Representatives from the eastern half of the diocese queue up to present the Book of the Elect for their individual parishes to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades Sunday, Feb. 23, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne. Assisted by Deacon Jerome Kohrman, the bishop recorded the names of each parish’s catechumens in the corresponding book during the Rite of Election, which was followed by the Call to Continuing Conversion.
Candidates, catechumens declare intentions to enter into full communion with Church

BY JENNIFER BARTON

T he Lenten season is meant as a time to focus on prayer and preparation for the highest of feasts in the liturgical year: the joyful celebration of Easter. This is especially true for those preparing to complete or receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil Mass.

On Sunday, Feb. 23, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne for those seeking full communion with the Catholic Church and who live and worship on the eastern half of the diocese. The rite anticipates the joy of their entrance into the Church as one of the final steps toward full communion.

During the service, Bishop Rhoades declared that the catechumens and candidates were chosen and called “into the holiness of God’s trinitarian life; the holiness of His love as His adopted children.”

Seventy catechumens and 91 candidates were presented for acceptance into the Church at the service, which began with the Liturgy of the Word and was followed by the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. Catechumens are those who have not been baptized and who will receive that sacrament along with their first Communion and confirmation at the Easter Vigil. To prepare for this, they become one of the “elect” in a public manner by asking for baptism and having their names written in the Book of the Elect. Candidates have already been baptized and now desire full communion with the Catholic Church. They will receive their first Communion and confirmation at the vigil. Both catechumens and candidates have undergone a period of prayer and study, preparing their hearts and minds to join Christ’s Church.

The readings focused on the fulfillment of God’s covenant with His chosen people through the passion, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. One reading was proclaimed in Spanish and the other in English, with translations provided in the program.

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades spoke first to the catechumens. “Catechumens, the Church is choosing you because you have responded to God’s call with faith and because you desire to live in Christ as members of His Body, the Church. This election by the Church is founded on your election by God, in whose name the Church acts. Usual is God who has chosen you.” He then referenced the second reading, from St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians: “It’s really a hymn, a great prayer of blessing that St. Paul addresses to God the Father. It begins with these words: ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before Him.’”

“In God’s eternal design, we have this vocation to be holy,” said the bishop. “Well, only God is holy. So our vocation to holiness is a vocation to communion with God.”

The first reading, from Jeremiah, also emphasized God’s election of His chosen people. “There is the promise of the new covenant that He made with them. Through Israel, Bishop Rhoades said, God sent His Son, ‘who would be the Savior of all humanity … In his Son, all would be chosen.”

All Christians are called to continued conversion. Jesus constantly invites the faithful to know, love and follow Him more deeply and boldly, proclaiming Him to all the world. This is part of Christian initiation, particularly for those who are already baptized and awaiting full communion in the Church.

Speaking to the candidates, Bishop Rhoades said, “You are already Christians. You already share in the Trinitarian life. You are already incorporated into the Body of Christ. In becoming Catholic, you will become more deeply united to Him and to His Church.”

The bishop then thanked those who played a part in bringing Christ to the catechumens and candidates, saying that he intends to pray for all of them throughout Lent. “And then, after Easter, I hope and pray that your life in Christ will continue to be nurtured by the sacraments and that you will be active members of the Church, the Body of Christ, all the days of your life.”

Following the homily, the catechumens were presented to the bishop by their pastors or a representative from the parish. As their names were called individually, each catechumen stood with their godparents while Bishop Rhoades wrote their names into the Book of the Elect. Afterward, he addressed the godparents and catechumens, asking them to vocalize their response to God’s call and desire to enter the Church. With their personal affirmations, he declared them to be members of the elect.

The candidates for full communion in the Church were presented to Bishop Rhoades in the same manner. He stated, “The Christian life and the demands that flow from the sacraments cannot be taken lightly” and therefore asked for the testimony of the candidates’ sponsors. The candidates then affirmed their desire to enter into the fullness of the Catholic faith.

A reception took place after the rite at the Grand Venue Center. There, the bishop greeted the candidates and the newly elect, expressing his intention to pray for them and wishing them well as they prepare to begin their journey in the Catholic faith.

Randal Krick, a candidate from St. Louis, Besanon Parish, New Haven, shared how he had been a Protestant for 32 years before turning to the Catholic Church. Last summer, Krick was attending Ohio Christian University to become a minister. While doing homework on the early Church and the Church’s fathers, Krick said he came to realize that the early Church “looked a lot like the Catholic Church.”

At the Atlanta Center, Annette Sinn, began to send him videos of Father Michael Schmitz. “I came to the conclusion that the Catholic Church is the true Church.”

Coming from an evangelical, charismatic background, Krick said he was glad to see that the Catholic Church believed in many of the same things he did, including post-biblical miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
Almsgiving: An overshadowed Lenten pillar has something to say

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — When it comes to the three pillars of Lent, almsgiving is a little bit like the middle child, not always getting the attention that prayer and fasting do.

The word hardly rolls off the tongue and people don’t talk about it as they might discuss what they are giving up for Lent or how they might be praying more or reading spiritual books during the 40 days before Easter.

A February editorial in America magazine described almsgiving as the “under-practiced, under-encouraged Lenten discipline” and pointed out that in the magazine’s 110-year-old archives, a search for prayer and fasting in article titles had thousands of examples but a similar search for almsgiving yielded just two results.

Almsgiving is defined as donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes it as “a witness to fraternal charity” and “a work of justice pleasing to God.” The practice of giving to help those in need runs through all the major faith traditions.

Christians might have good reason not to talk about their almsgiving practices since biblical warnings are pretty clear on guidelines of keeping this practice quiet.

For example, in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus has this to say: “When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others.”

But out of sight in this case should not mean out of mind. The Old Testament is full of reminders about the need to give alms. A passage from the Book of Tobit goes a step further by saying “almsgiving saves from death and purges all sins.”

So, if believers know that they should give, why isn’t this discipline more of a Lenten topic of conversation?

Jesuit Father Bruce Morrill, the Edward A. Malloy professor of Catholic studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville, Tennessee, said one possibility is that so much of the religious practice of Lent is shaped by images that represent what people are trying to do with their faith — ashes, for example, or fish on Fridays.

“Almsgiving is not easily recognizable,” nor does it necessarily demonstrate religious devotion as prayer and fasting do with their focus on personal holiness, he said.

He pointed out that the practice of giving to those in need was not recognized for its spiritual value even in the New Testament. Jesus spoke about being asked: “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?” and His response was if they did this for “the least of these” they also did it for Him.

Since the Second Vatican Council, Father Morrill said, the Church has made more of an effort to connect worship and prayer to moral activity, and many Catholics have made the connection that fasting is not just to be pious but should have practical measures: taking the money that would have been spent on food or drink, for example, and setting that aside to give to the poor.

That is the whole idea behind Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl, the small cardboard box for collecting donations to help those supported around the world by CRS, the U.S. bishops’ overseas relief and development agency. Since its inception in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl has raised nearly $300 million. Last year, nearly 14,000 Catholic parishes and schools across the U.S. participated in the program.

One of the suggestions on the website is to follow meatless recipes it provides from around the world and to put the money saved from not buying meat into the Rice Bowl.

Deacon Nicholas Szilagye, writing in a 2018 issue of Horizons, the online newsletter of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma, Ohio, linked almsgiving to the other Lenten disciplines by describing it as “fasting from our income and material possessions” and saying it translates “prayers into love for each other by giving to the needy in the name of Christ.”

He stressed the practice is not an optional one, but one that is required of believers, but he also lamented that it “seems to get the least attention among the three” Lenten disciplines.

The deacon suggested that people create an almsgiving plan that doesn’t necessarily need to be about giving money but also could be a donation of time, energy or talents to those in need.

“Let’s make almsgiving an encounter with God during Lent through the face of the poor,” he wrote.

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Marriage preparation for previously married couples gives unique emphasis

By Barb Arland-Fye

Davenport, Iowa (CNS) — Each of the 12 couples participating in a recent marriage preparation program at the St. Vincent Center in Davenport shared a common experience — one or both partners had been previously married.

“It’s super helpful to hear from other people who have been there,” said Tina Osmun, an adult child/grandchild of Jordan. “It’s super helpful to hear from other people who have been there,” said Tina Osmun, an adult child/grandchild of Jordan.

Jerry wants other couples to experience what they experience.

John Schmidt told The Catholic Messenger, Davenport’s diocesan newspaper, in explaining why he and Nancy lead this program. They want to train other couples to ensure that all couples entering the sacrament in remarriage receive the enrichment they need.

“Helping others to see marriage as a sacrament is important to us,” Jennifer Stefani said. “Jerry and Renee Guinan of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Davenport were among the couples in training. “I think it’s a great experience and a need in the community for people who are entering a second marriage,” Renee said. “Especially in light of the statistics regarding remarriage and blended families,” Jerry said. “Especially in light of the statistics regarding remarriage and blended families,” Jerry said.

The day’s program provided the Guinans with a good review and ideas for their marriage of more than years, Renee added. “God has blessed us with a sacramental marriage.” She and Jerry want other couples to experience what they experience.

Brandon Hinnenkamp and Alicia Freihammer of St. Thomas More Parish in Coralville, Iowa, appreciated the customized approach of the remarriage preparation program and the strategies and resources provided.

Brandon has been married previously. Alicia has not. Hearing about other couple’s situations regarding remarriage was helpful, she said. “We’re not alone; this is something other people go through,” Brandon said.

Rob Arth and his fiancée, Terese Venenuto, said their pastor, Father Tony Herold of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Davenport, encouraged them to participate in the remarriage program.

Both of them discovered during their annulment process that “you need God and his grace that comes through the sacrament. He needs to be at the center. He does have to be first. I think we figured that out, but today (the remarriage preparation program) affirmed it.”

“One thing that really seemed to stand out with this group of couples was the acknowledgment of the importance of keeping God at the center of their relationship,” Agnoli said. “Several couples commented that this had not been the case in their previous marriage, and they wanted things to be different this time around.”

From this first presentation in Davenport, she also recognized “the importance of having team members who have experienced death/divorce in a previous marriage to serve as hope that a healthy, thriving, Christ-centered remarriage is possible.”

Arland-Fye is editor of The Catholic Messenger, newspaper of the Diocese of Davenport.
Measure to protect pregnant employees among bills stalled

A bill designed to offer protections for pregnant women in the workplace is unlikely to move forward this year despite backing from the governor and a broad base of support that includes the Catholic Church.

With Senate Bill 342, advocates were hoping to see Indiana become the 28th state to enact legislation providing “reasonable accommodations” for pregnant employees, from more frequent breaks to exemptions from heavy lifting. But after initially passing through committee, the measure was effectively tabled this month when the Senate voted 34-15 in favor of an amendment proposed by Sen. Andy Zay, R-Huntington, to send the issue to a summer study commission.

The Indiana Catholic Conference considered this a pro-life bill and expressed dismay that it was halted, even while another measure reinforcing the sanctity of life moved forward in the same legislative chamber. A day after the vote on Senate Bill 342, lawmakers voted 40-9 in favor of Senate Bill 299, which requires abortion providers to treat fetal remains in a dignified manner.

“I am lucky to be here,” Espada said, explaining that she was born two months prematurely to a mother who worked long hours in an industrial laundry facility. “When you can help a pregnant mother sustain her pregnancy, that is pro-life.”

Senate Bill 342 had strong support from Gov. Eric Holcomb, who has made decreasing Indiana’s high infant and maternal mortality rates a priority. While progress has been made in recent years, Indiana currently ranks seventh in the United States for infant mortality and third for maternal mortality.

“I put legislation requiring reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers on my agenda because I believe women should not have to choose between a paycheck and a healthy pregnancy,” Holcomb said in a statement. “I still believe that and will work over the coming months to persuade the Indiana General Assembly to include these very same accommodations that 27 other states have already enacted. It remains committed to improving infant and maternal health in Indiana so more moms and their babies get off to a better start.”

The bill, which would prohibit an employer with 15 or more employees from discriminating against a pregnant worker, faced opposition from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and the Indiana Manufacturers Association. They and other opponents argued that many large employers already have protections in place and raised questions about the impact of the bill on small businesses.

But other business groups aligned with the broad coalition of the bill’s supporters, which range from physician groups to the March of Dimes to former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, now president of Purdue University. These proponents argued that the bill offered common-sense solutions for a serious problem.

“I was extremely hopeful about this bill, particularly since we had support from business groups large and small, and the governor’s staff provided such excellent testimony,” said Erin Macey, senior policy analyst for the Indiana Institute for Working Families, which also championed the bill. “We heard from the secretary of the Family and Social Services Administration about how part of our goal is to keep people working, and that this bill would help make that happen. “Since (the Senate vote), I keep hearing stories of women who bring in a doctor’s note to work and they’re told to come back when the baby has been born,” Macey continued. “(Employers) are not negotiating with women to see if they can keep them in the workplace. They’re just sending them home.”

Macey and others who testified in favor of Senate Bill 342 traveled to Washington, D.C., this week to meet with Indiana’s congressional delegation about a federal version of the measure. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act recently advanced in the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

“We’re going to take all the momentum on this issue at the state level and work on the federal legislation,” Macey said.

Another measure backed by both the ICC and the Indiana Institute for Working Families program in Indiana, which has not been updated in more than 30 years.

TANF is a federal government program that provides grants to the states for distribution to families in deep poverty. Because of antiquated state guidelines, the $288 maximum monthly payout for a family of three in deep poverty has not been adjusted for inflation since 1988.

A nearly identical TANF bill passed the Senate unanimously last year, but Senate Bill 111 did not receive a committee hearing in this short session of the Indiana legislature.

“We are optimistic that TANF will fare better next year,” Espada said. “The legislative session will be longer and there is no reason why with more time and consideration, money that flows from the federal government shouldn’t be made available to those who have the greatest need.”

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.
Catholics ‘unfriend’ social media, choose ‘digital detox’ for Lent

Baltimore (CNS) — No selfies. No cat videos. Not even an artfully composed photo of avocado toast. Come Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26, Sheila Wheltle’s social media accounts will go dark for 40 days. Her last post will read: “Good for Lent ... See you at Easter.”

More Americans are embracing the concept of a “digital detox” as social media becomes more ubiquitous and at times more harmful, however, others are disconnecting with a distinctly Catholic twist. Wheltle, a parishioner of St. Mark Church in Catonsville, Maryland, uses Facebook to connect with old friends. She grew up in Philadelphia and later moved to California. She loves how Facebook keeps her in touch with those far-flung friends, but she’s also set it aside for the past nine years during Lent. “As an extrovert, it really is a lot of fun,” Wheltle told Catholic Review, the media outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. But she said, “Facebook is also a major distraction and time waster.” The tradition of giving up small pleasures, like sweets or coffee, for Lent goes back to the desert fasting and praying. While Catholics are encouraged to pick something that’s actually a sacrifice, that doesn’t mean the sacrifice isn’t beneficial. Father Mark Bialek, pastor of St. John Parish in Westminster, Maryland, said as Lent approaches he is hearing from more of his parishioners this year about the need to unplug.

Catholic Scout councils not affected by bankruptcy case, chairman says

Washington (CNS) — Boy Scout councils and units sponsored by Catholic parishes and other entities will not be affected by the Chapter 11 bankruptcy case filed by the Boy Scouts of America, said the chairman of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting.

Jim Weiskircher, who also serves as the executive director of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, in an email late Feb. 18 that all local Scout councils and units will continue “business as usual, while monitoring the situation.” The Boys Scouts of America filed for bankruptcy protection in federal court in Wilmington, Delaware, Feb. 18 in an attempt to work out a compensation plan in response to hundreds of sex-abuse lawsuits.

The flood of cases involves several thousand men who claim to have been abused as scouts by scoutmasters and other leaders decades ago and have been filed as some states changed statute-of-limitations laws.

Weiskircher wrote that the National Catholic Committee on Scouting does not plan to follow the route of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which as of Jan. 1 broke with BSA and introduced its own global youth program. The withdrawal of 400,000 members was a blow to the BSA, dropping its membership below 2 million, the lowest since the World War II era. Membership peaked at more than 4 million in the 1970s.

‘Laudato Si’ at five: Project seeks to foster prayerful climate action

Washington (CNS) — Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment set the path five years ago and now a new effort by the Catholic Climate Covenant seeks to shape an intergenerational movement to respond to climate change.

The project seeks to partner with parishes and organizations that want to begin addressing climate change. Resources have been developed to guide participants through prayer services and liturgies, service projects, intergenerational encounters, healing and bridge-building, public demonstrations, classroom lessons, and advocacy and conversation with church and political leaders. The website is: https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/project/catholic-climate-project.

Pope clears way for beatification of Salvadoran Jesuit, companions

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican announced Feb. 22 that Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of a fellow Jesuit, Salvadoran Father Rutilio Grande, and two companions who were murdered en route to a novena in 1977 in El Salvador. Papal recognition of their martyrdom clears the way for their beatification, although the Vatican did not announce a date for the ceremony.

“The announcement of the beatification of Father Rutilio Grande has been expected for many years,” said Mercy Sister Ana Maria Pineda, a relative of the slain priest, in an email to Catholic News Service. “Today the news is received with jubilee and joy. That a man of such humble origins be recognized for his surrender to God, for his love for the poor, and his efforts to achieve justice, is an example.”

Father Grande died March 12, 1977, near his hometown of El Paisnial in rural El Salvador after being shot a dozen times or more along with elderly parishioner Manuel Solorzano and teenager Nelson Ruttilo Lemus, who were accompanying him to a novena for the feast of St. Joseph. Their bodies were found lifeless in an overgrown field and the priest was driving. With a team of Jesuit missionaries and lay pastoral agents, Father Grande, who was the pastor of a church in the neighboring town of Aquiaires, evangelized a wide rural area in El Salvador from 1972 until his assassination by death squads. As was the case with the assassination of St. Oscar Romero and tens of thousands of other Salvadorans, no one was ever charged with his death or that of his companions.

Church, world need St. Joseph’s spiritual care in tough times, says priest

Washington (CNS) — Marian Father Donald Calloway believes the Holy Spirit wants to draw Catholics’ attention to St. Joseph, husband of Mary and earthly father of Jesus “in a major way.”

“We need to entrust ourselves to his spiritual care at this very difficult time in the world and in the Church,” he said.

“Many countries are seeking to redefine marriage, men do not understand what it means to be a family, women do not understand what it means to be a woman, divorce rates are at all-time high, and families are falling apart everywhere.” “We need his loving and strong fatherhood to help us return order to our homes,” Father Calloway added.

To that end he is urging individuals, groups, schools, parishes, dioceses and the entire Church to consecrate themselves to St. Joseph. In his new book, “Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father,” to be published by Marian Press, Father Calloway outlines a 33-day preparation period in Part 1, includes several readings on the “Wonders of Our Spiritual Father” in Part 2 and several prayers to St. Joseph in Part 3.

Jean Vanier had ‘manipulative’ relationships with six women

Montreal (CNS) — Jean Vanier, founder of the ecumenical L’Arche communities that provide group homes and spiritual support for people with intellectual disabilities, has been found to have “manipulative” sexual relationships with at least six women, concludes an internal investigation commissioned by the organization. The investigation found “sincere and consistent testimony covering the period 1970-2005” from six adults, none of whom had disabilities. The women report Vanier initiated sexual relations with them, the report says. Vanier, who died in 2019, asked the women to keep their relations secret. The report says the women reported similar facts, although they did not know each other or about Vanier’s parallel histories. In a letter addressed to members of L’Arche communities around the world, which was due out Feb. 25, the leadership said to the media: “Stephan Posner and Stacy Cates-Carney, respectively international officer and vice president, made the final decisions about the investigation and concluded that the investigation was thorough. The investigation was conducted by the British consulting firm GCPS Consulting, which specializes in situations involving children or vulnerable persons. Members of L’Arche were informed last June that such a process had begun.

Carnival in Brazil

Revelers carry the likeness of a crucified Jesus during Carnival at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro Feb. 24. The annual celebration precedes Lent, which began this year on Feb. 26.
USF announces spring philosophy/theology lecture

FORT WAYNE — Dr. Vincent Wargo, University of Saint Francis associate professor of theology, will continue the USF Spring Philosophy/Theology Lecture Series with a discussion about why the question of “otherness” has become central to the identity of the subject in the 21st century. He will explore the philosophy of otherness and subjectivity as it relates to some contemporary major thinkers and issues.

The free lecture will be presented March 18 at 7 p.m. in the Parkview Physicians Group Auditorium, Room 226, in the Achatz Hall of Science and John and Toni Murray Research Center on campus, 2701 Spring St., Fort Wayne.

The lecture is sponsored by the USF Department of Philosophy and Theology. For more information contact Angie Springer at 260-399-8066 or email aspringer@sf.edu.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish mission

FORT WAYNE — Join members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne for a parish mission, “Prayer as a Eucharistic Parish,” with nationally known speaker and parishioner Robert Rogers.

Rogers will speak about “The Power of Prayer” on Sunday, March 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the Church. He will also speak on the topics “No Regrets Prayers and Adoration” on Monday, March 16, at 7 p.m. in the Church and “A Musical Experience of Prayer and Worship in God’s Presence” on Tuesday, March 17, at 7 p.m., in the Church.

Everyone is welcome to attend. The Church is located at 1502 E. Wallen Road. For more information contact Dorothy Schuerman at church@saintv.org or 260-489-3537, or visit https://www.saintv.org.

Lenten series: ‘Keep Your Eyes on the Cross’

SOUTH BEND — St. Jude Church, 19704 Johnson Rd., South Bend will offer three nights of prayer and reflection to help with the journey into Lent.

“Keep Your Eyes on the Cross” will be on three consecutive Wednesday evenings from 7-8 p.m. at the church. Participants will journey with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem as He makes his way to His crucifixion.

On March 4, the topic will be “Journey to Jerusalem.” Patcut Burns, a visiting professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, will lead a reflection on Jesus’ teachings and miracles as He makes His way to Jerusalem.

On March 11, “Journey to the Cross” will be presented by Paul Wheatley, a PhD student in Theology at Notre Dame. He will explore Jesus’ final week in Jerusalem by looking closely at the Gospel of Mark.

On March 18, Robin Jensen, the Patrick O’Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame with a background in art and art history, will explain why and when the cross and the crucifix began to appear in Christian art and show how the emergence of this core symbol is directly connected to the discovery of the True Cross relics in Jerusalem.

Prayer Pal birthday celebration

Seventh grade students at St. Joseph School, Decatur, traveled to Woodcrest senior community in February to celebrate Mass with Jim McGill and his wife, Jeannette, who turned 100 on Feb. 19. The students presented Jeannette with origami figures and a handmade wreath for her door. They have been writing to the McGills for two years as part of a Prayer Pal program that began 16 years ago at the school as a way to connect through correspondence and prayers with homebound parishioners.
Conference urges men to grow in holiness

BY BRADLEY SPAULDING

On Saturday, Feb. 22, around 1,500 men attended the 10th annual Rekindle the Fire Men’s Conference. This year’s conference took place at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne with the theme of “Where Is Your Focus in 2020?”

The daylong series of talks by renowned Catholic speakers gave those who were present a better understanding of their role as Catholic men. They also experienced a foretaste of heaven during a Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, where the hundreds of brothers in Christ from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend sang praises to God.

During his homily, Bishop Rhoades said: “Holiness, spiritual perfection, that’s our calling. It’s my vocation. And it’s your vocation. The reason we came to this conference is to become better men, better husbands and fathers, and all of us closer disciples of Jesus Christ. That is the test of whether this conference is successful or not. Not how much you enjoyed it or how excellent the speakers were. But if you leave here a little holier, a little more like Christ, the Holy One of God.”

Just being a part of the record-setting crowd seemed to be encouraging for the participants. There were men of all ages—from teens to young adults and middle-aged fathers to retirees. The day provided ample opportunity for growth and reflection. Father Benjamin Muhlenkamp and Father Jacob Meyer emceed the event. The featured speakers were Marcus Grodi, Father Michael Schmitz, Jesse Romero and Bishop Rhoades.

Grodi, the host of “The Journey Home” on Eternal Word Television Network, led the first morning general session with a thought-provoking discussion of what it really means to “win” at the game of life. Grodi explained, the definition of a “winner” involves self-sacrifice, personal growth, gratitude, joy and responsibility toward others and toward the Earth.

During the second general session of the morning, Father Schmitz defined what it means to be a Catholic man. “We need to reject passivity,” Father Schmitz said. He emphasized the need for men to take responsibility for themselves and to also take responsibility for others. “We do this by ‘digging in’ and ‘staying’ in the relationships in our present context, such as our family, our co-workers and our fellow parishioners,” he said.

Romero, a bilingual, full-time Catholic lay evangelist and popular radio host, provided a high-energy presentation on how to fight against the lies of the devil during the afternoon general session. Using a boxing analogy, Romero said that confession and the Mass work like a “one-two punch” offense against Satan. Romero also emphasized memorizing the Ten Commandments and the seven deadly sins in order to “form your conscience, so you can look at life as a child of God.” Praying the rosary daily also helps “take custody of your intellect.” All of these practices help men to fight against evil by being more fully attuned to their heavenly Father.

At the end of the day, Bishop Rhoades led the men in the celebration of the Mass. Citing the theologian Léon Bloy, the bishop noted, “The only tragedy in life is not to become a saint.” That’s what Rekindle the Fire is about: helping Catholic men grow in holiness, taking small steps on the road to sainthood.

The 2021 Rekindle the Fire Men’s Conference will take place Feb. 20 in South Bend.
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated a Mass honoring Our Lady of Lourdes with the students and faculty of Marian High School on Feb. 11. Our Lady of Lourdes is the patron saint of the Mishawaka school.

The bishop explained that he originally planned to visit Marian on the actual feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, Feb. 11, but then was honored to accept an invitation to concelebrate the installation of Bishop Robert J. McClory of the Diocese of Gary on the same date. A week later, he told the students he was very glad to be with them. He also acknowledged two former principals of the school, Secretary for Education Carl Loesch and Superintendent Dr. Joseph Brettner, who were present for his visit, along with current principal Mark Kirzeder.

During the homily, the bishop spoke about the first miracle in St. John’s Gospel — the Wedding at Cana. He said that at first glance, it seems a relatively simple miracle to be presented as Jesus’ first. ‘Though simpler, it had deep significance for two reasons,’ Bishop Rhoades said. In the Old Testament, when prophets like Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah, the new king, they mentioned that He would preside over a great wedding banquet. Secondly, in the Old Testament, God is the bridegroom of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus is the bridegroom of the new Israel, the Church.

He went on to explain that having abundant wine at a wedding was a sign of joy and plenty, which is what Christ wants to bring to us. ‘Now it’s important to notice that Jesus didn’t do the miracle at Cana completely on His own. He did the miracle at the request of His mother,’ he said. ‘It’s not insignificant that it was Mary who noticed that the wine had run out,’ the bishop said. ‘Mary didn’t tell her Son what to do about it, but she believed that He could indeed do something about it.’

‘Keep in mind, up to that moment, Mary had not seen Jesus perform any miracles. She obviously believed He could. She had faith in His supernatural power and believed He could help. Mary says to us as she said to the waiters at Cana — ‘Do whatever He tells you.’’

He shared with students that he once served at a parish in a neighborhood where there were many evangelical churches and they would often ask him if he had accepted Jesus as his personal savior. He always replied that he had, and he does so every day. He started asking them, ‘Have you accepted Mary as your personal mother?’ That gave him the opportunity to talk about Jesus giving Mary to John and to us on the cross, and Mary’s role as mediator at the wedding feast. ‘Mary is our spiritual mother. Under the title of Our Lady of Lourdes, she is your patron and mother here at Marian High School,’ he said.

He reminded the students that Mary intercedes for us like she did for the young couple at the wedding. Those who refuse to welcome Mary into their lives miss something very beautiful, he added, and he encouraged them to deepen their devotion to Mary through actions like praying the Hail Mary or the rosary, wearing a scapular or Marian Medal and having a Marian image in their bedrooms. ‘May Our Lady intercede for all of you and for this wonderful Christian community of Marian High School,’ he said. ‘I pray we go forth from this Mass, strengthened by the graces of the Holy Eucharist, to heed the words of Mary: ‘Do whatever He tells you.’ If we do, our lives will be changed like water into wine. We will have life and have it to the full. That’s what Mary desires for us — friendship with her Son, our salvation!’

Success for all students

Marian has 644 students currently enrolled. This year, the school initiated the Bernadette Scholars Program for students with special needs. Led by Annie Ganser, the program is an extension of the Learning Strategies Center that creates individualized educational plans for each student. The Bernadette Scholars are mainstreamed for at least one class a day; they also participate in school events and activities, liturgical services, sports and clubs to gain the social and emotional benefits of being an active part of the Marian family. The name ‘Bernadette’ was chosen for the program because the school’s patroness, Our Lady of Lourdes, appeared to a young girl named Bernadette in 1858 in France. Bernadette is believed to have had a cognitive disability. The first group of Bernadette Scholars will be sophomores next year. At that time another teacher will be added to work with that year’s freshman group of Bernadette Scholars, according to Mary Kay Dance, director of admissions and marketing.

Although the Bernadette Scholars are not on a diploma track, they will receive certificates of completion at the end of their high school careers and be part of graduation exercises. Marian offers a dual credit program for its mainstream students, and 87% of last year’s graduating class received some college credit — up 2% from the previous year. Kirzeder explained that the school has partnered with several local colleges including Holy Cross, IUSB and Ivy Tech to certify Marian’s teachers and curriculum so they are at the “same standard as those college professors” to enable students to get the college credit. Thirty-four classes are offered for dual credit, and of the seniors who received a dual credit last year, 57% received one semester of college credit and 48% received two semesters. ‘The students have to qualify to take the class, but then we work with them to make sure they at least get some college credit,’ Kirzeder said.

Dance said the credits are recognized at all Indiana state colleges and some other state and private colleges as well. ‘At the same time, we continue to have our AP classes. This (dual credit) didn’t replace it, it runs alongside it.’ Students take the AP test in May and also can receive college credit, depending on their score.

Excelling in service, science and art

The school continues to encourage community service with its Knight’s Service Day in October. Every student, along with staff and parent volunteers, travel to pre-determined locations to volunteer. Last fall, 50 different organizations or homeowners benefited from the work performed by the volunteers. Dance said the idea is to get the kids out in the community, making those connections and hope they build relationships and continue to serve.

This school year is the first for the Service Learning Curriculum. Kirzeder explained that new state requirements offer different pathways to graduations, and one, the Service Learning Curriculum, will be available to the Class of 2023. Marian, however, was allowed to implement it earlier. Years one and two have been developed and administrators and teachers are working on the third and fourth years. Students will be asked to reflect on the service they perform and integrate it into their lessons.

“Our goal is we will meet the requirements without sacrificing our Catholic identity and high academic rigor. That’s what differentiates us from public schools,” Kirzeder said.

Kirzeder also is known for his science and art programs. Those with an interest in science are blessed to be able to use resources at nearby colleges and universities. “They’re doing very well with the help of college professors and are turning in world-class projects that are then entered into national and international science fairs,” Dance noted.
Thank goodness it’s Friday

BY ANNE THERESE STEPHENS

In the U.S., Fridays are marked by festivity, feasting, partying, and partaking in every physical comfort the Western world has to offer. No other day of the week has a similar feel, at least for those who are on a Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. job schedule.

In contrast, Fridays in a cloister of Poor Clare nuns run in an entirely different mode. For them, Fridays are deemed “bridal days” where they observe the habits of waiting, the oblation of almsgiving, the oblation of meditation, the oblation of silence, the oblation of alms, the oblation of prayer, the oblation of fasting and abstinence, the oblation of a good name, the oblation of the choice of penance, and the oblation of the choice of the man of God: fasting for the sake of God, not for one’s own self. Even more, it describes how penance transforms Christians into the likeness of Christ, in particular uniting them to the moment he suffered and died on the cross.

Thus, individual penances affect the whole Church. It is a great and mysterious responsibility that has been given, perhaps one not easily or gratefully received by 21st century Americans accustomed to comfort.

Pope Paul VI did not abrogate Fridays as a day of penance. In fact, he clearly maintained its penitential nature. "Paenitemini" states: "[t]he days of penitence and public confession are to be observed between Wednesday and Thursday, including the day of penance which is the sixth day of the week. The days of penance are also to be observed in the Eastern Church.

The contrast between the whole Catholic world was obliged to observe the obligation in the Apostolic Constitution Paenitemini. Post-1966, on Fridays outside of Lent, everyone now feasts and celebrates, rejoicing that the work week is over.

But Christ still died on a Friday. Wouldn’t Catholics still be bound to observe the commemoration of the Savior’s death? This leads to a question of what exactly, did Pope Paul VI change in the Apostolic Constitution Paenitemini?

First of all, the distinction between penance and the manor of executing penance must be understood. Penance is obligatory for every Christian. Pope Paul VI states as much. “[b]y divine law, the faithful are required to do penance,” the constitution says. The first several paragraphs of “Paenitemini” describe the history of penance as it was understood in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and which was most perfectly practiced by the Lord Himself. It defines penance as “a religious, personal act which has as its aim love and surrender to God: fasting for the sake of God, not for one’s own self.” Even more, it describes how penance transforms Christians into the likeness of Christ, in particular uniting them to the moment He suffered and died on the cross.

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the manner in which the penitential obligation of Friday is carried out. The constitution states, in Chapter 3: “the Church, while preserving...the custom of practicing penitence also through abstinence from meat and fasting, intends to ratify with its prescriptions other forms of penitence as well, provided that it seems opportune to episcopal conferences to replace the observance of fast and abstinence with exercises of prayer and works of charity.” Pope Paul VI believed that it was an opportune time to give the episcopal conferences the authority to prescribe other forms of penitence on Fridays.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops produced a document on Nov. 18, 1966, that was approved by the Apostolic See. Another short, but enlightening and inspirational document, its name is “Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence.”

The document begins describing the importance of penance for Christians. Toward the middle of the document, in a moving several paragraphs, the bishops recommend that every Friday ought to be like a Good Friday and every Sunday like a little Easter. They state: “Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year. For this reason we urge all to prepare for that weekly Easter that come with each Sunday by freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial, penance and fasting.”

Some, thus form of penance must be observed on all Fridays throughout the year. This could include abstinence from meat. It could also include abstaining from some other food, from stimulating beverages or any other comfort a person is used to. The bishops astutely point out “the Catholic bishops of the United States, far from downgrading the traditional penitential observance of Friday, and motivated precisely by the desire to give the spirit of penance greater vitality, especially on Fridays, the day that Jesus died, urge our Catholic people henceforth to be guided by the following norms.”

They also encourage engagement in volunteer work in hospitals, visiting the sick, serving the needs of the aged or lonely, instructing the youth in the faith and meeting obligations to one’s family, friends and neighbors. As anyone who has fasted knows, authentic fasting cannot follow except upon fasting. Formerly, Catholics were required to fast before feast days. These obligations have been abrogated, but remain an encouragement by the Church. In regard to this, the bishops of the U.S. state: “we suggest that the devout will find greater Christian joy in the feasts of the liturgical calendar if they freely bind themselves for their own motives and in their own spirit of piety, to prepare for each Church festival by a day of particular self-denial, penitential prayer and fasting.”

The bishops are describing the joy that accompanies the feast after the fast. The Poor Clare runs exhibit this joy. Only because of their radical mortifications are they capable of such joy. Thus, it would be right to say, “Thank goodness it’s Friday.”

Not because of Friday’s worldly comfort, but because of the penance that it holds — enabling all to enter into the joy of Easter.

Thank goodness it’s Friday. On this day Catholics commemorate the greatest act of love the world has seen — the death of Jesus on the Cross.

Thank goodness it’s Friday. On this day all are invited and have the ability to enter into the life of eternal love, a source of comfort greater than any physical comfort. TGIF.
Women and men: the odds

When we first began having grandchildren, they were roughly evenly divided between boys and girls. But the past 14 in a row have been girls. What are the odds? Roughly the same as the odds that in the general population, boys are born slightly more often than girls. I put the probability of our recent streak at something like .488 to the 14th power, or .00004343876 — in other words, very unlikely.

Here is something even more surprising. In law school, students who do exceptionally well in their first year are elected to clerkships and law firm jobs in their first year are elected after their second year to be officers. The most prestigious among these is the editor in chief.

This year, the editor in chief at every one of the top 16 law schools in the country was a woman. Harvard University, Yale University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Pennsylvania, Duke University, University of California, Berkeley...you get the idea. What are the odds?

This is harder to figure. A generation ago, I would have our string of granddaughters. A generation ago, I would have our string of granddaughters. Harvard Law Review. But these our string of granddaughters.

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The ultimate message is that Satan deceives and tries to exploit human weaknesses. Jesus knows and voices truth, commanding even the devil.

Reflection

In this first weekend in Lent, the Church teaches these basic facts of spiritual life; namely, that sin removes us from God, and that sin is not thrust upon us. We are not captured by sin against our will. We choose to sin.

Another important lesson follows. Perhaps, ultimately, the guiltiest effect of original sin is the human tendency to minimize the existence of slow transport, few foodstuffs, and the drab colors, somber music and demands to fast, pray and give alms — remind me of the inconveniences of the cross and the remarkable gift of Christ's sacrifice.

In the Synoptic tradition. Similar stories appear in Mark and Luke.

As was the case with Genesis, this reading is heavy in its symbolism. Having fasted, Jesus was hungry. Bread, in the time of Jesus, meant something besides food. The devil uses the Lord's natural hunger to draw Jesus into a trap.

Finally, the devil takes Jesus to the top of the temple, tempting the Lord, in effect, to renounce God.

The ultimate message is that Satan deceives and tries to exploit human weaknesses. Jesus knows and voices truth, commanding even the devil.

The inconveniently necessary Lent

I don't like Lent. I don't like the color. I'm much more a green-and-white than a purple-and-gray type of gal.

I don't like the music. Everything is in a minor key, somberly flowing along like we're all walking to our grave.

I don't like the length of the season. Forty days is just awkward. In my experience, it is spent doing nothing.

But most of all: I don't like the demands. I don't like having to give something up, and in the age of social media, feel the need to tell everyone what I'm sacrificing. I don't like having to do something else. I'm busy enough as it is, and I think I'm plenty generous! And I certainly don't like the extra prayer I'm expected to do. I think I do enough of that already.

Lent is a season of inconvenience, and that's precisely why we need it.

The things I find inconvenient and unenjoyable are the boredom and the drab colors, somber music and demands to fast, pray and give alms — remind me of the inconveniences of the cross and the remarkable gift of Christ's sacrifice.

Lent is the time we're given to think on this remarkably mysterious thing: that the God of the
On the need for moderation, even in learning

A while back in the Community in Mission blog found at blog.adyw.org, I reflected on the puzzling truth that we can endure more pain than pleasure. We seem to be able to endure a lot of pain, but we can endure only a little pleasure at a time. In fact, too much pleasure actually brings pain: sickness, hangovers, obesity, addiction, laziness and even boredom. You can read more of that in my Jan. 28 entry. But the point is that pleasures and good things are only enjoyed in moderation.

Something similar may be said for wisdom and knowledge. We learn best in small portions. For example, consider a teaching by St. Bernard, who is reflecting on a verse from Sirach in this sermon:

“If you have found wisdom, you have found honey. But do not eat so much that you become too full and bring it all up. Eat so that you are always hungry. Wisdom says: Those who eat me continue to hunger (Sirach 24:51). Do not think you have too much of it, but do not eat too much or you will throw it up. If you do, what you seem to have will be taken away from you… Solomon says: A prudent man will be mastered before more complex realities can be understood. Personal development also plays a role. I have found, for example, that certain Scriptures suddenly make sense to me or stand out in ways they did not before. This is often due both to our growth in knowledge and also to our personal growth in maturity and holiness. The Latin Fathers of the Church said of Scripture that it is “non nova, sed nove” – “It is not a new thing but it is understood newly.” And thus, as we make our journey and if we are faithful, our understanding of Scripture deepens.

The moderation of novelty.
There is a saying: “Repetition is the mother of studies.” While learning new things is important, so is remembering and recapitulating what we already know. One of the things that most deeply ingrained Scripture in my soul was the repeating cycles of readings in the Mass and in the Divine Office.

Yes, moderation is the key, even in learning the things of God. A slow, steady, lifelong learning is what makes for a wise soul. Though wisdom comes from God, it, like all graces, interacts with our nature, and it is our nature to grow slowly and in stages. There are surely growth spurts, but the general rule is slow, steady and in stages. Thus, in your prayer and spiritual reading, a little each day adds up. But always remember to spend time reflecting on what you read and reviewing from time to time what you have read and learned in the past. Yes, a little each day helps keep the devil away.

Mary De Los Angeles Guerrero Gonzalez, called Angelita, grew up in Seville, Spain. With little formal education, she was placed in a cobbler’s workshop making shoes. But she was drawn to religion and tried the Discalced Carmelites and Sisters of Charity, before illness forced her return to home and the shoe factory. After patiently discerning a call to be poor among the poor, Angelita and three like-minded women moved into a small rented house in 1875, forming the Company of the Cross. They prayed and mediated, but were always available to serve the poor and dying. By the time of her death, Madre Angelita’s Company had spread from Spain to Italy and Argentina. She was canonized in 2003.
Leap year’s extra day has a Catholic origin

BY DONIS TRACY

BOSTON (CNS) — The extra day that comes approximately once every four years is a way to adapt the calendar year to the astronomical year.

But did you know the present system of calculating the leap years was designed around fixing the date of Easter? While the concept of the leap year has been around since ancient times, the current calendar year has its origins in the Catholic Church.

According to Father James Weiss, associate professor of Church history at Boston College, in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII set about adjusting the calendar to bring the celebration of Easter to the time of the spring equinox. Without adjustment, the start of spring was fixed as March 21. Without adjustment, the date of Easter would eventually drift into the summer.

So, on Feb. 24, 1582, Pope Gregory issued a papal bull titled “Inter gravissimam” in which he set about to correct the error. The new calendar — which would be called the Gregorian calendar — added an extra day to February every four years, unless the year is divisible by 100. Those years do not have a leap year. The exception to that rule is if the year is divisible by 400. So, following this rule, 1900 was not a leap year, but 2000 was. Although this mathematically corrected the problem, Father Weiss continued, there was the problem of the 10 days that were “out of sync.” Catholic countries such as Italy, Spain and Poland, he said, altered their calendars during the month of October, so that when people went to sleep Oct. 4, they awoke on Oct. 15.

“This complicates matters, not all of Europe followed the Gregorian calendar,” Father Weiss continued. “There was a huge confusion for a very long time with regards to the date, which introduced a kind of chaos into European dating.”

Over the next 200 years, most European nations adopted the Gregorian calendar, he continued. The final country to switch to the Gregorian calendar was Turkey, which finally adopted the calendar in 1927.

Today, most of the world uses the Gregorian calendar. Some exceptions, such as Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan still use their traditional calendars to mark the years. Others, such as India, Bangladesh and Israel use both the Gregorian and their traditional calendars to mark the passage of time.

Tracy is a contributor to The Pilot, archdiocesan newspaper of Boston.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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

Card party planned
YODER — St. Aloysius Knights of Columbus will have a card party and euchre tournament Saturday, March 7, in the activity center starting at 7 p.m. Admission fee is $7 with free-will offering for food and beverages. Contact Dave Meyer at 260-658-4882 for information. Proceeds will benefit the art department.

Holy Family Las Vegas Night
SOUTH BEND — The Holy Family Church Ushers Club, 56405 Mayflower Rd., will have a Las Vegas Night Saturday, March 7, from 6-11 p.m. in the parish center. Tickets are $8 in advance at the rectory and $10 at the door. Tickets include sandwiches, beverages and a chance in a $1,000 drawing. Contact Jim Niespodziany at 574-282-2517. Lic#001289.

FISH FRIES • FRIDAY, FEB. 28
Lenten fish fry at St. Patrick
WALKERTON — St. Patrick Church, Letko Hall, 811 Tyler St. will have a fish fry on Friday, Feb. 28, from 4-7 p.m. Dinners will cost $9/adult, $4/children 6-10 years and children under 6 years are free. Meal includes all the fish you care to eat, two sides, drink and dessert. Drive-through carry-outs are available. Fish prepared by Tyner 100F Lodge. Contact 574-586-7152 or info@saintpatricks.church.

Drive-through fish fry at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel
FORT WAYNE — Knights of Columbus Council No. 12579 will have a drive-through-only fish fry at St. Joseph – Hessen Cassel on Friday, Feb. 28, from 4:30-7 p.m. There will be 450 dinners available. Price is $8 per meal and includes fish, potato wedges, coleslaw, applesauce and roll.

Fish fry in Decatur
DECATUR — A fish fry to benefit St. Joseph School, will be Friday, Feb. 28, at the Knights of Columbus Council No. 864, 1703 High St. Meals served 5-7 p.m. Menu includes fried fish, french fries, cheese pizza, applesauce, coleslaw and salad. Age 10 and up meals $10, age 5-9 $6, no charge for children under 5. Baked goods available for an additional charge.

Fish fry at Immaculate Conception, Auburn
AUBURN — The Knights of Columbus Council No. 9186 will begin fish fries on Fridays from 5-7 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church, 500 E. Seventh St. Tickets are $5 ages 2-11 and $9 ages 12 and older (Maximum $28 per family in same household). Proceeds donated to Women’s Care Center in Auburn. Fish fries will take place on Friday, Feb. 28, March 6, 15, 20, 27 and April 5. Visit www.iccauburn.com.

FISH FRIES • FRIDAY, MARCH 6
Fish fry at Our Lady of Hungary
SOUTH BEND — Our Lady of Hungary Holy Name Society is planning a fish fry on Friday, March 6, from 4-6:30 p.m. in the school, 735 W. Calvert. Meal includes macaroni and cheese or baked potato, and ice cream. $10 adult dinner, $5 children 6-12 and under 6 free. Tickets at the door. Carry-out available. Food Pantry Needs: In observance of Lent, bring a voluntary donation to the food pantry of a non-perishable food item. Contact Kathy Baugher at 574-289-2143 or ohp@sbcglobal.net.

Queen of Angels Lenten fish fry
FORT WAYNE — Queen of Angels Parish will host a Lenten fish fry on Friday, March 6, from 4:30-7:30 p.m. in the Msgr. Faber Activities Center, 1600 W. State Blvd. Tickets are $11 for adults, $5 for ages 6-10 and those 5 and under eat free. Food served will include fish, french fries, coleslaw, applesauce and dessert. Carry-out will be available. Visit www.queenofangelsfw.org.

St. Vincent de Paul Boy Scouts fish fry
FORT WAYNE — The St. Vincent de Paul Boy Scouts will have a fish fry on Friday, March 6, from 5-8 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children 6-11.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL BOY SCOUTS FISH FRY
FORT WAYNE — The St. Vincent de Paul Boy Scouts will have a fish fry on Friday, March 6, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Msgr. Faber Activities Center, 1600 W. State Blvd. Tickets are $11 for adults, $5 for ages 6-10 and those 5 and under eat free. Food served will include fish, french fries, coleslaw, applesauce and dessert. Carry-out will be available. Visit www.queenofangelsfw.org.

St. Patrick Las Vegas Night
SOUTH BEND — St. Patrick’s Holy Family Las Vegas Night is planning a fish fry on Friday, March 6, from 4-6:30 p.m. in the school, 735 W. Calvert. Meal includes macaroni and cheese or baked potato, and ice cream. $10 adult dinner, $5 children 6-12 and under 6 free. Tickets at the door. Carry-out available. Food Pantry Needs: In observance of Lent, bring a voluntary donation to the food pantry of a non-perishable food item. Contact Kathy Baugher at 574-289-2143 or ohp@sbcglobal.net.

The CrossWord
March 1 and 8, 2020

TODAY'S CATHOLIC
‘Let’s listen in our hearts to Jesus saying ... ‘Arise!’

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

High school students from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend gathered at Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne, for a state-side World Youth Day conference Feb. 21-23. Throughout the weekend, the teens heard from a number of speakers, including Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. Several priests assisted in a healing service Friday evening. The service included the first of many opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation that weekend.

Father Andrew Budzinski celebrated Mass for the students Saturday morning, and shared the reason all Catholics have for daily joy.

“When I deserved death,” he said in the homily, “Jesus died so that I could live; and He is real — and He’s alive — and He wants you to live.”

The teens later selected from among four breakout sessions. In one, Bishop Dwenger High School theology teacher Jessica Hayes and student Anna Morris spoke about discerning the voice of God. In another session, Father Matthew Coonan related sports training to the spiritual life.

Sarah Swafford, a well-known Catholic relationship speaker, gave a talk on arising into true womanhood to the girls. She shared that each of us personally: “Arise! He is inviting us to rise up by His grace to friendship with Him,” said the bishop. “He wants to have an intimate relationship with you and me. This begins with faith: believing in the Lord and in His love for us: for each of us personally. But how do you have a close, intimate, and personal relationship with Jesus?”

“As with any relationship,” she answered, “you must choose how close you want to be with someone. It’s a matter of choosing Jesus in faith, choosing to have Him as your best friend, choosing to converse with Him, to speak to Him about your life, your challenges, your hopes, your dreams, your struggles and your joys. And then to listen to Him speak to you in your heart and to experience His love, His compassion, His consolation, His forgiveness, His peace.”

After the bishop’s talk, teen leader Samuel Horine and emcee Jennifer Litchfield gave the students a presentation about adoration etiquette before they joined the bishop to worship the Lord in the exposed Eucharist.

Following benediction and the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the students gathered for a “birthday party,” rejoicing over their newly cleansed souls. The celebration included candy-filled piñatas for the teens to whack, as well as cake and refreshments. They also threw colorful streamers and balloons into the air in a show of joyful triumph over sin and darkness.

On Sunday, the teens enjoyed the presence of Bishop Rhoades again at Mass.

“It’s so hard to treat someone with kindness if they’ve hurt us, but Jesus abolishes the limits of love,” the bishop said during his homily.

“He abolishes the boundaries that limit our love when He says, ‘love your enemies and pray for your persecutors.’ And that’s what Jesus Himself did, didn’t He?”

“Think about what you’re going to do,” said the bishop, “what’s going to help you to be holier — and don’t be afraid to be ‘fools’ for Christ.”

Sarah Swafford gives a talk about emotional virtue and womanhood to the female participants on Saturday.

Teens participate in one of many praise and worship sessions offered during a state-side World Youth Day conference that took place Feb. 21-23 at Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne.