Catholic Schools Week 2020
Celebrating excellence

Catholic schools across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will celebrate Catholic Schools Week Jan. 26-Feb. 1 with special events, dress-down and dress-up days, and open houses. Inside this issue of Today's Catholic, read about the vision of the Catholic Schools Office and why Catholic schools are so deeply valued.

Photos taken by Jennifer Barton, John Martin and Derby Photography.
Mom of twins says ‘miracle’ events led her to reject abortion, choose life

BY DAVE HRBACEK

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, Minn. — Alonna Mertz prayed in front of abortion clinics as a teenager in Michigan, driven by her well-formed, pro-life conviction.

Then, in 2017 as a young adult, she went to such a clinic in Minneapolis for a different and unexpected reason: She was pregnant.

Dating a man whose values didn’t align with hers, she found herself alone and feeling scared about the new life inside her body.

“At that point, there was enough distance between me and God that I wasn’t listening to the Holy Spirit,” said Mertz, 27. “I was terrified, and I made an appointment for an abortion.”

Like so many other women who discover unplanned pregnancies, Mertz struggled with a torrent of tortured emotions when a home pregnancy test confirmed what she had sensed was true.

“I wept,” she said of seeing the positive result. “I felt so sorry for my baby. It (her life) wasn’t a white picket fence. It wasn’t a mother and father who loved each other. It was broken and it was hard. And, this is what my child was going to meet. And, I just couldn’t bear that reality.”

She was well aware of the “big disconnect” between what she had grown up believing and what she now wanted to do. A Catholic, she had served for a year and a half with NET Ministries in West St. Paul, and even had volunteered with a pro-life pregnancy resource center in the Twin Cities after moving to Minnesota from Michigan in 2015. Still, she pressed on and went to the abortion clinic.

Fourth-degree members of the Knights of Columbus color guard prepare to lead the 2020 Right to Life of Northeast Indiana March for Life on Saturday, Jan. 18. At right, the banner for the newly renamed organization is unfurled for the first time at the downtown Fort Wayne event and carried by organization volunteers. The expansion encompasses the counties of Adams, Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Wells.

Despite the cold, rainy conditions, groups of families with young children joined the march in support of the millions of unborn children who are at risk of abortion each year.

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Photos by Jennifer Barton
Gratitude abounds —

Bishop Rhoades celebrates Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

BY JENNIFER MILLER

To begin the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated and preached a homily during the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom last year. At that liturgy, Father Khaled Anatolios and the Byzantine Catholic community of the University of Notre Dame offered thanks for the fruits of Our Lord’s passion and death, and give thanks for the Eucharist. Bishop Rhoades concluded with the reminder that “what we are doing now in this chapel is all about gratitude. The word Eucharist, from the Greek literally means ‘thanksgiving.’ It’s no coincidence that this is the greatest prayer of thanksgiving we can offer to God. We give thanks for the fruits of Our Lord’s passion and death, and we celebrate with thanksgiving the new life we receive through His Resurrection.”

An icon of Jesus Christ stands in Malloy Chapel, University of Notre Dame, during the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of St. John Chrysostom last year.

Jennifer Miller

Anatolios family ‘entirely drawn into’ ministry

For Meredith Anatolios, M.Div., wife of Father Khaled Anatolios, it is a joy and privilege to serve the Byzantine Catholic community alongside her husband. Originally from outside Detroit, Michigan, she clearly remembers the first time she worshipped in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. “From that very first time, I have been drawn to the sense of the transcendence that I find in the Divine Liturgy. Now, 16 years later, I feel very at home at both (Catholic and Byzantine) liturgies.

The autumn after Father Anatolios’ ordination in 2015, the family moved to Indiana from a large Melkite cathedral. In the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the Anatolioses have supported one another in their service and ministry to the flourishing Byzantine Catholic community.

Father Anatolios is most grateful for his wife’s strength and support, Meredith focuses on a lot of the administrative, behind-the-scenes work, like the email list and sending reminders. She also sets up the chapel and prepares for a social hour that takes place after the liturgy.

“My part of that is often very mundane: taking more responsibility for our children or work around the house or work. My part is to support his or her spouse in their vocation — it just so happens that my husband’s vocation is to be a priest.

“I have experienced profound moments of deep love for him while watching him celebrate the Divine Liturgy. There is a great blessing in watching your husband live out his vocation and know that others are being drawn closer to God through his work. My part of that is often very mundane: taking more responsibility for our children or work around the house so he can write a homily or visit a sick community member. Other times it is tending to his vestments or making sure we have the right color altar cloths. But we also spend a lot of time talking about our community and how we can meet their needs. Our married life, well, really, our family life, is entirely drawn into this ministry.”

— Jennifer Miller

Public schedule of Bishop
Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, January 26: 9 a.m. — Mass of the Sunday of the Word of God, St. Vincent de Paul Church, Fort Wayne

Tuesday, January 28: 11:30 a.m. — Fort Wayne You Can Lend a Hand Luncheon, Grand Wayne Convention Center, Fort Wayne

Tuesday, January 28: 6:30 p.m. — Theology on Tap, Welch’s Ale House, Fort Wayne

Thursday, January 30: 11:30 a.m. — South Bend/Southwest Michigan You Can Lend a Hand Luncheon, Century Center, South Bend

Friday, January 31: 8:15 a.m. — Mass and Pastoral Visit, Holy Cross School, South Bend

Saturday, February 1: 5 p.m. — Mass of the Presentation of the Lord, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne

TODAY’S CATHOLIC

January 26, 2020

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Alonna Mertz plays with her twin daughters, Lilly and Eve, at the home of Joan and Robley Evans in Mendota Heights, Minn., Jan. 3. A year ago the family took in Mertz and the twins, who will turn 2 Feb. 2. Mertz became pregnant unexpectedly in 2017 and was considering abortion. She went as far as going to an abortion clinic, but what she describes as a “miracle” took place the day she went. She changed her mind and instead sought help at a pro-life center in Woodbury, Minn., where she had once volunteered.

“Eventually, she was called in for an ultrasound to confirm the pregnancy and determine how far along she was. But, the technician could find nothing — no image, no heartbeat. Mertz was instructed to schedule an appointment to try the test again. No way, Mertz decided. After a reaction of “just relief,” she went to the parking lot, cried for 20 minutes and looked up a pro-life clinic for a follow-up exam because of abdominal pain. There she was told she was having twins.

“It was time to start telling people and seeking help, including a friend she had met a few years earlier, Theresa Evans. Eventually, Mertz did tell her boyfriend, and they came back together for a year after the girls were born. But it didn’t work out, and she turned to Evans and her family for help. Theresa’s parents, Robley and Joan Evans of St. Joseph in West St. Paul, quickly and eagerly offered to let her stay in their Mendota Heights home.

“She has her own apartment in the basement, and an informal lease agreement that is up for renewal every six months. So far, the arrangement has worked well for both sides, partly due to the pro-life convictions of the Evans family.

“We have a sign in our yard that says, ‘Choose life,’ “ said Joan, 60. “You can consider yourself pro-life, but when something like this happens, it challenges you.”

With all of their six children grown and most of them out of the house, Joan and Robley had room for a tenant. Theresa also lives there, and she likes being close to Mertz and her daughters. Eve is her goddaughter.

“Meanwhile, Mertz, who is studying to become an MRI technic- ian, is sharing her story publicly, including how she stayed from her Catholic faith, became pregnant and abortion-minded, and eventually returned to the Church. She hopes she will have the chance to encounter a woman in an unplanned pregnancy. She wants to say to her what she now knows after bringing twin girls into the world and raising them over the past two years: “You are not alone, and you can do this.”

Dave Hrbacek is a photographer/reporter at The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.
Bills offer protections for pregnant women in the workplace

As a leading pro-life voice in the Catholic Church calls on 2020 to be a “Year of Service for Pregnant Women,” the Indiana Catholic Conference is closely monitoring legislation that would promote safer working environments for employees who are expecting a child.

Companion bills introduced in the Indiana House and Senate this month would prohibit an employer with 15 or more employees from discriminating against a pregnant worker. House Bill 1294 and Senate Bill 342 also would require employers to provide “reasonable accommodations” for their pregnant employees per a doctor’s recommendation — from offering them extra breaks in their weekday to being exempt from heavy lifting.

“Passage of this legislation would allow women to be employed without the stress and fear of working in situations that could lead to miscarriage,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “Additionally, minor modifications and freedom from discrimination could also prevent a pregnant woman from seeking an abortion because she fears losing her job.”

The timing of the proposed legislation coincides with a challenge recently issued by Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. He called upon all U.S. bishops to join in a nationwide effort titled “Walking upon all U.S. bishops to join in a national effort to protect pregnant women’s right to be pro-life.”

Bohacek, a Catholic and a businessman himself, said he wants those in the business community to see that they can fulfill their obligations to their customers while ensuring the safety of pregnant employees and their unborn children.

“This bill gets it done,” said Bohacek, a member of Notre Dame Parish in Michigan City in the Gary diocese. Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb referenced both the House and Senate bills in his Jan. 27 in the Senate Committee on Family and Children’s Services.

“We will be working really hard to ensure that Indiana soon becomes the 28th state to have a law like this in place,” Macey said.

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

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CANDLEMAS

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate the Mass for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord Saturday, Feb. 1

5 PM Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Pope appoints first woman to Vatican foreign ministry post

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis named Francesca Di Giovanni, a longtime Vatican official, as an undersecretary in the Vatican’s foreign ministry, making her the first woman to hold a managerial position at the Vatican Secretariat of State. The Vatican announced Jan. 15 that within the Vatican Secretariat of State’s Section for Relations with States, Di Giovanni will head the multilateral sector, which deals with intergovernmental organizations and multilateral treaties.

With the new appointment, the Vatican foreign ministry, led by Archbishop Paul J. Gallagher, will have two undersecretaries. Di Giovanni will serve as undersecretary alongside Msgr. Mitrosław Wachowski, who will continue to work in the area of bilateral diplomacy. In an interview with Vatican News published shortly after the announcement, Di Giovanni said that there had been a need for an undersecretary for the multilateral sector, but “I sincerely never would have thought the Holy Father would have entrusted this role to me. It is a new role and I will try to do my best to live up to the Holy Father’s trust, but I hope not to do it alone,” she said. “I would like to count on the harmony that has characterized our working group so far.”

USCCB president urges nation to overcome racism that still clouds hearts

WASHINGTON (CNS) — While the United States has “come a long way” in addressing racism and injustice, much more remains to be accomplished to achieve the dream of “the beloved community” envisioned by the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles urged the country to overcome still-entrenched racist beliefs and discriminatory practices in a statement released in Washington to mark the annual holiday honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which is the sacred Scripture that found its fulfillment in his person,” Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, said.

The newly established day is being celebrated Jan. 26.

The official logo for the Sunday of the Word of God was unveiled at the Vatican Jan. 17. It depicts “The Road to Emmaus” and is based on an icon written by the late Benedictine Sister Marie-Paul Farran. The logo shows the resurrected Christ holding in his left hand a scroll, which is “the sacred Scripture that found its fulfillment in his person,” Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, said.

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Pope speaks to U.S. bishops about pro-life issues, transgender ideology

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Protecting human life is the “preeminent” social and political issue, Pope Francis said, and he asked the head of the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Pro-Life Activities to convey his support to the pro-life community. Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the bishops’ committee, told Catholic News Service Jan. 16 that the pope agreed with the U.S. bishops’ “identifying the protection of the unborn as a preeminent priority. His response to that was, ‘Of course, it is. It’s the most fundamental right,’” Archbishop Naumann recalled the pope saying. “He said, ‘This is not just a religious issue; it’s a human rights issue,’ which is so true.”

Archbishop Naumann was one of 15 bishops from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska making their “ad limina” visits to the Vatican in mid-January to report on the status of their dioceses. He and other bishops spoke to Catholic News Service Jan. 16 after meeting with the pope for more than two hours. Archbishop Naumann said he told the pope that since the Roe v. Wade court decision legalized abortion, an estimated 61 million abortions have taken place in the United States.

President Trump issues new guidance on prayer in public schools

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Donald Trump announced his administration’s new guidance on prayer in public schools during a Jan. 16 event in the Oval Office on National Religious Freedom Day. Primarily, it will require states to report cases where public school students have been denied their right to pray. Ahead of the event, material about it was provided to reporters in a background briefing the morning of Jan. 16. In a separate proposed rule, the administration aims to protect the rights of religious student groups at public universities, giving them equal treatment with secular student groups. For schools to receive federal funding, they will need to certify once a year with state education departments that they do not have policies or rules that would prevent students from constitutionally protected prayer, a senior administration official said. State departments of education also would have to report to the U.S. Department of Education each year with a list of local school boards that failed to make the required certification as well as complaints made to that department about a local school board or school that has been accused of denying students or teachers their right to engage in constitutionally protected prayer.

Judge blocks Trump’s order on state refugee settlement

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A federal judge in Maryland issued a preliminary injunction Jan. 15 blocking the Trump administration from enforcing an executive order that would allow state and local government officials to reject resettling refugees in their jurisdictions. The judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, three faith-based resettlement agencies — HIAS, a Jewish organization; Church World Service; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service — who said their work would be directly impacted and harmed by the order. In his 31-page decision, U.S. District Judge Peter Messitte said the executive order could be seen as unlawful because it grants states and localities veto power that “flies in the face of clear congressional intent.” The judge also called for refugee resettlement to “go forward as it developed” for the almost 40 years prior to President Donald Trump’s executive order, announced last September. Ashley Feasley, director of policy for Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, echoed this sentiment, telling Catholic News Service that “refugee resettlement will continue as it has before” based on available resources and family connections. But she also acknowledged that the refugee resettlement process has taken a hit. “Everything is in flux,” she said just after the injunction was issued, and she pointed out it would likely be appealed by the Trump administration.

News Briefs

The official logo for Sunday of the Word of God was unveiled at the Vatican Jan. 17. Official logo for Sunday of the Word of God unveiled
TODAY'S CATHOLIC

AROUND THE DIocese

Northeast Indiana parishes march for life

SOUTH BEND — Adult learners are getting ready to return to Forever Learning Institute for another 10-week semester of lifelong learning.

A not-for-profit school attracting volunteer instructors from a variety of backgrounds, the breadth and depth of course offerings is what brings over 1,000 students to FLI each semester. And at $45 a course, Forever Learning remains accessible to seniors on any budget. Class topics include health and fitness, creative arts, music, dance, history and political science, religion, languages, leisure activities, business and computer technology.

Students may view the 100-plus course offerings online at www.foreverlearninginstitute.org or stop by Forever Learning at 54319 Lea Road, South Bend, to pick up a course guide. Guides are also made available through St. Joseph County public libraries.

Classes take place at locations throughout Michiana. Forever Learning’s main campus and office are in St. Therese, Little Flower Parish Center. Classes also are taught through the Irish Federation of St. Joseph County, Southfield Village, and new this semester, Howard Park.

The 10-week spring semester will begin March 2. Onsite registration for all classes will be available Feb. 18, 19 and 20 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students also may register for classes by mail, using the registration form online or in the course guide.

The mission of Forever Learning Institute Inc. is to improve the quality and dignity of senior adult life through continuing interventional challenges, spiritual reflection and social interaction.

ST. MEINRAD — The Montessori-based method of Catholic formation for young children will be offered by St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level I training includes three sessions. The first session will be held June 10-14 on the St. Meinrad campus. The deadline for registration is March 1.

The training is designed to create and facilitate a sacred, hands-on space for children called an atrium, where children and their catechists can hear, ponder and celebrate the essential mysteries of the Catholic faith as revealed in Scripture and the liturgy.

This course will enrich the participant through fostering a catechist’s spirituality, grounded in theological and pedagogical formation, along with a study of Maria Montessori’s vision of the human person.

In addition to providing the theory and praxis of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the course will prepare participants to develop and facilitate an atrium for 3- to 6-year-old children. After completing the course in January 2021, the participant will be certified as a Level 1 Catechist by the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

The second and third training sessions will be held July 16-19 and Jan. 7-10, 2022. For more information and to register, visit www.saintmeinrad.edu/continuing-formation/catechesis-of-the-good-shepherd.

The program is offered by the school’s Continuing Formation Program. For more details, contact Morgan Simon at msimon@saintmeinrad.edu or 812-557-6341.

Medical mission taking volunteers

FORT WAYNE — Divine Healer Medical Mission is in need of medical volunteers for its next trip to Nigeria in April. Divine Healer is located in Fort Wayne and was started by Sister M. Austin Terese Finnerty, the Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy, who felt God was calling her to serve the poor and needy throughout the world. Sister Austin, a students practitioner, is a native of Nigeria.

Divine Healer’s purpose is to share God’s love, compassion and healing power by improving health and establishing food pantries for the hungry. The next mission trip takes place April 14-24 to a rural area in Nigeria. The group is in need of doctors, nurses and medical personnel who are willing to serve the poor.

Anyone interested in learning more about past medical missions or how to join the April trip can visit www.divinehealer.org, email divinehealermed@gmail.com or call Nancy at 260-402-4263.

Donations are gratefully accepted at Divine Healer Medical Mission, P.O. Box 10821, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46850 and on the website.

St. Joseph, Elkhart county right to life organizations merge

SOUTH BEND — St. Joseph County Right to Life announced the week of Jan. 13 a merger with Elkhart County Right to Life. The merger was effective Jan. 1. The combined organization will conduct business as Right to Life Michiana.

St. Joseph County Right to Life was founded in 1972. For 45 years, SJCRTL has been taking a fervent stand for the protection and respect for all innocent human life from fertilization to natural death. The foresight and resolve of the founding members continued to strengthen, making the organization a powerful force for life in north-central Indiana.

Elkhart County Right to Life began in 1993 and has grown in many ways. The organization has led the call for respect for life through monthly and annual life chains, an annual rally and prayer walk, a presence at the Elkhart County 4-H Fair, pastors’ luncheons and a fall reception.

Right to Life Michiana will continue with the mission of pro-life education to natural death. The foresight and resolve of the founding members continued to strengthen, making the organization a powerful force for life in north-central Indiana.

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Rekindle the Fire
enlightening for father and sons

T he upcoming “Rekindle the Fire” men’s conference, a strong and growing tradi-
tion in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, invites the Holy Spirit to bring
the blessings best suited to each of the more than 1,200 men expected to
attend Feb. 22 at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

One example of the graces for male spiritual-ity that are received at the
conference is the inter-generational bonding expe-
rienced by Brian Carmody and his family. Carmody,
his wife Nicole and their three sons are members of
St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne. He shared
his story about gifts that have already overflowed
to Sam, 19; Luke, 16; and Jacob, 15.

One of the stories. They were
gotten before was some
design, we each invited
our sons, so it was a peer
group for them. It was just
what I thought it would be. The boys were all-in. Sam
and I still talk sometimes
about that first one and
about one of the speakers,
Jesse Romero, who urged
men to be like sheepdogs,
looking out for people.

How did Rekindle
the Fire become a
‘family affair’ for
you and your sons?

I never went just by
myself. I started taking
my oldest son, Sam, who’s
now 19, when he was
about 15. He liked it. I had
been involved in Chris
Renews His Parish, and
I liked that environment
where everyone is open
and honest and you’re
there to just be guys, just
who you are. Sam had
gone to a Life Teen retreat,
and he and I had talked
for a half-hour after that
retreat. I wanted him to
have the same kind of
experience with an older
group.

(In 2016), I was plan-
nning to go with my brother
and a co-worker. By
design, we each invited
our sons, so it was a peer
group for them. It was just
what I thought it would be. The boys were all-in. Sam
and I still talk sometimes
about that first one and
about one of the speakers,
Jesse Romero, who urged
men to be like sheepdogs,
looking out for people.

So attending with
your oldest son
became an annual
practice?

We went to both Fort
Wayne and South Bend.
Last year, along with
Sam, I took my other two
sons when they were 15
and 14. And again my
brother went with his son.
I expected a little pushback
about spending the whole
day and traveling to South
Bend. But they really
enjoyed it. They said, “This
was really good, Dad.”

They had met one of the
priests they know. It was
neat to see all the priests
there. The confessions are
awesome — something
I always look forward to
doing. But the conference
format lets you do what
you want. I was amazed
by the sheer number of
people there — the grow-
ing number.

How did it affect
everybody?

One of the takeaways
is being in a good envi-
ronment where you have
that full day, you’re pretty
much immersed. You soak
up more. You break up
into groups and have great
conversations. It’s just
great to see all these guys
sharing a vision of how we
should live our lives, with
the help of great speakers
and the guys who help put
the event on.

What the boys hadn’t
gotten before was some
of the stories. They were
really neat — especially
the Father Don Calloway,
the surfer priest. You get
so many different perspec-
tives. It makes you realize,
“I’m on a different jour-
ney.” But it’s not bad. It’s
just you.

How have the
conferences
affected you
personally?

Early on, I was invited
to be in one of the ongo-
ing local Rekindle the
Fire groups. Our group
is named the sheepdogs,
after Jesse’s talk. It was
five or six people to start
with. Now it’s up to about
15. We meet every three or
four weeks. It’s that extra
boost you need for getting
engaged and to get that
male camaraderie — in an
environment where you
can say whatever. Usually
nothing earth-shattering,
but it’s a laid-back two
hours. It’s good for the
soul, that’s for sure.

The kids aren’t ready
for that yet, but I think
when the time is right
they’ll feel comfortable.
We’re reading “Be a Man,”
by Father Larry Richards.

MORE INFO

The event location
rotates every year
between Fort Wayne
and South Bend. Jesse
Romero will join
Father Mike
Schmitz and
Eternal Word
Television Network’s
Marcus
Grodi as
this year’s
Rekindle
the Fire
speakers.

To register, visit
rekindlethefire.net.
The five essential marks of an authentically Catholic school are: being inspired by a supernatural vision, founded on Christian anthropology, imbued with a Catholic worldview, sustained by Gospel witness and living out the Gospel message, taking time for worship, certainty in transubstantiation, having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, believing in the communion of saints and more.

The Catholic school, which includes all of our parish schools, as a community of faith, is involved with an integral nature of the human person. Because we are social beings, a community of faith in a Catholic school requires interaction, teamwork, and cooperation among all members with students and the school’s physical environment. Archbishop Miller said. While interaction, teamwork and cooperation among individuals are easy to understand, what requires clarification is what is meant by the school’s physical environment. The context of the physical environment as part of our Catholic faith has to do with a school’s Catholic identity. When one enters our schools, they should see visible signs, such as images, symbols, icons and other objects of worship that convey this is an authentically Catholic school. When Catholic schools are animated by communion and community, they are places of faith.

The final indicator that a school is authentically Catholic is the witness of its teachers and administrators. While this is the most natural essential mark to understand, it is the hardest to fulfill. Teachers and administrators must see their jobs as a vocation from God that requires them to participate in the evangelization of the Church. We can accomplish this by living up to the example set by Jesus Christ as a teacher and servant. The hard part comes from revealing the Gospel by actions and not just words.

Catholic educators, Archbishop Miller said, must be committed to the teachings of the Church and living a sacramental life whether or not they are Catholics. Catholic schools with educators sustained by Gospel witness are places of faith.

Please join me in prayers of entirelist for our bishops, pastors, parents, administrators, teachers and staff, who ensure that these five marks are brought to life in our Catholic schools by their daily witness.
I believe: The value of Catholic schools

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Many choices for primary and secondary education exist in modern society. Advocates for Catholic schools — parents, teachers, administrators and the students themselves — often sacrifice much for the opportunity to achieve an academic foundation that's not only challenging but faith-based, from grade school through high school. In this issue of Today's Catholic, they share why they value Catholic education.

Owen Hilger
9th grade; Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne
“I like having crosses and things around the school, it keeps me in the mindset of prayer all the time. I go to the Decade Club before lunch. All the teachers are all in the same boat, so you can communicate with them very easily and ask them questions about what Catholics believe about something, like evolution in biology.”

Alexis Converset
4th grade; St. Joseph, Decatur
“I like that you learn religion and memorize the 10 Commandments in fourth grade.”

Carol Draeger Thomas
Principal; Our Lady of Hungary, South Bend
“What the beauty of Catholic education is, it's basically a marriage between faith and academics. They both go hand in hand and both enrich each other in a philosophical but deeper manner. What I love about being here is I can wear my Catholicism on my sleeve, so it permeates everything I do. So you're helping students grow in their faith, but in their academics as well.

“We teach them to always go to God. Go to God for your strength, for your gratitude, and if you go there, He will listen. We're so lucky because in the Catholic schools, we teach them the faith life and the value of our Gospels. That's what's going to carry them over in their entire life.”

Christian Lozada
8th grade; Queen of Angels, Fort Wayne
“In our Catholic education, the religion teacher, Mrs. Meyer, is very helpful; she gives us a lot of information about our religion, even to the ones who aren’t Catholic. I also like that the teachers, like Mrs. Frey, help out kids in need, that don’t understand the lesson we’re on. I like practicing our faith every day.”

Brian Baker
Principal; St. Joseph, Decatur
“Catholic education is the lifeline of the parish. The parish supports the school, but the school supports the parish because these are their future parishioners. What sets Catholic education apart is the children's ability to pray for each other, receive their sacraments and learn the teachings of the Catholic faith. It's ingrained in daily education; it makes a difference.”

Liam Post
5th grade; St. John the Evangelist, Goshen
“I like that we do this thing called ‘Reading Counts.’ It gives me something to really work towards and has helped my grades. I also like the teachers. Since most of them are Catholic, we can really talk about our faith with them. And our friends; we can talk about our faith with them freely. And there’s not a ton of Catholic schools all over the world. We’re very lucky to have one in Goshen.”

Paul Morgan
6th grade; St. Joseph, Decatur
“The most important thing about Catholic school is that we get to go to church every Tuesday and Friday.”
I believe: The value of Catholic schools

Nelda Vega
Mother of three at Our Lady of Hungary, South Bend
“Catholic education is very important to me. I just love the faith and the Catholic community and how strong our faith is in the Catholic religion. I have three kids; it’s pretty much my whole family there, all my little cousins. I had my kids at Our Lady of Hungary and told all my cousins about it and they took their kids out of public schools and put them there. I love how they work with students one-on-one; they have more time with them. Also, they learn about God and the Virgin Mary, and they get to pray.”

Brigid Frey
Language arts teacher; Queen of Angels, Fort Wayne
“I appreciate the small, family atmosphere. Whether it’s the students or parents or the awesome staff you get to work with, everyone is close-knit. Queen of Angels has been my second family now for 23 years. Working here has really helped a lot because I’ve been through so much. It was a godsend; working around faith-filled people and family; people that are willing to go above, even the students.”

Dezmond Armenakis
7th grade; Our Lady of Hungary, South Bend
“I like that the teachers make me feel comfortable. They work one-on-one with you, they help you. Here the teachers show that they care. They have a good vibe. I have a lot of friends and two cousins here. Everybody’s family here.”

Elias Hilger
11th grade; Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne
“I appreciate the ability to pray, obviously, and also to develop relationships with my teachers. I know I can rely on them, go to them with my questions and they’re a good example. They teach more than just the subjects that they’re in. I feel like Dwenger provides a lot of opportunities, like the chapel. Every time before lunch there’s Decade Club, and I like to go to that and pray before we eat.”

Jimena Guerro
5th grade; St. John the Evangelist, Goshen
“I like all of our teachers. And I read all the books here. I like the church, and instead of just going to Sunday Mass, I go to Wednesday and Friday Mass at school.”
Catholic Schools Office articulates long-term vision

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Under Superintendent Dr. Joseph Brettnacher, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Catholic Schools Office is committed to its mission and the beliefs shared by all diocesan schools, providing sound religious instruction based on the teachings of the Catholic Church and ensuring academic success for all students.

What’s new since 2019 — when Brettnacher was appointed superintendent — is a deliberate process to articulate a long-term vision and develop a strategic plan to carry it out. This process will eventually lead to Focus Accreditation, a new kind of accreditation at the diocesan level.

Input on establishing the vision has come from many different stakeholders, beginning with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and including those who staff diocesan Catholic schools. The Catholic Schools Office seeks to involve additional partners, including universities, national and local organizations, “to help our students to build Catholic values and morals, and excel spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially,” according to Brettnacher.


BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Jennifer Miller

For the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, achieving academic excellence involves curriculum development and extra-curricular experiences that are challenging, relevant, research-based and infused with the Catholic faith and traditions. Above, fourth graders depict saints that they researched for an all-schools Mass in South Bend in November.
What is National Catholic Schools Week?

Since 1974, National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2022 is Jan. 26 - Feb. 1. The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2020 is “Catholic Schools: Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.” Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to the church, the communities and the nation.

Upcoming CSW schedules

2021
Celebrate Catholic Schools Week - Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2021

2022
Celebrate Catholic Schools Week - Jan. 30-Feb. 5, 2022

2023
Celebrate Catholic Schools Week - Jan. 29-Feb. 4, 2023

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Catholic Schools

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• has a new 3-Year-Old Program COMING fall of 2020
• scored in the top 4% of all Indiana schools on the statewide iLearn exam
• received an “A” on the Indiana state grading scale
• has an aide present at all times in each primary classroom
• has a full-time licensed resource teacher, technology coordinator, school counselor, food service manager, literacy specialist, and curriculum director
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Sunday, January 26, 2020 11:30 am - 2:00 pm

DID YOU KNOW CHRIST THE KING ... ?

• has a new 3-Year-Old Program COMING fall of 2020
• scored in the top 4% of all Indiana schools on the statewide iLearn exam
• received an “A” on the Indiana state grading scale
• has an aide present at all times in each primary classroom
• has Pre Kindergarten and Kindergarten
• offers extracurricular activities ranging from Robotics, Student Government, National Junior Honor Society, to Drama Club

Catholic Schools


Catholic Schools Week 2020
January 26 - February 1
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THE PURPOSE OF OUR SCHOOLS IS THREE-FOLD: TO HELP OUR STUDENTS TO
BECOME DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, FULFILL THEIR DESTINY TO BECOME SAINTS AND HELP THEM TO
REACH HEAVEN,” READS THE VISION STATEMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DIOCESE
OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND. EACH DAY, IN THOSE CLASSROOMS, STUDENTS CONTINUE
ON THAT PATH.

“Nothing begins with Catholic identity, helping stu-
dents deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and understand
the role of faith in their daily life and in larger society. One of the
tools that will clarify this is the “Principles of Catholic Identity in
Education” program developed by the Cardinal Newman Society,
which enables schools to achieve
the status of Catholic Education
Honor Roll School.”

Leadership includes recruiting
and training principals, from
promising classroom teachers to
retired professionals. Parishes
and the CSO will assist teach-
ers in earning the necessary
advanced certification, being
trained in both state and dioc-
esan assessment measures and
learning about modern collabor-
ative technology that will make
their jobs more manageable.

Principals and pastors will have
opportunities to attend regional
training on specific topics such
as school advisory boards,
tuition and contracts.

Achieving academic excellence
involves curriculum development
and extra-curricular experiences
that are challenging, relevant,
research-based and infused with
the Catholic faith and traditions.
The tools available to improve
academic excellence now include
standard curriculum collabora-
tion days, mechanisms to evalu-
ate success and research-based
interventions to handle challeng-
es. An area of potential growth
that the CSO has identified is the
availability of prekindergarten
programs.

Operational vitality secures
the sustainability of a school’s
finances, personnel, facilities
and institutional advancement.
Besides sound investments and
facilities, ensuring operational
vitality also can include employ-
ing marketing and branding
strategies. The Catholic Schools
Office plans to develop a tool-
kit each school can adapt to
improve internal and external
communication and increase
enrollment.

What is essential about all
this? As Brentnacher put it, “The
purpose of our schools is three-
fold: to help our students to
become disciples of Christ, fulfill
their destiny to become saints
and help them to reach heaven.”
Each day, in the classrooms of
Catholic schools across the dio-
cese, the students continue on
that path.
The Catholic Difference

Understanding the debate about celibacy

I

n one of those embarrassing public dust-ups that occasionally affict our Church, a source of great concern was the public retirement of the Pope this spring due to his advanced age. At issue was the finteness and appropriateness of the man who chose to dedicate his life to the Church, and how his departure was handled.

The Church's long-standing discipline of celibacy is a testament to the understanding of the Church's commitment to the spiritual needs of our people. It is not something that should be taken lightly or ignored.

On one hand, the Church has a clear understanding of the benefits of celibacy and the importance of a priest's dedication to the spiritual life. On the other hand, there are those who argue that a married priest would be better suited to the needs of the faithful.

In the end, the decision is a matter of conscience and the need to serve the faithful. The Church is committed to ensuring that those who are called to the priesthood are able to serve the faithful in the best way possible.

Reflection

These readings remind us of how blind we humans can be and also of how powerful human beings are.

In the first reading, Isaiah criticized the people for their religious listlessness, but he also said that they were capable of change. He taught a basic message: earthly reward will pass, more quickly than many might realize. This understanding requires grace, available only to those who earnestly follow the Lord.

St. Matthew's Gospel supplies the last reading. It is situated in Caeraphnaum, the fishing village located at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is there, having left Nazareth. His public ministry has begun.

As a center of commerce, albeit very modest commerce, Caeraphnaum saw people come and go. Jesus used this coincidence as an opportunity to encounter many people. He called them to fidelity to God. He repeated for them the admonitions of the ancient law, which were applied by the teaching of the Apostles.

In this place Jesus met Andrew, and then He met Peter, who He renamed Simon. These brothers became the first of the Apostles in the sequence of calling. In time, Christianity was to grow from, and build upon, the foundation of the Apostles. It is interesting that the Gospels, such as the case in this reading, refer to these Apostles so specifically by giving their names. The Gospel leaves no doubt whatsoever about their identity since it was vital in the early Church that the teachings of the Apostles were known and kept intact.

Sin is no match for God

Sin is no match for God, and if by chance we allow it to prevail, we are allowed to ask away by turning to God and by allowing divine grace to empower us. The impulse to sin, with real, is no match for God or for the heart determined to be with God.

The teachings of the Apostles guide us to our own empowerment and union with the Lord.

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The teachings of the Apostles guide us to our own empowerment and union with the Lord.
In Bible study in my parish, we have been reading through Genesis. On Jan. 12 we read of Lot and the horrifying results of his decision to pitch his tent toward Sodom. We also see in his life a significant spiritual problem: sloth, one of the seven deadly sins. Sloth is a sorrow, sadness, or averse to the effort, even in little ways, that things God offers. Rather than being joyful and zealous to obtain these gifts, the slothful person sees them as too much trouble to obtain and is adverse to the changes such gifts might introduce into his life. This is clearly the case with Lot, who resistively and self-defensively was the attempts of God to rescue him and his family from the sinfull city of Sodom, which is about to be destroyed.

Lot’s personal troubles were many, but for our purposes his problems began when he “pitched his tent toward Sodom.” (Gen 13:12) Abraham and Lot had grown very rich — almost never a good thing in the spiritual life — and realized that their flocks were so large that part of the land could not sustain them both. Thus they agreed to live in separate sectors. Abraham left the choice of areas to Lot, who chose the better part for himself. The area where Sodom was is now a deep desert, but at that time the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. (Gen 13:10)

But Sodom was a wicked city, filled with false worship, greed, insensitivity to the poor, and the approval and practice of homosexuality. By turning his face toward Sodom, Lot willingly exposes his family to the grave moral threats there. And it does indeed affect them. Ultimately, his wife cannot bear to leave, looks back and is lost. His daughters escape, but later engage in the grave sin of incest. Lot, too, will find it hard to flee Sodom, finding God’s offer to save him to be too much trouble.

Many of us, too, think little about the risks that television, the internet, music and culture pose to us and our children. Too easily we risk our eternal salvation and that of our children by pitching our tent toward Sodom through easy connection to the good world that is poisonous to our ears and soul. Even if some things are troublesome, many of us are too lazy to draw back and limit, even in little ways, the influences that are contrary to our faith.

Sloth also has only one resource in his favor. Abraham is praying for his nie-de-do-well nephew. He asks God’s destroying angel to spare Lot and his family. (Gen 19) God agrees to this and acts to save Lot in spite of himself. Really, it’s the only thing that saves Lot.

It is true that Lot was just, in the sense that he did not approve of the sin around him. But neither did he act to really protect himself or his family from it. Something about Sodom appealed to him and he weighed that more heavily than the risks. And so, for many today, who have the TV on no matter the risk because it entertains or has some other perceived benefit that outweighs the moral risks. Or those for whom it’s just too much trouble to monitor the websites their children visit or the music they listen to. It really is only Abraham’s prayers that save Lot, who would live with sinners, from dying along with them. Thus, don’t forget the power of prayer or some of the “ne’er-do-wells” you may know. God may act to save them before the Day of Judgment simply because you prayed for them. But here comes the heart of the story: sloth. The angel warns, “Flee!” But Lot hesitates. Fleeing is hard work; it means leaving things behind that you like. Perhaps Lot thinks, “Maybe the warnings of destruction are overblown; maybe it won’t really be so bad.”

The story says that Lot, although he recognized the Lord’s kindness toward Sodom, put his own comfort first before turning his back on the evil. That is sloth with a capital “S!” So lazy and settled in with sin has Lot become, that he rather accept danger than expend the effort to flee. Not only that, he can’t even manage to rouse himself in order to save his family. It’s all just too much trouble. Sloth is sorrow, sadness or averse. In effect, he says, “Man, those hills look far away. And they’re not nearly as nice as this valley. It’s going to take a lot of effort to get there. Do I really have to go that far?”

And here is another aspect of sloth, compromising with despite knowing the danger. Even if it occurs to many that some things in their lives need to change, they choose to make no changes. The Lord tells us that we cannot serve two masters, that we cannot serve both the world and Him. But realizing that this may introduce uncomfortable situations or have financial impacts, begin to negotiate with their conscience, saying, “I’m basically serving God … well, at least mostly. Maybe it’s enough if I do a few holy things in saving them, asks to change the plan and flee to a smaller and more simple living, is rejected as requiring too much trouble or as requiring too much change. The Lord tells us, “That is sloth with a capital “S”!” Sloth is sorrow, sadness or averse. In effect, he says, “Man, those hills look far away. And they’re not nearly as nice as this valley. It’s going to take a lot of effort to get there. Do I really have to go that far?”

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The virtues opposed to sloth are zeal and joy. Zeal for God’s truth and the beauty of holiness, and a joyful pursuit of the life God offers us, are gifts to be sought.
‘1917’: about the Great War

BY JOHN MULDERIG

NEW YORK (CNS) — “1917” (Universal) is a great movie about the Great War. By turns harrowing and lyrically beautiful — and deeply humane throughout — director and co-writer (with Krysty Wilson-Cairns) Sam Mendes’ gripping historical drama displays both the horrors of trench combat and the endurance of fundamental decency and spiritual striving.

Our entree into the grim spectacle of the global conflict comes as two friends serving with the British Army on the Western Front, Lance Cpls. Schofield (George MacKay) and Blake (Dean-Charles Chapman), are dispatched on a dangerous mission across enemy territory.

Their task is to warn a nearby commander, Col. Mackenzie (Benedict Cumberbatch), that, by carrying out an imminent attack, he will be falling into a German trap. Their mission is made all the more urgent by the fact that one of the 1,600 men under Mackenzie’s command facing slaughter if the assault goes forward is Blake’s brother, Joseph (Richard Madden).

Mendes keeps the stakes high and the pace unflagging as the duo journeys across a once-fruitful but now ruined landscape. While the relentless challenges lying in their path may strike some canny moviegoers as a bit extreme, most will be too busy rooting for the success of their quest to notice.

Unsparing in its portrayal of misery and desperation, “1917” also is luminous in its affirmation of civilized values. This is especially true during an encounter between Schofield and a refugee mother who has taken shelter in a basement as she tries to care for her infant child.

Mendes brings as light and artful a touch to this peaceful interlude as he does to the anti-war theme that pervades the picture. Like a good novelist, he takes to heart the admonition to show rather than tell.

The tension between cynicism and faith also is dealt with in a subtle way. Thus when a burnt-out officer, Lt. Leslie (Andrew Scott), finds that Schofield and Blake are determined to carry out their orders, despite what he regards as hopeless odds, he “anoints” them with the contents of the flask he’s been drinking from while reciting a prayer from the rite then known as Extreme Unction.

Yet, at a climactic moment, the singing of a transcendent hymn transfixes a company of soldiers as they’re about to go into battle — and the audience along with them. While the message conveyed by this scene is broad and implicit, it’s also — like “1917” as a whole — profoundly moving.

John Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.
WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

**NOTRE DAME** — The Kloska Family Life Defenders Boot Camp will be Saturday, Feb. 8, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Gedes Hall, Notre Dame. This Boot Camp provides a comprehensive pro-life apologetic training and is open to all from eighth grade through adulthood. To learn more or register, visit prolifechiana.org/bootcamp.

**SOUTH BEND** — Just Desserts, a “date night” series for couples in its 10th year, will be Saturday, Feb. 1, from 7:30-9 p.m. at 260 489-3537 or reginazeda@Saintv.org. An all-you-can-eat Polish food, open bar, along with along with lots of dancing. The evening will feature a surprise bride and groom chosen from the crowd, honeymoon cash, wedding gifts drawn from the “hopper,” music by the DJ Sound FX, and more. Tickets are $50/person and you must be 21 or older to attend. RSVP by Jan. 25 to 574-287-5435 or email development@chiarahomerespite.org.

**FORT WAYNE** — St. Vincent de Paul Church will host a “Polish Wedding” fundraising event on Saturday. Feb. 8, from 5-10 p.m., benefitting Chiara Home. Enjoy a wedding reception dinner complete with all-you-can-eat Polish food, open bar, along with along with lots of dancing. The evening will feature a surprise bride and groom chosen from the crowd, honeymoon cash, wedding gifts drawn from the “hopper,” music by the DJ Sound FX, and more. Tickets are $50/person and you must be 21 to attend. RSVP by Jan. 25 to 574-287-5435 or email development@chiarahomerespite.org.

**STRONGHOLD** — Fort Wayne-South Bend. Contact Abby Kyle at 574-272-7070 orabby@littleflowerchurch.org.

**FORT WAYNE** — Fort Wayne South Bend. Contact Lisa Everett 574-234-0687 or leverett@diocesefwb.org.

**FORT WAYNE** — A children’s carnival will be offered at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel, 1152 Old Decatur Road S., on Friday, Jan. 31, from 6-8 p.m. There will be various games for the children to play including plinko, cake walk, face painting and more. There will be food to purchase and a raffle table.

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**Christ Renews His Parish at St. Pius X**
GRANGER — St. Pius X, 52553 Fir Rd., will host a Christ Renews His Parish weekend for men on Saturday, Feb. 8. It is an opportunity to take time away from the daily routine and focus on the spiritual journey to experience Christian community, celebrate the sacraments, and develop a deeper prayer life. Contact Harry Mahold at 574-850-5064 or hmbahold@yahoo.com for information.

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**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL** — Sunday, Jan. 26, at 9 a.m., at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Fort Wayne. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate the ‘Sunday of the Word of God’ Mass on Sunday, Jan. 26, at 9 a.m., at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Fort Wayne.
BY JENNIFER BARTON

Students at Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne, were challenged to seek truth and a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ during a pastoral visit by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades on Jan. 15. The seeds of that challenge were sown throughout classroom visits and rooted in the celebration of the Mass, at which the bishop noted, “We need to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, to the graces of our Baptism and Confirmation, so that we have the courage and strength to live our faith.”

During his visit, the bishop was able to interact with all grade levels. He also recorded an interview in the school’s new video productions class for a half-hour documentary about teenage depression and stress. The documentary will air on PBS this spring.

Deb Baum’s morality class had a surprise for Bishop Rhoades: a card in honor of his 10th anniversary as bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The card had been signed by the entire junior class and featured a student’s drawing of the bishop wearing a Bishop Luers school T-shirt. In addition to the card, the students committed themselves to praying a novena for him beginning on the day of his visit.

Chad Smith brought up another issue of truth in a senior religious dialogue class that was focusing on the challenges students face in living out their faith “when society tells them one thing and the Church tells them another.” Bishop Rhoades responded by telling the students to form their consciences in the truth of Scripture, the teachings of the Church and through prayer.

“Don’t let the culture form your conscience. Seek the truth,” he said. When a student asked how he keeps his faith strong in today’s society, Bishop Rhoades answered, “My relationship with God. I know that I am God’s beloved son, and that gives me peace.”

The concept of truth came to the forefront again in Heather Briggs’ AP biology class, where senior Alex Workman presented his findings from an enrichment project for a unit on genetics. Workman has a genetic condition called celiac disease, which prevents the body from processing wheat products. He became interested in new genetic editing technology known as CRISPR. Research indicates that such science could provide a defense against diseases like celiac, cancer and HIV/AIDS.

“Workman spoke about not only the potential benefits, but also the ethical problems with such technology. Bishop Rhoades informed the class about Catholic scientific organizations that discuss ethics in various areas of science, including the Society of Catholic Scientists. He pointed out that the Catholic Church has long been a supporter of science and that faith and science are compatible, though science is not always good if not tempered by the proper application of ethics.”

Workman’s presentation was followed by a talk on CRISPR by Deb Baum's morality class. During the Mass, Bishop Rhoades conferred the sacrament of confirmation on four people: three students and one teacher. The students who were confirmed were Juan Ramirez, Helen Ramsey and Juan Rodriguez, who also made his first communion that day.

“Emily Didrick, who has been teaching English at Luers since 2017 said, ‘I wanted to be a witness to those students that have not yet made their confirmation. I wanted our students to see that no matter their age or place in life, the Church is welcoming to all.”

In his homily, the bishop spoke of the courage given to the Apostles by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to go forth and speak the truth of Christ. He said that same spirit is with Christians today.

“Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us everything. He is the Spirit of Truth. The world needs this truth, needs Christ, who is the Truth. Only Christ can humanize humanity.”

He assured the students and staff that although it can be difficult to live the Catholic faith today, at times, God will remain with them.

“Christ still needs to be made known and loved. That will only happen if believers like you and me are willing to serve the Gospel and to bear that Gospel to our contemporaries. Not just bishops, priests, and sisters, but all of us have this mission. You have this mission as baptized and confirmed Catholics and Christians. Don’t be afraid to be faithful to the truth of Christ, to respond to hatred with love, and to proclaim the hope of the risen Christ to others,” he encouraged. “The Holy Spirit will help you.”

At the end of Mass, Bishop Rhoades announced that he had a surprise for the students. Until recently, he said, he had not been able to find any artifacts belonging to Bishop John Henry Luers. But on this visit he brought the slippers, or buskins, used by the first bishop of the diocese. Of even greater interest was the second item Bishop Rhoades brought from a collection on loan from the Congregation of Holy Cross to Diocesan Museum: a decorated mitre. Originally thought to have been used by Bishop Joseph Dwenger, Bishop Rhoades related that when he opened it he found instead the signature of Bishop Luers inside.

The student body enthusiastically greeted the news that they would be allowed to temporarily display the only known artifacts of their namesake.

“I think that the gifts the bishop brought were outstanding and what a special surprise,” said principal James Huth. “The mitre is absolutely beautiful, and it’s amazing for as old as it is. It’s in great shape. The slippers were ... it’s crazy. They fit Bishop Luers (school), because of the comfortable place that this is.”

The bishop shows Bishop Luers High School students a mitre that belonged to the school’s namesake, the first bishop of the diocese.