Dec. 31, 2009.

Note: This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended for tax advice. Please consult with your professional advisor.



Elisa M. Smith, CPA/PFS, is director of Planned Giving for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and director of financial planning for Haines, Isenbarger & Skiba, LLC, 4630-8 West Jefferson Blvd., Fort Wayne.

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Endowments and the Catholic Community Foundation

BY ELISA M. SMITH

What is the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana?

The Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana (the foundation) is a religious organization that was incorporated in Indiana in 1994 by Bishop John M. D'Arcy under the name "Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Endowment Trust" and has received 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.

What is the purpose of the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana?

The purpose of the foundation is to provide a means for individuals and organizations that wish through long-term efforts to financially support the spiritual, educational and charitable needs of the Catholic Church. Through the establishment of individual endowments, the foundation generates income for parishes, schools, agencies and organizations and helps sustain the long-term strength and viability of the Catholic community in northeast Indiana.

Who manages the foundation?

The foundation is managed by an advisory board of directors comprised of clergy and lay persons. The directors are leaders in their parishes and communities. The financial statements of the foundation are audited each year to ensure accuracy and accountability by a certified public accounting firm. In addition, professional investment advisors manage and invest the assets of the foundation.

What is an endowment fund?

One aspect of our Catholic stewardship is to provide for future generations. An endowment can accomplish that mission. Unlike an offertory collection or annual appeal which is an expendable gift or immediately usable, an endowment is held in an investment fund set aside for the long-term support of an organization. The principal is preserved in perpetuity to provide future earnings for the benefit of a Catholic charitable cause. The income earned can be used according to the donor's intentions.

What are the endowments established by the Legacy of Faith campaign?

In 2004, Bishop D'Arcy and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend embarked on a grand effort to raise funds for endowments through the Legacy of Faith campaign in order to strengthen Catholics in northeast Indiana for years to come. Endowments for Catholic education, Hispanic ministries, and Catholic Charities are accounted for and administered through the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana.

Are endowments only for diocesan-wide projects like the Legacy of Faith campaign?

No. A donor may establish an endowment fund within the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana for the purpose of a specific parish, school or other Catholic ministry. It may be a restricted gift for building maintenance or tuition assistance. Or an unrestricted endowment fund, which has no stipulation for use,

can be set up if the donor wishes to provide the greatest good to those Catholic organizations in greatest need. The foundation holds approximately 100 endowment funds for parishes, schools and other ministries.

How are the assets in the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana invested?

In January 2003, the diocese hired Jeffrey Slocum and Associates, Inc. as an investment evaluator to provide investment consulting and advice on all diocesan investment assets. Based on their analysis, the diocese switched from three custodians to one, Northern Trust, in early 2004. In addition, a new statement of investment objectives and policies was created. Now all assets including the assets of the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana are pooled together with other diocesan assets and allocated to various investment managers. The diocese and Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana strictly adhere to morally and socially responsible guidelines in accordance with those set forth by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

How do endowments further the mission of one's parish and school?

As a parish grows spiritually and physically, its needs may exceed its financial means. Fluctuations and shortfalls in offertory collections and school tuition may lead to deferred maintenance of church and school buildings, inability to retain good teachers, and other program cutbacks.

Endowments are a way to stabilize income for years to come. Thus, they help parishes, schools and other Catholic organizations continue to carry out the work of Christ.

How much money is necessary to start an endowment?

An initial minimum gift of \$5,000 is required for an individual or for a Catholic parish, school or agency to set up a separate endowment. Donors have the option of naming the endowment in their family's name or in memory of a loved one.

Why would an individual or Catholic entity want to create an endowment fund?

An endowment can be the vehicle for an annual gift to continue each year to a parish even after the donor's death. For example, let's say that a donor contributes \$1,000 per year to his/her parish. The donor could create an endowment that would be funded with \$20,000 principal and would pay out 5 percent each year. This would provide the parish with \$1,000 annually from this endowment to use as the donor chooses either in an unrestricted manner or for a restricted purpose.

An endowment can also be used to establish a scholarship fund for a Catholic school. Perhaps instead the donor would like to establish a scholarship fund for a student attending a Catholic school. If that same \$20,000 were contributed initially, each year approximately \$1,000 would be available for tuition assistance for a student attending that school.

Can the principal of the endowment fund ever be invaded and used?

The principal includes the initial contribution given to create the endowment as well as all additional contributions to the endowment. Endowments are permanent and therefore, principal is invested and the income used for the purposes in which the donor expresses.

What are the steps to establishing an endowment fund with the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana?

- The donor, parish, school or agency would contact the diocesan development office and state that they would like to establish an endowment.
- After gathering the necessary information from the donor, an Endowment Fund Donation Offering Agreement would be drafted and sent for review.
- The donor signs the agreement and returns it to the development office. In return, the foundation representative would sign the agreement and return a copy to the donor for their files.
- The initial gift to the new endowment can be contributed currently or, if in the form of a deferred gift, can be contributed at a later time.

If you would like more information about the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana or endowment funds, please contact Elisa M. Smith, diocesan director of Planned Giving, at (260) 422-4611 or esmith@diocesefwsb.org.



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EDITORIAL

About the envelope attached to this issue

We are most grateful for the prayer support and generous response from readers who contributed to our envelope campaign to help defray the costs of sending *Today's Catholic* to every registered Catholic home in the diocese. You are truly partaking in the evangelization efforts of the diocese by participating in this campaign.

When we began delivery to all registered Catholic homes in the diocese last February, we informed our readers that twice a year an envelope would be inserted into the paper. We did this in June and we continue to receive funds from that campaign. The envelope has been again placed in this week's issue of *Today's Catholic*.

We pray for your continued generosity as we reach the households of our diocese. As we welcome Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades as our new bishop and publisher of this newspaper, he has assured us that evangelization is one of his priorities.

Your support of *Today's Catholic* allows us to share diocesan events and news, allows our parishes and schools to share their works of evangelization, provides catechesis and the teachings of our Catholic faith, and shares news of the pope and the church across the nation and our globe.

As we look ahead into 2010, our first issue will honor the nearly-25 years of Bishop John M. D'Arcy's episcopacy. Our Jan. 10 issue will welcome Bishop Rhoades and will acquaint our readers with our new shepherd. The Jan. 17 issue will cover the pro-life witness of our church.

On Jan. 24, readers will learn about the installation Mass of Bishop Rhoades. And on Jan. 31, Catholic education will be the focus in our Catholic Schools Week issue.

Shortly after that, our marriage section will promote the teachings and importance of the sacrament of marriage. And following that issue, we will begin our Lenten journey.

We are all on a journey of faith together, and *Today's Catholic* is pleased and humbled to walk that path with our readers, to help you embrace and understand the faith.

We continue to upgrade our technology. Our Web site, www.todaycatholicnews.org has recently been launched. Our Web master, Francie Hogan, organized Web streaming that allowed viewers across the globe to view Bishop Rhoades' introduction at the Fort Wayne news conference. We also offer a 15-minute news-cast available on our Web site, through iTunes or played every Sunday at 1:45 p.m. on Redeemer Radio — Catholic Radio 1450 AM. These are all the ways technology has allowed us to be better evangelizers.

But we still need your support. Did you realize that *Today's Catholic* may be the only Catholic reading material that most Catholic homes receive in the diocese? We humbly ask for your continued prayer support for this media ministry and we encourage your financial support in the next few weeks, for our efforts.

Thank you.

Jesus is the reason for the season

Many have seen the statue of Santa Claus kneeling at the manger of the Infant Jesus. This statue provides the glimmer of hope that is the reason for the season — namely Jesus Christ and the celebration of the Incarnation.

It's a good impression to keep in our minds as we shop for those special gifts for those we love and fight the secularism of the holiday that sees dollar signs more than the Christ Child.

It is through love that we offer gifts to family and loved ones. And it is important to remember that the greatest gift we can give to others is our heartfelt selflessness. Serving others is the greatest act of love.

So let us not become mesmerized by the commercialization of the season. Rather let us try to find moments of quiet and prayer that lead us to the manger, where we may find Santa kneeling in reverence to God's greatest gift of Love, Jesus our Savior.

Today's Catholic editorial board is 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

Dining room has special importance

The centerpiece of our dining room table growing up always held special importance. Home to the Advent wreath, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers, or a simple candle, it was at the core of our family gatherings and reflected our celebrations and also our concerns.

For written on small pieces of paper within that centerpiece were the names of family members who needed special prayers. Including in-laws, my parents have 50 descendants so there were always plenty of people who could use an extra prayer. A lost job, a troubled relationship, an addiction, a health problem—all landed you in the middle of the table and the middle of family prayer.

Having struggled with depression for a long time, my name was reliably in the centerpiece for a number of years. It was comforting and at the same time embarrassing. My pride didn't want me to admit my constant need of prayer.

My parents raised us to be self-sufficient. Though both handicapped physically, for years they refused to park in a handicap space because they were sure someone else needed it more. It was like me not wanting to be in the center of the table. None of us like to acknowledge our own brokenness. And yet that acknowledgment can be a crucial step in our journey as Christians because it gives us the humility we need to walk closer to God.

I was better for six wonderful years and was pleased to not be found within the centerpiece. When

visiting my parents, I took some personal satisfaction and pride as we prayed for others who were more in need. But it is not in our pride that we come closer to God. It is in our weakness and vulnerability and our humility.

Three months ago I went back to school to fulfill a lifelong dream to become a doctor. And despite working very hard over that time, I have struggled to keep up with the other students and retain the material. I'm going home for the holidays and I know, with what I've experienced lately, I will be back in the midst of the Advent wreath. I pray that I will be open to the humility my brokenness offers me. And I give thanks for a family that has held me so often as a prayer priority.

Julie Coyle
South Bend

Love and life in the Divine Plan

During their 2009 Fall assembly, the U. S. Catholic bishops approved their new pastoral letter, "Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan." The letter represents a summary of church teaching on marriage. It is the centerpiece of a wider effort initiated in 2004 called The National Pastoral Marriage Initiative (see www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/npi.m.shtml). The pastoral initiative represents a renewed effort in the church to strengthen marriage. It is a multi-pronged work that includes a Web site called "ForYourMarriage.org." The Web site features popular articles and resources to help married couples in their life's journey.

The bishops have a deep concern for marriage and the family. After all, marriage affects everyone — it is the "little church" where its members learn about loving God, each other and their neighbors. Marriage and the family are the building blocks of society.

On a personal level, the church must assist married couples to live their sacrament fully. The church also bears the responsibility to prepare engaged couples for this special vocation. On a social scale, the church has always defended marriage against those forces that would tear it apart. In today's world this is especially urgent.

Strengthening marriage
is an urgent priority
in today's world.

Strengthening marriage is an urgent priority in today's world. Most of us can list the multitude of forces that tear at the fabric of marriage. We know that many people have an inadequate understanding of the nature of commitment causing many to wonder if life-long commitment can be attained. This fear is understandable when we consider the effects of generations of no-fault divorce. The irresponsible practice of one spouse opting out of a marriage for any reason has poked holes in marital permanence. With the increase in acceptance of couples living

together without the benefit of marriage, society has also fostered a "test-drive" mentality regarding romantic relationships. If it ultimately doesn't "feel" right, one can get out of the driver's seat.

Lost in our day is a sense of delaying our own personal satisfaction. As a society, we almost frantically grasp for whatever we think will make us happy. The idea of "self-sacrifice" for the love of someone else often stands in the shadows. It is, of course, not wrong to want various things — like to develop our individual talents and attain our goals — but when one is married, "we" must be considered before "me."

Also forgotten in our day is the fact that the sexual relationship is wired for bonding and

LIFE ISSUES FORUM



BY THERESA NOTARE

procreation. Sex is not only about personal fulfillment. Rather, sex is about moving out of the self to love the other person — loving that person so much that the gift of a child is the fruit. Life-long love, marital love, is the best environment for man and woman because it nourishes each of them and cares for the well-being of children.

The bishops' pastoral letter is an invitation to Catholics and to all people of good will to rediscover the true meaning of marriage — something that is based not only on individual satisfaction and personal fulfillment but also on God's desire for the good of his people.

Theresa Notare is assistant director of the Natural Family Planning Program, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. The U.S. Catholic Bishops' new document, "Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan" can be found at: www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/cathteach.shtml. For resources that can strengthen marriage see www.foryourmarriage.org.

Immigration reform next up on bishops' wish list for Congress

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Over the years, hundreds of thousands of postcards have come from U.S. Catholics in organized efforts to influence members of Congress on issues ranging from partial-birth abortion to human cloning to healthcare reform.

A new postcard campaign in 2010 will urge Congress to take up as its next priority comprehensive immigration reform that would reunite families, regularize the status of an estimated 12 million people in this country illegally and restore due process protections for immigrants.

"We want to increase Catholic grass-roots support for immigration reform, but we also want to show members of Congress a strong Catholic voice and strong Catholic numbers in support of immigration reform," said Antonio Cube, national manager of the U.S. bishops' Justice for Immigrants project, in a Nov. 16

conference call with reporters.

The postcard campaign will coincide in most places with the bishops' National Migration Week, Jan. 3-9, although it might be held earlier or later in some dioceses, Cube said. It also is part of a multifaceted interfaith campaign called "Home for the Holidays," designed to stress the family reunification aspect of immigration reform.

The Catholic Church is uniquely situated to comment on the immigration issue, because of its "long history of welcoming and serving immigrants for generations" and because it is "present in both the sending countries as well as the receiving countries," Cube said.

Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration, predicted in a Nov. 17 interview with Catholic News Service that the prospects for Congress to pass

THE VATICAN LETTER

NANCY FRAZIER O'BRIEN

immigration legislation will depend a great deal on how health care reform fares in the coming weeks.

If healthcare reform fails to pass, Bishop Wester told CNS at the U.S. bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore, it will mean the political parties are so divided that the chance of passing immigration reform will be greatly diminished.

However, success with health

LETTER, PAGE 16

Joy and peace will prevail



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

2nd Sunday of Advent Lk 3:1-6

The Book of Baruch, the source of this Advent's weekend first biblical reading, is relatively brief, only five chapters. It also is among the books called by Protestants scholars the Apocrypha, by Catholics the Deutero-Canonical. As such it does not appear in the King James version of the Bible and some other translations that rely upon the thinking that led to the selection of books for inclusion in the King James edition.

It is not found in Jewish translations of the Scriptures.

One reason for its omission from the King James and Jewish versions is that at one time it was presumed to have been written originally in Greek. (It was thought that Old Testament books could not be considered authentic revelation unless composed in Hebrew.) Actually, scholars now believe that Baruch first was written in Hebrew, but that only Greek translations survive.

For Catholics, however, most important is the fact that Christians from early times venerated Baruch as part of the Bible, and the church officially has recognized it as such.

Regardless, when Baruch was written, great problems beset God's people. This book encouraged those who were suffering,

reassuring them that God would not forsake them, and that God's justice and mercy would prevail in the end.

The Epistle to the Philippians furnishes the next reading. Sent as a letter to the Christians of Philippi, an important city in the ancient Roman Empire, the epistle urges the Philippians loyal to the Lord to be steadfast in their faith, come what may, until the second coming of Jesus.

As often predicted elsewhere in the New Testament, this reading says that one day, but at a time unknown, Jesus will come again in triumph and judgment.

Luke's last reading centers upon Jesus, although highly visible in the reading is John the Baptist. Carefully constructed, the Gospel presents the coming of Jesus as uniquely important in the course of human affairs.

The Lord's coming was so important, in fact, that preceding this coming was the proclamation of God's majesty, and of human responsibility before God, by John the Baptist.

John was a prophet and a holy man. Holiness gave persons special wisdom. God used such persons to reveal truth to other humans. Through John, God was revealing the person and mission of Christ.

Also, to emphasize the importance of the Lord's coming, this Gospel takes pains in setting the presence of John, and the coming of Christ, at an exact moment in history, namely by stating that it all occurred when Tiberius was emperor, Pilate his governor in Palestine, and so on.

Finally, Jesus came as God's promised redeemer. Jesus was, in God's mercy, the fulfillment of these promises. The prophets of

old had yearned for the redeemer and had predicted the coming of a savior. When this messiah would come, all would be made right. The rough ways for people would be made smooth. Now, as John the Baptist declared, the Redeemer at last had come.

Reflection

When Baruch was written, times were bad for the Jews. When Philippians and the Gospel of Luke were written, times were hard for Christians.

On this Second Sunday of Advent, the church speaks to us. Times are hard. Even materially, things are far from good, with recession and war confronting us. Spiritually, sin still cripples us and dooms us to eternal death.

However, all will be right, joy and peace will prevail, if we admit Jesus into our lives. He will come to us, but we must invite the Lord into our lives sincerely, by reforming ourselves, by renouncing sin, and by giving ourselves totally to God. The call of John the Baptist is spoken to us.

READINGS

Sunday: Bar 5:1-9 Ps 126:1-6

Phil 1:4-6, 8-11 Lk 3:1-6

Monday: Is 35:1-10 Ps 85:9ab, 10-14 Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday: Gn 3:9-15, 20 Ps 98:1-4

Eph 1:3-6, 11-12 Lk 1:26-38

Wednesday: Is 40:25-31 Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10 Mt 11:28-30

Thursday: Is 41:13-20 Ps 145:1, 9-13ab Mt 11:11-15

Friday: Is 48:17-19 Ps 1:1-4, 6 Mt 11:16-19

Saturday: Zec 2:14-17 (Ps) Jdt 13:18bcde, 19 Lk 1:26-38

THE CATEQUIZEM

By Dominic Camplisson

In November we remember St. Andrew Dung Lac.

1. What was his nationality?

- a. Korean b. Vietnamese c. Cambodian

2. How was Christianity introduced to Vietnam?

- a. the Apostle Thomas
b. by the Visigoths
c. European missionaries

3. They served this community:

- a. Displaced Japanese Christians
b. Hindu Sufis
c. Mongolian yak herders

4. The first significant mission and Catholic community was

- a. Hue b. Saigon c. Da Nang

5. To resist these efforts one of the local kings banned

- a. dances
b. linguistics
c. foreign missionaries

6. When mounting anti-Christian campaigns, the kings insisted on this test of faith, also found in Japan:

- a. The suspect had to eat a frog
b. The suspect had to walk on a crucifix
c. The suspect had to sink or swim in a river

7. Many priests had to

- a. convert to Shinto
b. hide out
c. fight in the arenas against lions

8. Persecution increased in this century when Dung Lac was killed

- a. 17th b. 18th c. 19th

9. Politics intermingled with religion in the mid-1800s when foreign missionaries were suspected of being

- a. in league with rebels
b. ministers of state of neighboring Laos
c. foreign

10. This European power, and eventual colonial power, eventually forced an agreement which guaranteed freedom of religion:

- a. The USA b. China c. France

11. In the 20th century Christianity

- a. flourished
b. died out
c. was subsumed into the Karen nation

12. This political change put increased pressure on Catholics:

- a. The triumph of the USA
b. The triumph of communism in the north
c. The triumph of imperialism by the Thais

13. The Catholics often fled overseas or toward this (as it turned out temporary) haven:

- a. Indonesia
b. Timor
c. South Vietnam

14. These two calamities increased the pressure on an already struggling Catholic community:

- a. The Korean War and division of the peninsula
b. The Sino Russian split and rapprochement with Albania
c. The Vietnam War and eventual victory of communism over the south

15. Yet today the Catholic community there

- a. is a thing of the past
b. struggles against hardships, yet continues to thrive
c. has replaced Marxism as the predominant government creed

ANSWERS

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

Where is Lydda where St. Peter cured Aeneas of paralysis?

In the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament, St. Peter cured Aeneas, a Christian of the town of Lydda in Israel of paralysis. Peter said "Aeneas, Jesus Christ cures you. Get up and make your bed." Upon seeing this miracle, all the inhabitants of Lydda were converted to Christianity. So an early Christian community resided at Lydda. The people of Joppa went to Lydda to get Peter to come to Joppa and see Tabitha. St. Peter then raised Tabitha from the dead. Lydda is 12 miles southeast of Joppa and 25 miles from Jerusalem. The bishop of Lydda attended the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Nicea in Turkey was the summer residence of the Roman emperor Constantine.

Lydda is probably most famous as the town where St. George was martyred c. 303 under the persecutions of the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Father J. Delaney says St. George may have been a soldier or tribune in the imperial Roman army. Later legend says St. George was a Christian knight who came to Libya in northern Africa to slay a dragon that was terrorizing the people. St. George became popular in England as a patron of knighthood and soldiers. "St. George's arms" was a red cross on a white background that became the basis of the uniforms of British soldiers and sailors. G. Freeman mentions another opinion that the famous St. George may be George of



FATHER RICHARD HIRE

HIRE HISTORY

Cappadocia in Turkey. A church in honor of St. George is recorded at Lydda in the fifth century Baedeker says the bones of St. George at Lydda have been shown to visitors since the fifth century. K. Prag says the crusaders built a new church on its ancient walls between 1150-1170. In both churches, the cave-tomb of

St. George the martyr was located beneath the main altar. In the 15th century a Moslem mosque was constructed on the southwest side of the main church and is still there today. There is a minaret or tower in the mosque courtyard. By the shops, there is the Greek Orthodox church of St. George, rebuilt in 1870, with a relief of the saint as the slayer of the dragon above the entrance.

North of Lydda is a bridge spanning the river built in 1273. It is a stone bridge with pointed arches between two heraldic lions.

Four kilometers south of Lydda is the city of Ramla built in 712 by Sulaiman. K. Prag says the inhabitants of Lydda, mainly Christian, were forcibly resettled in the new

city of Ramla. Sulaiman and his successor Umar built the White Mosque at Ramla. In 1266 it was rebuilt in the form you see today. In the Middle Ages, Ramla became an important point on the Christian pilgrim route from Joppa to Jerusalem. Between 1395-1402 the Franciscans established a pilgrim house in Ramla. In Ramla today, you can see the Franciscan convent, the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, the Armenian Church of St. George and many Moslem mosques.

Father Richard Hire, pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish, Syracuse answered this question.

Five ideas for Advent

In the early years of our marriage, David and I, like many young, Catholic newlyweds, put a lot of thought into how we would celebrate each liturgical season with our new family. Advent was one time that we wanted to make especially memorable for our children.

One year, when our oldest was maybe five, I was browsing the Advent and Christmas section of a religious bookstore and came across a small cardboard book entitled, "The ABCs of Advent." Inside were instructions for a personalized Advent calendar, Scripture verses and a prayer for each day.

According to the book, "A" was for angel. "B" stood for Bethlehem. And so on. The idea was to cut out pictures from old Christmas cards to illustrate each of the ABCs. Each night of Advent the children would tape one picture onto a large, home-made, cardboard calendar. The family would pray the prayers and read the readings. This little invention turned out to be a huge success with our bunch of preschoolers.

As the children grew we added other activities. We kept as tradition what worked and ditched the things that didn't. Here are a few ideas. Take what works for you.

Start with confession. When I'm planning a graduation or birthday party, one of the first things I do as the day approaches is clean house. If I'm going to have guests over, I simply have to have tidy rooms and clean windows. If Advent is preparation for Christ, then the first order of the day is to be spiritually clean. This means starting with a good examination of conscience, followed by appropriate contrition, a trip to confession and resolution not to repeat the sins. Taking the family to confession together is a great way to kick off Advent. If you're like me you might want to follow up with ice cream or another enjoyable treat. If your kids are grown, make a confession "date"

with your spouse. Receiving the sacraments together is another way to keep your marriage strong.

Get out the wreath. If you don't have an Advent wreath yet, it's not too late to get one. These can be as simple as woven pine branches or as elaborate as a store-bought ceramic one.

Evergreens, the traditional material of Advent wreaths, symbolize continuous life — they are ever green. The shape of the wreath is a circle. It has no beginning and no end. This reminds us of God who always was, always will be and always remains the same. It also represents everlasting life which we will have with Christ if we die in the state of grace.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. The three purple candles represent prayer, penance and sacrifices which help us prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ.

The rose candle, lit on the third Sunday, is symbolic of rejoicing because Jesus is near. Of course the lit flames on the candles remind us of Jesus himself — the light of the world.

Remind your children of these meanings when you take out your wreath each year. Repetition is critical if they are to commit these things to memory and pass on the faith to their children. Start a tradition of reading a prayer and lighting the candle each Sunday after dinner. Take turns or draw names to determine who gets the honor each week.

Check out the bulletin. Every parish has a different schedule for various penance and prayer services during Advent. Get those dates down on the calendar so you will have a real chance of making it to at least some of them. Private prayer is nice but the church is a community. Pray together with your family, and others, at your parish. The best preparation for Advent is Mass.

Integrate some Advent activities into your day. Don't go overboard on this. It's easy to be



THERESA A. THOMAS

EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

swept away by elaborate plans. Making homemade Nativity sets from toilet paper rolls with the children, baking a gingerbread crèche and hand decorating an Advent wall hanging of multicolored felt might seem fun at the onset, but can easily become overwhelming amidst the effort towards spiritual focus and general busyness of the season. Pace yourself. Find one or two crafts or activities to do with the kids and stick to them. The Internet and a visit to the local Catholic bookstore are all you need to find ideas and directions for Advent crafts.

Chill out. Advent is a busy time of year: Meetings at the church, choral concerts, confession, shopping, baking. Make the time to find silence and peace in the clamoring of the busy world. Treat your family to a Gregorian chant CD to use as background music some Sunday afternoon. Say "no" to the distractions you really don't need. Silence your heart so you will be open to God's will in preparing you for Christmas. Peace.

Theresa Thomas, is the mother of nine children and wife of David. Theresa Thomas may be contacted at: theresathomaseveryday-catholic@gmail.com.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for December 6, 2009

Luke 3:1-6

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Advent, Cycle C: the historical appearance of John in the desert. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

FIFTEENTH	YEAR	REIGN
CAESAR	HEROD	TETRARCH
PRIESTHOOD	ANNAS	WORD OF GOD
JOHN	ZECHARIAH	REGION
JORDAN	FORGIVENESS	VOICE
CRYING	LORD	VALLEY
FILLED	ROUGH	SMOOTH

PREPARE

N A N W O R D O F G O D
 A Z R A E Y V J E D S E
 N A E G Z E O O H S D L
 H J I C K L I H E L K L
 T O G B H L C N P O C I
 N R N R C A E S A R S F
 E D W O J V R H Y D M A
 E A H U I W N I T T O N
 T N E G H P N H A S O N
 F R R H T G O J N H T A
 I O O T E T R A R C H S
 F X D O O H T S E I R P

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LETTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

care legislation will bode well for an immigration bill, he said: "That will mean there's a momentum in the country."

President Barack Obama has promised repeatedly that immigration reform would be the next big issue on the administration's domestic agenda.

At a Nov. 13 press conference, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, whose agencies handle most immigration-related law and policies, said the political climate, economy, border security issues and immigrant flows have all

changed since the last attempt to pass an immigration bill in 2007, making the goal more attainable.

"I've been dealing hands-on with immigration issues since 1993," said the former Arizona governor. "So trust me, I know a major shift when I see one, and what I have seen makes reform far more attainable this time around."

Napolitano outlined an immigration reform package that echoes the comprehensive approach long advocated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, other religious and immigrant rights organizations. She also came out strongly in favor of offering a way for the millions of undocumented immigrants to legalize their status.

Sports

BOWLING TROPHY With the coveted B.O.B.B. (Battle of the Bishops Bowling) trophy on the line, the Knights and Saints went head to head at Village Bowl on Nov. 19. Bishop Luers held the trophy from the 2008 match-up, but Bishop Dwenger rolled to a victory claiming the 2009 prize by winning two out of the three this season. The Saints took both the girls' and junior varsity events and the Knights won in the varsity boys bowling. Rich Sarrazin is the head coach of Bishop Dwenger while Tom Leonard heads Bishop Luers. — *Michelle Castleman*

The great eighth is as good as the first Bishop Luers Knights win the 2-A State Football Championship

BY SEAN MCBRIDE

INDIANAPOLIS — Luers Spirit is alive and well and was on display for the entire state last Friday night.

The Knights completed an epic season of ups and downs at Lucas Oil Stadium in front of a boisterous crowd of 14,512, earning their eighth state football crown. But it wasn't easy by any means. It was a tale of two halves. The Knights started out sluggish as they had a hard time stopping the impressive offense of the Monrovia Bulldogs (14-1). The Bulldogs controlled the time of possession in the first half and the scoreboard. The time of possession clock was lopsided in favor of the Bulldogs 17:03 to 6:57.

The tension from the Knights sidelines and grandstand was palpable, as the Bulldogs ran at will to the outside on drives that backed up the Knights and kept their coaches scratching their heads. But the Bulldogs didn't know about Luers Spirit. After a successful opening drive and three points for the Bulldogs, the Knights took the lead on a Ken Mullen run from 3 yards out. The 'Dogs were unfazed. They marched down the field in 11 plays covering 78 yards and took the lead on a very questionable touchdown score from short yardage. The score was 10-7. The Knights took over on offense and the drive stalled. The Bulldogs once again drove the ball 55 yards in 10 plays featuring a tricky "belly option"

offense that was tough to contain. The score was now 17-7.

The turning point was a text-book two-minute drill by James Knapke and the Knight offense to close out the second quarter. Ken Mullen again scored with just 17 seconds remaining in the half putting the Knights right back in the game as it was now 17-14 going into the locker room.

Joe Goodwin's defense lead by Steve Kiermaier and company took over from there. A great defensive half-time adjustment proved the difference-maker.

In the second half, Monrovia only got the ball twice. The third quarter saw scores from kicker Alex Stronzcek to tie the game at 17-17. Then to finish the quarter, Steve Kiermaier from his fullback

position went airborne and leapt in for the go-ahead touchdown and brought the score to 24-17. The Bulldogs were officially done but still had fight left in them.

In the fourth quarter on fourth down and 2 yards to go, on their own 49-yard line the 'Dogs decided to go for the first down instead of punting the ball away. This proved to be a bad idea as freshman Jaylon Smith shot into the backfield to stop the sweep and kill the drive with a 2-yard loss.

The biggest defensive effort came in the waning minutes of the game as the Bulldogs mounted a final charge taking the ball down the Knights' 6-inch line. It was fourth and goal, the 'Dogs needed six inches to score. A collective deep breath fell over the Knight

faithful. Once again the defense came up with the play of the game. Jordan Presley and Steve Kiermaier were not to be denied as they blasted into the backfield and stopped Garrett Johnson on the run off-tackle left. The Knights bench and stands erupted in jubilation.

Just as impressive was the subsequent drive by James Knapke and his offense. Moving the ball from their own 1-foot line down to the Monrovia 22-yard line. The clock ran out and the game was over. Ken Mullen was named player of the game. With only nine seniors on the team this year, we wonder what's in store next year?

The Bishop Luers Knights — 2009 2-A state champions.

Luers community honors winning team

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — Memories of August two-a-days and a rocky regular season sub-.500 finish faded fast when the Bishop Luers Knights celebrated an avalanche of a postseason that culminated just days short of December with a state championship. Fort Wayne Bishop Luers pocketed their eighth state Indiana Class 2-A football title on Friday, Nov. 28, and were honored in a medal cer-

emony Monday afternoon in the Knights' gymnasium.

Week after week, the "come-back kids" never stopped believing and as a reward hoisted the state trophy proudly in front of the entire student body, family and loyal fans.

Also on hand for the festivities, a representative from Mayor Tom Henry's office read a written proclamation declaring Monday, Nov. 30, in the year 2009, as a day set aside to commemorate the Knights state championship foot-

ball team who exhibited 48 minutes of Bishop Luers football.

Bishop D'Arcy made a return trip to the school after celebrating Mass with the team on game day. Opening with a prayer, Bishop D'Arcy congratulated the Knights on their well-played game, which he watched in its entirety on television, noting the courage and skill it took to come from behind to win.

"This young team played with great energy, heart and desire and while nothing is guaranteed, (we know) we will be back in Indianapolis next year," Bishop D'Arcy envisioned. He asked all to be thankful for the great gift of Bishop Luers High School and expressed gratitude to the 2009 group, which continued and enhanced a great winning tradition.

"This football team has once again emblazoned the name of Bishop Luers across the state of Indiana," Bishop D'Arcy con-



PROVIDED BY MARK WATTS

Bishop Luers pocketed their eighth state Indiana Class 2-A football title on Friday, Nov. 28, and were honored in a medal ceremony Monday afternoon in the Knights' gymnasium. Bishop John M. D'Arcy congratulates team members of the Bishop Luers Knights.

cluded.

Bishop Luers Principal Mary Keefer shared with the crowd a poem she created just for the special occasion which began, "Twas the day after Thanksgiving ..." and highlighted memories of the championship game in the "Colts den."

Longtime Coach Matt Lindsay read his list of thank-you's to all for "keeping the faith" this season. He then called each player by name to receive their state medals. The Bishop Luers pep band ended the party the way they started it, by playing the school fight song.



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Vatican art book a treasured gift

REVIEWED BY YORK YOUNG

As Christmas approaches, many readers are thinking about shopping lists and what can be given as a gift this year that would be unique or different. Being able to tap into something that takes into consideration the interests of the person you are buying for is often difficult. Therefore, one perennial idea when trying to fill this goal is books — oftentimes, coffee-table books.

This year, for a Catholic loved one or friend, a particularly attractive book is "The Vatican: Secrets and Treasures of the Holy City," by Father Michael Collins (DK Publishing, \$35). The cover price is actually fairly reasonable, considering the magnitude of both the quantity and quality of the artwork in this 300-page book.

Covered with a design that evokes both gift wrapping and the framing of artwork, "The Vatican" is much more than just a book with a lot of pictures. The goal is to detail both the splendor of the Vatican and its holdings, as well as the day-to-day happenings at the center of Catholicism and the world's smallest state.

A historical section provides an ever-so-brief look at the development of the See of Peter in about 40 pages (brief because we are

talking about 2,000 years here). But the purpose of coffee-table books is generally to impress the owner with the artwork, for repeated viewing and hours of pleasure.

The bulk of the images in this book focus on architecture and artwork, a vast variety of which the Vatican and surrounding church-related property possess. A look at the buildings at the Vatican includes small floor plans of the structures and many pictures of sculptures, gardens, facades, etc., at unique angles.

While St. Peter's Basilica viewed from the Piazza San Pietro, designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in the early 17th century, is how most people see the iconic image of Catholicism, other parts of the Vatican grounds and pictures of St. Peter's as viewed from different locations on the 109-acre property are a joy to see.

After being wowed by the physical structure of the Vatican, readers are taken into the daily lives of many who work there. Yes, there are many pictures of what a pope's life is like, and, by following Pope Benedict XVI around, the photographer has given us a glimpse of some rarely seen locations, includ-



ing the pope's living quarters.

Perhaps as interesting, though, is learning about the jobs of those who work at the Vatican — that is, everyday people, such as a ceremonies assistant, a painting restorer, a papal photographer, a

Sister of Charity, a seminarian, a member of the Swiss Guard and others. The explanation of daily life is not as exotic as it might seem. Daily tasks, long hours, a break for lunch, all are similar to what many of us go through each workday — the location is just different.

Also included are images of many of the treasures of the Vatican, including items used in the Mass and other devotions.

We all know that many Christmas gifts don't have a very long shelf life. Even most books get put aside quickly, maybe even without being read. But, if the receiver of this gift has a desire to get in touch with his or her faith and the church a little bit more, this is a gift that can help. If you're not sure, a little present for yourself surely won't hurt.

McEveety speaks on 'The Passion of the Christ'

STEUBENVILLE, Ohio — "Never has the world been so dark," movie producer Steve McEveety told a standing-room-only crowd at Franciscan University of Steubenville on a Sunday evening. "This is the time to make this world a better place."

McEveety, producer of "The Passion of the Christ," "Braveheart," "We Were Soldiers" and "Bella," engaged the audience with stories about his involvement in that struggle and his thoughts on how the rising generation of filmmakers may become involved, in his Nov. 15 talk, "The Passion, Hollywood, and the Church."

McEveety captivated students, faculty and community members with stories of the time he spent working with Mel Gibson before and during production of "The Passion." He also shared many of the difficulties and problems the crew experienced while working on the film.

"It was the hardest movie I ever shot," McEveety said. "It's a movie about arguably the most important 12 hours of all eternity, so of course we're going to have a lot of problems."

The wild media controversy that began before they even started shooting only intensified as the movie neared release, and was a daily struggle, McEveety said. Thunderstorms plagued the filming

process, with Jim Caviezel, who played Christ, and a crewmember being struck by lightning, but miraculously emerging uninjured.

Because no major studio would release the film, they had to go directly to individual theater owners to find people willing to show it.

"The devil was doing whatever he could to mess up the project," McEveety said.

The devil didn't succeed, however; "The Passion of the Christ" had the second-biggest opening weekend ever for an R-rated film, earned over \$600 million, and most important, has impacted people all over the world.

In a question-and-answer session, McEveety predicted that while there are a lot of great Christian writers out there, probably not more than one or two Christian movies are going to come out of the big production studios a year, because the current system "doesn't understand the Christian market."

McEveety's latest film, "The Stoning of Soraya M.," is currently being shown in selected venues and is due out on DVD, in spring 2010. He is currently working on two projects: "Left to Tell," the true story of a Rwandan genocide survivor, and a film about Our Lady of Guadalupe.

His lecture was the latest presentation in the Franciscan University Distinguished Speaker Series.

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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.

MISC. HAPPENINGS

Help from all councils needed

Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 13142 will sponsor an Angel Tree at St. Henry Church Saturday, Dec. 19, at 1 p.m. Volunteers are needed from all councils to provide gifts, music, food or funds for the children of inmates in prison. Call Mark at (260) 622-4042 for more information.

Day of Reflection

Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent (across from Marian High School) Wednesday, Dec. 16, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is "Joy." Please bring a Bible. The cost of the day is \$15 and includes lunch. Register by Dec. 11 to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at (574) 259-5427.

Christmas concert announced

Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Church, 1515 Barthold St., will present a Christmas Concert Sunday, Dec. 27, at 7 p.m. in the church with Jim Didier, choir director and Kathy Schall, bell choir director. Admission is free.

Living Nativity

Fort Wayne — The children of St. Therese Parish will perform "Follow the Star" a living Nativity on Saturday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. at the church, 2304 Lower Huntington Rd. Christmas music will be sung and live animals will be on hand. Some walking is required. Refreshments will follow in the parish hall.

Knights help pitch-in campaign

Huntington — Knights of Columbus Council 1014 will hold a "Pitch-In" campaign on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with roadblocks set up in three locations throughout the city of Huntington. One hundred percent of the donations help people who have a temporary need and no other source available to attain assistance.

St. Anthony de Padua holds open house

South Bend — St. Anthony de Padua School, 2310 E. Jefferson Blvd., will have an open house Sunday, Dec. 6, from noon to 2 p.m.

St. Pius X senior group to meet

Granger — The St. Pius X senior group will meet Tuesday, Dec. 8,

beginning with Mass at noon, lunch and entertainment to follow. Cost is \$5. The Knights Council 4263 will also meet that day for a 6 p.m. rosary, 6:30 p.m. Mass and 7:30 p.m. supper and council meeting in the Holy Cross room.

National Society of Foresters plan Christmas party

Fort Wayne — The St. Antoinette Court 870 of the National Society of Foresters will have a Christmas potluck Sunday, Dec. 13, from noon to 5 p.m. in the Sacred Heart school basement. For information call Pedro Heredia at (260) 447-2357.

St. Bavo announces parish mission

Mishawaka — St. Bavo will have a parish mission Dec. 7-9, from 7-8:30 p.m. each night. Father Andy O'Reilly, Cpps, will be the speaker on "The Compassionate Life."

Lessons and Carols at St. John the Baptist

Fort Wayne — Lessons and Carols, a concert of Christmas and Advent music and lessons from sacred Scripture, will be presented by the choirs and instrumentalists of St. John the Baptist Parish on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 5 p.m. The church is located at 4525 Arlington Ave.

REST IN PEACE

Angola

Eileen Marie Mercer, 92, St. Anthony of Padua

Elkhart

Jeanette Lochmandy, 94, St. Thomas the Apostle

Fort Wayne

Susan Drew Neuhaus, 64, St. Jude

J. H. Bueter, 82, St. Jude

Rita J. Pallone, 88, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Donna Rae Botteron, 77, St. Jude

Ernesto Garcia, 76, St. Patrick

Marian C. Slyby, 82, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Granger

Frances Marion Gilroy, 87, St. Pius X

Hot V. Nguyen, 62, St. Pius X

Richard F. Andrzejewski, 79, St. Pius X

Rafael Macias, 80, St. Pius X

Mishawaka

Sister M. Clarita Denzel, OSF, 98, St. Francis Convent

South Bend

Emilia Kolesnik, 79, St. Adalbert

Linda Korn, 88, St. Jude

Lois Mae Spaulding, 87, St. John the Baptist

Celina Van Mele, 97, Christ the King

Rafaela Lara Alvarez, 74, St. Adalbert

Wanda A. Matuszak, 92, St. Stanislaus

Walkerton

Juanita M. Malkowski, 78, St. Patrick

FUND RAISERS

Cookie Walk

Plymouth — A cookie walk will be Saturday, Dec. 12, from 8 a.m. to noon in the school cafeteria of St. Michael Church. The cost is \$4 per lb. and is sponsored by Altar Rosary Society.

Cookie Walk

Mishawaka — A cookie walk will be Saturday, Dec. 12, from 9 a.m. to noon in the lower level of St. Monica Church. The cost is \$4 per lb. and is sponsored by Rosary Society.

Queen of Peace Parish Papa Vino's spaghetti dinner

Mishawaka — Queen of Peace Parish will hold a Papa Vino's spaghetti dinner on Tuesday, Dec. 8, with dine-in service from 5-7 p.m. Carry-out service will be available from 5-6:50 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$4 for children 3-10 and free for children under 3. For those wishing to carry-out their meals after the 7 p.m. Mass for the feast of

the Immaculate Conception, the carry-out price is \$6. Tickets must be turned in by 6:50 p.m. with meal pick-up immediately following Mass.

Knights sponsor breakfast

Fort Wayne — The St. Joseph Hessen-Cassel Knights of Columbus will have a pancake, egg and sausage breakfast Sunday, Dec. 6, from 8 a.m. to noon in the church hall. Proceeds benefit the Women's Care Center.

Michiana performing arts benefit St. Vincent de Paul Society

Mishawaka — The Michiana performing arts association will present, "Because It's Christmas," Sunday, Dec. 6, at 2 and 7 p.m. in the Battell Community Center Auditorium, 904 N. Main St. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students under 18 and free for children under 6. Proceeds will benefit the St. Vincent de Paul Societies of St. Bavo, St. Joseph and St. Monica.

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For Information & Application, Contact:Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Rhonda Scher, Personnel Manager • P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, In 46801 260-422-4611 x3335 • E-mail: rscher@diocesefwsb.org
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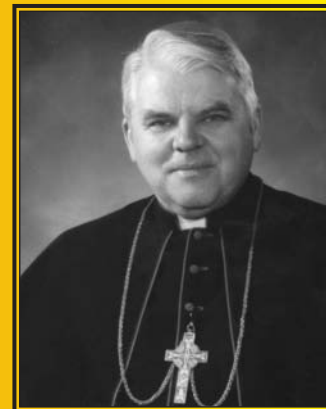
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BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB

This month's featured selection:

"Same Kind of Different as Me" by Ron Hall and Denver Moore

Reviewed by Kay Cozad

Today's Catholic book of the month choice is a compelling true-life story of social injustice, compassion and faith. The detailed narrative is told in first person, chapter by chapter, by the two men who became friends under the most obscure circumstances.

This odd couple pairs Denver Moore, a uneducated homeless black man, whose boyhood spent working on a plantation in Louisiana and subsequent travels lands him in abject poverty, with Texan millionaire Ron Hall, who worked his way from a mediocre banking investments position up to a lucrative fine art brokerage and gallery owner. As the two retell their story, an inspiring tale of unbelievable injustice and brutality washed clean by love and hope unfolds.

Moore's life, riddled with basic survival struggles, addiction and loss, leads him to accept food at an area shelter, where the naive and judgmental Hall and his compassionate wife Debbie have committed to serve. The juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, racial differences and faith attitudes colors the book an interesting shade of black and white until one person, Debbie Hall's, core belief in the sanctity of all life melts and molds the hearts of all involved.

Debbie's forgiving spirit, that once saved her troubled marriage, shone brightly as the shelter inhabitants came to know her. Her commitment to her marriage, her serv-

ice life and her faith fueled her ability to open each person's heart to a better way of life. Her prodding coaxed her husband Ron to work at befriending the angry, mysterious Moore.

As their friendship develops, the two men unwittingly journey together in and out of their separate worlds of poverty and privilege and come to realize that their values and faith are not so different.

As the Halls gently and lovingly invite Moore into their family, life takes a turn when Debbie is diagnosed with an illness that will cement an unbreakable bond the three share. Love, compassion and faith form the strong bond of friendship as the trio strives for healing through medical treatment and prayer. The intimacy of the dialogue and mystical circumstances holds the reader rapt and wanting more.

The text, well written in colloquially realistic language, gives the reader a genuine feel for the painful struggles, loss and hope the characters experience. The inspiring faith exhibited by Debbie, before and during her illness, is both encouraging and motivating.

The book includes a Reader's Guide offering individual or group discussion questions and an interview with the authors as to where they are now. Photos that bring the unlikely pair's journey of friendship to life illuminate the final pages.

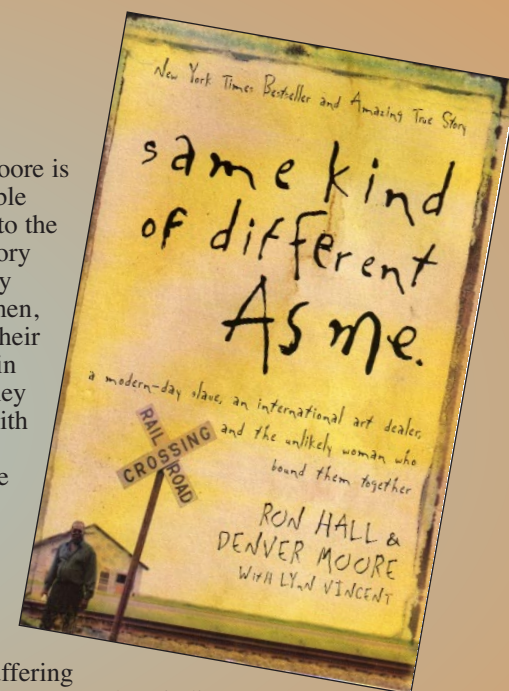
"Same Kind of Different as Me," by Ron Hall and

Denver Moore is an incredible journey into the real life story of two very different men, who find their sameness in the God they worship with the loving help of one deeply faithful and compassionate woman.

It's a story of suffering and pain, poverty and prejudice, all cloaked in the vestiges of faith and forgiveness, bond in love, compassion and hope. It's a must read!

For discussion questions see page 237 of the text.

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