Notre Dame president addresses controversy

BY ANN CAREY

NOTRE DAME — After nearly three months of consideration, the University of Notre Dame president announced on April 5 that he will not ban controversial events like “The Vagina Monologues” and a gay film event from the Notre Dame campus.

In addresses to the faculty and the student body in January, Holy Cross Father James M. Jenkins had said that he was considering whether or not to allow those two annual events to continue. He explained that those events raised deeper issues about academic freedom and the Catholic character of the university, and at the beginning of his presidency he wanted to determine principles for deciding what events were appropriate for Notre Dame.

At those addresses, Father Jenkins had signaled that a change might be coming when he invited input from the university community on this position: “An event which has the implicit or explicit sponsorship of the university as a whole, one of its units, or a university-recognized organization, and which either is or appears to be in name or content clearly and egregiously contrary to, or inconsistent with, the fundamental values of a Catholic university, should not be allowed at Notre Dame.”

Father Jenkins told Today’s Catholic that “views which were passionately held were passionately expressed” after his January presentations. Indeed, around campus strong opinions were voiced on both sides of the issue. Students associated with productions of “The Vagina Monologues” argued that the play was their only venue for celebrating womanhood and freedom and the Catholic character of the university, and at the beginning of his presidency he wanted to determine principles for deciding what events were appropriate for Notre Dame.

Easter Message

BY BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

His death on the cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form. By contemplating the pierced side of Christ (cf Jn 19:37), we can understand the starting point of the encyclical letter: “God is Love” (1 Jn 4:8). It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move. — Pope Benedict XVI, encyclical letter: “God is Love”

Thus, does the successor of Peter in his first encyclical speak to the world about what is central to the life of the church.

This week we have pondered that sacred act, which expresses the depth of God’s love for us. For this week to affect our lives, we must keep before us and allow to penetrate our hearts through the power of grace the meaning of the wound in the side of Christ.

Is this when the apostles first began to grasp the depth of his love — when, with Thomas, they saw the risen Christ and the wound in his side. Is this when they first began to be open to the Holy Spirit who would soon transform them? Pope Benedict XVI writes that love can only be commanded when it has first been given. To live out the commandment of love given on Holy Thursday, we must first accept it. We must allow Christ to wash our feet.

The true source then of apostolic love and pastoral love lies in contemplating in prayer the wounded side of Christ and the love that prompted him to offer himself for our salvation.

Another word for this love is grace. It is the true grace of Easter: Union with God given to us through baptism and the Eucharist. We must understand it more deeply through prayer and offer it to others. As we approach the 1500th anniversary of this diocese, a cross travels from parish to parish, carried by parishioners, including many young people. The words of a psalm are engraved on this cross, “His Steadfast Love Endures Forever.” The jubilee logo or image, which is taken from a beautiful work of art from one of our parishes, shows Christ on the cross with Mary by his side.

All this is to first call us to prayer and then to love. Christ the eternal Son of God was wounded for our salvation and he gave this to us out of love for us. In this beautiful Easter season, let us allow Christ to approach us, for he is always trying to do so, and let us prepare for our jubilee year by loving others, for our love of God and neighbor is one; and it is the grace of Easter.

A blessed Easter to you all.

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Notre Dame series probes the mission field

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Going forth as disciples

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Holy Week has always been a time to treasure, special graces

BISHOP JOHN M. D'ARCY

Another Holy Week

Long after I have completed my mission here, if God gives me years, I will remember Holy Week in this diocese. The chrim Masses, one in each city. The informal dinner with the priests and deacons beforehand. People coming from all over the diocese, first in South Bend and then in Fort Wayne, Maryknoll members. Eucharistic ministers. Young people. The priests renewing their promises joyfully and with all their hearts. The long trip from South Bend to Fort Wayne late at night.

Holy Thursday. The washing of the feet. Slaves washed the feet of the elite and intelligentsia. The renewal of this service that had taken place in the early church but then lapsed is something I remember. I believe it was in my diocese in the year that this was begun once again. Optional, but impressive. The focus at such a time is on Christ. He is not a priest, but on Jesus Christ; and it is a call to humility and repentance for all of us.

I alternate years; Holy Thursday in South Bend and Good Friday at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, and the opposite the following year.

The Good Friday service and hearing confessions afterward. Hearing confessions also on Holy Thursday, this year at St. Matthew Basilica. I can remember saying to him, "Well, if that is the choice, then the way is clear." Msgr. Stapleton died again on Holy Thursday. I was not quite ready. But that night I prayed after the Holy Thursday liturgy in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. I can remember saying to the Lord, "If I do this for you, you will see me through." The worry, indeed, had been about studies. Classes in Latin. A faraway place. Away from my parents and my family. I can remember saying, "If I do this for you, all will be well," the decision followed. It was divine grace.

I remember that prayer in the back of Mary, Star of the Sea Church during the period of eucharistic adoration on Holy Thursday night. I went out on the front steps, a short walk from the Atlantic Ocean. The decision was clear. Indecision was over. I have thought about it nearly every Holy Thursday since then. There are special graces in these weeks. I have always practiced this prayer before every big decision.

Once I heard myself saying, "If I do this for you, all will be well," the decision followed. It was divine grace.

Easter week

I look forward to a quieter week on Easter Monday and Tuesday. After that, confirmations begin in earnest — St. Mary, Huntington; St. Michael, Plymouth; St. Joseph, LaGrange; St. Pius X, Granger; and on. Also, there is a youth rally at Marian High School for teenagers throughout the diocese. A beautiful night in Decatur for confirmation. Decatur is special. People come out to church here. A few weeks before I came, they had a penance service that packed the church. Among those concelebrating with me was a son of Decatur, Father Dale Bauman. There have been many vocations, both to the consecrated life and the priesthood, from this parish.

A few weeks earlier, I had joined Father Bauman at the parish where he is the pastor, St. Joseph, Bluffton, for the celebration of the feast of St. Joseph. In both places, Bluffton and Decatur, many people came up to me to thank me for sending such a good pastor. This was true in Decatur about Father David Voors and also true in the small town of Bluffton about Father Bauman. Is there anything better as a bishop than having people say, "Thank you, bishop, for sending us this priest.'

A blessed Easter to all.
JENKINS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

calling attention to sexual vio- lence, and these students mounted a petition drive to keep the play. Many faculty asserted that the position some said Jenkins proposed was an affront to academic free- dom, and the Notre Dame Faculty Senate on April 5 approved a “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom” that contended: “To silence other- wise legitimate intellectual or artis- tic expression solely because its content is thought to conflict with the core values of the university is to risk both insult to the individual whose expression is silenced and injury to the climate of intellectual freedom.”

Other students, faculty and alumni welcomed the prospect that material offensive to Catholic val- ues would not have a place at Notre Dame, and some alumni threatened to withhold contribu- tions if the play continued to be on campus. Expectations of this group were raised when the presi- dents of The Catholic University of America and Providence College banned “The Vagina Monologues” from their campus

And Bishop John M. D’Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend repeat- ed the objections he had made every time the play was offered, since 2002, when he asked the Notre Dame administration to pro- hibit the play because it “is offen- sive to women” and “antithetical to Catholic teaching on the beauti- ful gift of human sexuality and also to the teachings of the church on the human body relative to its purpose and to its status as a tem- ple of Holy Spirit.”

On April 5, Father Jenkins released a statement announcing his decision to allow the events to continue.

“We are committed to a wide- open, unconstrained search for truth, an exercise that is con- ducted in a spirit of openness and freedom,” he said. “Catholic teaching has nothing to fear from engaging the wider cul- ture.”

Later he called the decision “a wonderful exercise in academic free- dom and the nature of academic free- dom. It’s not a problem that such views are allowed, that they are pro- moted in the context of the widest possible audience.”

He also said that his main con- cern was that “The Vagina Monologues” was not a problem to students because the play is “a radiant example of the freedom we seek to defend.”

Reaction to the statement on April 5, 2006

As pastor of the diocese with the sacred responsibility for the care of souls of all our people, including the young men and women at the University of Notre Dame, and with pastoral concern always for the Catholic identity of Notre Dame, as is my obligation, I am deeply saddened by the decision of Father John Jenkins, CSC, to allow the continuing sponsorship of the ‘Vagina Monologues’ by Notre Dame, the Catholic University of Notre Dame.

For further understanding of my position on this matter, I refer all to my statement found in the Feb. 12, 2006 issue of Today’s Catholic, and in my statements of the previous two years. All these statements may be found on the diocesan Web site at www.diocese-fwsb.org.

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B Y CINDY WOODEN

ROME (CNS) — The Gospel of Judas was unimportant to most Christians when it was written hundreds of years ago and it is unimportant to most today, a Jesuit professor who has convoked a series of ecumenical studies of the historical Jesus.

Father Gerald O’Collins, a longtime professor of Christology at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University, said the text, like the gospels of Mary Magdalene and Philip, “does not merit the name ‘Gospel’.

The National Geographic Society unveiled the document

April 6, posting a copy of it on the society’s Web site (www.nationalgeographic.com), and releasing English translations of portions of the text.

“A ‘Gospel’ is a literary genre — established by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — focusing on the life, death and resur- rection of Jesus,” Father O’Collins said. While including events supposedly related to the life of Jesus, the Gospel of Judas and the others really are texts “attempting to bolster the importance” of the personalities they are named after, not of Jesus, the priest said.

“They are not summaries of the good news,” he said. The texts come from the gnostics, a religious-philosophical current popular in the second, third and fourth cen- turies. The gnostics claimed to have secret knowledge unavail- able to the vast majority of people and focused so strongly on the spiritual and intellectual that they despised material creation, including the human body. In the year 180, St. Irenaeus con- demned the gnostics, men- tioning particularly a Gospel of Judas.

Father O’Collins said the most impor- tant thing about the text released in early April is that “it shows just how right Irenaeus was in saying the gnostics were against mainstream Christianity and Judaism, they were against our God.”

“‘To give Judas greater credit,’” the Jesuit said, the gnostics “portray Jesus giving him secret knowledge. It was a nice try,” but there is no evidence to support the claim.

“It was junk then, and it is junk now,” he said.

Father O’Collins, who between 1996 and 2003 con- voked a series of ecumenical, interdisciplinary summits for Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish scholars on the historical Jesus, said it was “ridiculous” for any- one to claim publication of the Gospel of Judas will challenge mainstream Christianity.

Judas kisses Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus is handed over to soldiers in this detail from a contemporary Bible illumination. The National Geographic Society April 6 released the first modern transla- tion of an ancient gnostic text that describes conversations between Jesus and Judas Iscariot.

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NOTRE DAME — “Can a rich man go to heaven?”
A lecture by that intriguing title attracted a large crowd of students, Holy Cross seminarians and faculty to the University of Notre Dame’s Mendoza College of Business April 5 to hear Father Robert A. Sirico, president of the Acton Institute.
The Acton Institute was co-founded by Father Sirico and Kris Alan Mauren in 1990 in Grand Rapids, Mich., in order to educate religious and business leaders, as well as academic professors and researchers, in principles of economics and the connection that can exist between virtue and economic thinking. The institute is named after the 19th-century English historian, Lord John Acton, who said: “Liberty and morality. Between virtue and economic systems that are productive, and many religious thinkers believe that if you are poor, you are holier than a wealthy person, and that somehow contact with the material world is intrinsically evil.
“‘There is at the base of this ambivalence a presupposition that the wealth of one logically implies the poverty of another,’” Father Sirico said.
That negative attitude is based on a “zero-sum world view,” he said, and is like viewing wealth as a pie that needs to be divided up: When someone takes a big piece of the pie, he is depriving the person who receives only a small piece. The roots of this negative view of wealth are from the pre-industrial world when goods were scarce and most people came into wealth through either politics or theft, Father Sirico said.
Therefore, wealth came to be associated with greed and injustice, and the heresy of gnosticism sustained the notion that the material world is bad and disordered.
A broader and more positive view of material goods, he said, is in the Judeo-Christian view of creation of the world, in which God pronounces it good and creates humans to multiply and fill the earth. And God entrusts the human family with the care, productivity and cultivation of the world. This view parallels the economic model of creating wealth.
Father Sirico said that too often in discussions about material goods, we simplistically “canonize the poor and demonize the rich without asking some very essential questions” that have to do with the persons involved and the opportunities and knowledge they have.
He urged the business students to tap into the insights of Catholic social teaching, which is based on the intrinsic dignity of the human person. One of the greatest contributions in this teaching, he said, was the 1991 encyclical of Pope John Paul II, “Centesimus Annus” (“The Hundredth Year”), written on the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical “Rerum Novarum” (“On Capital and Labor”).
In John Paul’s encyclical, written shortly after the fall of communism, the pope pointed out that man’s greatest resource is the human person, because the human person is inventive and creative. Father Sirico said. There are two paradigms for viewing economy, he continued: command and control, or free. One has to examine both to see which reveres the dignity of the human person, he said, and he made it clear that he favors the free economy in which labor and capital work together in harmony.
“I don’t believe that capitalism or a free economy is a good moral system, but it has moral potential” and can be used for good or evil, Father Sirico concluded, urging the business students to ask themselves not “What kind of a capitalist will I be?” but rather, “What kind of a person will I be?”

Father Robert Sirico, president of the Acton Institute, was introduced for his lecture at Notre Dame’s Mendoza College of Business by Margot O’Brien, a professor in the business school.
The church needs to be in the middle of Hollywood

BY ANN CAREY

This feature is the first of three-part series of lectures at the University of Notre Dame titled, “Hollywood: Mission Field or Mission Impossible?”

NOTRE DAME — “Because Hollywood is so powerful in shaping the culture, the church needs to be there, in the middle of Hollywood.”

That was the message of Holy Cross Father Willy Raymond in an April 4 presentation at the University of Notre Dame entitled, “Hollywood: Mission Field or Mission Impossible?”

Father Raymond is national director of Family Theater Productions, a Catholic production company founded in 1947 by the late Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton, also known as the rosary priest.

Family Theater Productions is located on Sunset Boulevard, smack-dab in the middle of Hollywood. There, Father Raymond and his staff of 11 full-time employees have produced films like the documentary “The Fifth Gospel: The Land and Sea of Galilee” and biographies like “God, Country, Notre Dame: The Story of Father Ted Hesburgh.”

The company also oversees production of the Vox Latina Spanish radio series and distributes the Family Theater Classic Radio series created by Father Peyton and starring Hollywood greats like Bing Crosby. And the company runs a nationwide public service billboard prayer campaign fashioned on Father Peyton’s slogan of the “Family That Prays Together Stays Together,” but updated with slogans like “God Made House Calls.”

However, Father Raymond’s work is not limited to making wholesome films and radio programs and reminding people to pray. He also runs a busy postproduction reach program for Catholics and people interested in the faith, and he touched on all the facets of his work in his talk to the Notre Dame students, exploring both the good side of Hollywood and the dark side.

“There are a lot of good, committed people doing good, ethical work” in Hollywood, he said; but others are driven by power, money and the desire to be “edgy” in order to impress their peers with how low they can go.

Film is a powerful influence in shaping culture around the world, he continued, telling of his surprise in seeing Polish, Italian and South American youth in Rome for World Youth Day 2000 singing probably the only thing in English they all knew: “Singing in the Rain,” from the American movie. It’s important not to condemn Hollywood and the film industry outright, Father Raymond said, but he added that we must be discerning. He cited the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est” (“God Is Love”), saying that Benedict pointed out that the church can’t replace the state in political battles, but neither can it remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.

The media can be misleading and often distort the truth for an agenda. Father Raymond cautioned, “So it’s important to have people in the media who love the truth.”

Father Raymond related that he often encounters young Catholics who come to Hollywood looking for a career in the film industry. Artists are particularly open to talking about the faith and learning more about it, he said. So, this is a perfect opportunity to do the pastoral work of the church.

“There are a lot of ways you can go wrong in Hollywood,” Father Raymond said. “There are so many ways you can be tempted and seduced by the appeal of Hollywood, so it’s incredibly important for the church to be present in the middle of that industry.”

Thus, Family Theater is a production company during the day and a supportive place for young Catholics at night. Once a month, Family Theater hosts a “Prayer and Pasta” open house for young people in the film industry. At that event, guests pray with the staff and other people in the business and enjoy a meal and conversation. Father Raymond often refers newcomers to others in the industry who will be good mentors.

Every Tuesday, a group is hosted by Family Theater to study and discuss Pope John Paul II’s “Theology of the Body.” And every Wednesday, a prayer and discussion session on “Going Deeper” into the Catholic faith takes place. Additionally, weekly RCIA sessions run from October through Pentecost, examining the content of the faith through great literature, art and film.

Family Theater also sponsors the “Angels’” annual student film festival to encourage young film-makers to create works that respect the dignity of the human person, with a grand prize of $10,000. Father Raymond showed the 2005 second place, $5,000 winner to the Notre Dame student audience. The film, “Christmas Wish List” was produced and directed by Sean Overbecke, a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and involved finding the true meaning of the Christmas spirit.

Father Raymond’s presentation was the first of a three-part Catholic film lecture series sponsored by the Notre Dame Center for Ethics & Culture as a companion to the center’s fall lecture series on Catholic literature.

The Novena to The Divine Mercy

On Good Friday, 1937, Jesus requested that St. Faustina make a special novena before the Feast of Mercy, from Good Friday through the following Saturday. He, Himself, dictated the intentions for each day. By means of a specific prayer He was to bring to His heart a different group of souls each day and then immerse them in the ocean of His mercy, begging the Father - on the strength of Jesus’ passion - for graces for them.

(See diary of St. Faustina, 1209)

Prayers for the Novena

(Diary, 1209-1229)

The novena and chaplet is said on the rosary. Begin with the three beads each day your intentions with the soul is read.

It is greatly recommended that the following novena intentions and prayers be said together with the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, since Our Lord specifically asked for a novena of Chaplets, especially before the Feast of Mercy.

First Day

“Today bring to Me all mankind, especially all sinners, and immerse them in the ocean of my mercy.”

Second Day

“Today bring to Me the souls of Priests and Religious, and immerse them in My unfathomable mercy.”

Third Day

“Today bring to Me all devout and faithful souls, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy.”

Fourth Day

“Today bring to Me those who do not believe in God and those who do not yet know Me.”

Fifth Day

“Today bring to Me the souls of those who have separated themselves from My Church, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy.”

Sixth Day

“Today bring to Me the meek and humble souls and the souls of little children and immerse them in My mercy.”

Seventh Day

“Today bring to Me the souls who especially venerate and glorify My mercy, and immerse them in My mercy.”

Eighth Day

“Today bring to Me the souls who are detained in purgatory, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy.”

Ninth Day

“Today bring to Me the souls who have become lukewarm, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy.”

Divine Mercy Celebration - Sunday, April 23, 2006

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, Divine Mercy Chaplet

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

500 East Seventh Street - Auburn, Indiana

2:00 PM Confessions - 3:00 PM Celebration

PRESIDER: FATHER BABASINO FERNANDES

Assisted by Fathers Raymond Balzer and Adam Schmitt

Jesus, We trust in You!
SAINT MARY’S COLLEGE SPONSORS HOME RENOVATION

Mishawaka — FaithFest, the annual Catholic Youth Rally led by teenage members of the Diocesan Youth Council and sponsored by the Office of Youth Ministry of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, will be held Saturday, April 22, at Marian High School, Mishawaka. FaithFest 2006 begins at noon, and it will be celebrating its 12th consecutive year.

Featuring recording artist and comedian Jesse Manibusan, the event includes Mass with Bishop John D’Arcy presiding, the sacrament of reconciliation, dinner, workshops, alternative experiences and more. The cost is $25 per person if pre-registered by April 9, $30 at the door.

For more information or to register, call (260) 422-4611, ext. 3348, or go to the Web site: www.dios常年/faithfest.

St. John the Baptist Cub Scouts earn their Catholic religious emblems

FORT WAYNE — A Cub Scout is reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion. The Cub Scouts and their families at Pack 3019, St. John the Baptist in Fort Wayne know this.

Thirty-eight Cub Scouts from Pack 3019, with the assistance of their parents, leaders and Father Daryl Rybicki, recently completed the requirements to earn their religious emblems by completing activities and Bible studies geared toward strengthening the spiritual growth and religious knowledge of Scouts of the Catholic faith.

The purpose of the Light of Christ emblem is to help Cub Scouts in the third and fourth grade explore a wide range of activities in order to discover the presence of God in their daily lives as members of their families and parishes, and also to develop a positive self-image through service and leadership opportunities. The Cub will come to see Jesus as a real person and friend.

The purpose of the Parvuli Dei (Children of God) emblem is to help Cub Scouts in the third and fourth grade explore a wide range of activities in order to discover the presence of God in their daily lives as members of their families and parishes, and also to develop a positive self-image through service and leadership opportunities. The Cub will come to see Jesus as a real person and friend.

The following are Scouts who completed their requirements:

- Parvuli Dei — Webelos Scouts, fourth grade, Nicholas Steffen, Dominick Parsons, Sam Russell, Brennan Mullins, Nathan Grabner, Benjamin Oberly, Benjamin Gut, Patrick Shank, Jack Jones.

Ministry Center offers ‘Awakening to the Sacred’ workshop

HUNTINGTON — The Victory Noll Ministry Center will offer a workshop entitled “Awakening to the Sacred,” on Saturday, April 29. This workshop will consider some of the emerging insights from eco-spirituality and science that will awaken participants to the awesome wonder of the planet and teach them how to walk reverently on the earth.

The workshop presenter, Sister Paula Gonzalez, a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati, is an educator, futurist and environmentalist. She has presented over 1,500 similar workshops and retreats throughout the United States and abroad and has inspired a deep appreciation for the beauty and sacredness of all creation and our responsibility for caring for the planet earth.

The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Victory Noll Ministry Center, 1900 W. Park Dr., in Huntington and is open to the public. A donation of $10 is requested for the workshop, which includes a continental breakfast and luncheon. Preregistration is required and must be made no later than April 23.

Correction

The mother-daughter talk, featured in the April 9 issue of Today’s Catholic, had an incorrect reference to the Fort Wayne event. The Fort Wayne program of “Beyond the Birds and Bees — Understanding the Language of the Body” was by Marcello Cocozza, Fort Wayne councilman; Michele Addino-Colchin, singer-songwriter; and Bruce Summerfield, religious artist.

National guests included Patrick Madrid, Dr. Ray Guarendi, Sinclair Shannon, John Martignoni, Stephanie Wood and Matt Pinto.

Father Gurtner remarked that since Redeemer Radio’s come on the air, it’s all he listens to. “Everyone I’ve talked to just loves it.” And Msgr. Lester noted that a great thing has started at Redeemer Radio, calling it a “golden opportunity.”

Also as a part of Sharrathon, local Catholic-owned businesses donated their products or services, which were offered on the air as incentives for giving. Local Catholic groups, such as the Knights of Columbus, worked the phones and processed pledges from listeners.

Schmitt Lecture Series welcomes stem-cell bioethicist

NOTRE DAME — The Notre Dame Center for Ethics & Culture will host Dr. William Hurlbut, M.D., on Tuesday, April 18, at 4:30 p.m. in the McKenna Hall Auditorium.

Dr. Hurlbut, a consulting professor in the program in human biology at Stanford University, will discuss stem-cell research.

Each semester since fall 2001, the center has sponsored a lecture series in honor of the generosity of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation to the University of Notre Dame. The goal of semi-annual lectures is to bring in distinguished speakers from around the world, attract- ing people of the highest quality, Nobel laureates, outstanding scientists and engineers and leading philosophers and theologians.

The lecture series aims to provide occasions at which the Schmitt fellows, graduate students of the College of Science and Engineering, could join with other members of the Notre Dame community to reflect on the ethical, political and religious dimensions of the studies in which they are engaged.
Goshen parishioners hear from the voices of Afghanistan

BY DENISE FEDOROW

GOSHEN — Their main message was that Afghanistan needs continued support from United States government, individuals — much is being done, but so much more is needed. Carrying that message were Melody McNeil and Huma Safi from Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Afghanistan, who spoke at St. John the Evangelist Church on Monday. The program was sponsored by Notre Dame’s Center for Social Concerns.

McNeil, originally from Michigan, said Afghanistan is the sixth poorest country in the world. She and her husband have been living in Afghanistan for two years. McNeil works mainly in western Herat, a major agricultural area, and the rest in a nearby mountainous area. McNeil said when the U.S. removed the Taliban regime, the Islam Republic of Afghanistan held elections in 2004 and 2005.

“The general sense of the Afghan people is that they went pretty well,” she said. “So much of the country is remote, so the government is not far-reaching, not able to effectively reach the people at this point.”

McNeil said there are two main CRS offices in Afghanistan and five field offices with 160 staff members, 150 of whom are Afghanistan natives.

Some of the projects McNeil is working on are agri-enterprise support programs, which offer support to small and medium farmers. CRS is also helping build greenhouses and collection centers and teaching the people to grow new crops like Chinese garlic and saffron. McNeil said greenhouses are vital to the Afghan people because, in winter, the cost of importing fruit and vegetables is 20 times more. She said the idea of greenhouses has been well received. “Afghans are real nationalistic about what they eat,” she said.

A lot of the work CRS does in Afghanistan is focused on women. “When we decided to focus on women, we were not sure it would work. Organizing the women and getting them access to them was difficult,” McNeil said.

Currently, there are 80 women in four food-processing centers where they are taught to make jam and tomato sauce and market the product to local village shopkeepers.

“It’s really incredible to see the results and response — the shopkeepers have been extremely supportive of the program,” McNeil said.

She said local villagers have started to bring produce into the centers asking the women to make the tomato paste for them. The women told her, “Everyone is so proud of us they got together and brought us presents.”

Safi works in the CRS office in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, working mainly with education issues. She said Afghan women are important contributors to the household working on carpet weaving, livestock maintenance and tailoring.

During a question-and-answer segment, McNeil was asked if she felt safe. She replied, “I feel very safe where I am. When you work very closely with communities, you become friends, like family. I’ve never felt anything but welcomed and loved in Afghanistan.”

She said the Christian workers do not proselytize — the government is not interested in that, so they do not do so — their function is to practice Catholic social teaching. “People are aware they are Catholic and are very tolerant. McNeil said a Jesuit priest and brother travel to Herat on occasion, and she’s able to attend Mass in a home. Most Christians in Afghanistan attend church in their homes.”

Safi was asked what was the mood of the people in Afghanistan and did they realize how desperate they appeared to the world? She said, “There are a lot of problems but they are very happy now we have peace in our country. They have hope for the future of Afghanistan.”

After the presentation, Safi was asked how she felt about her first visit to the U.S. “Before I came, I was a little worried. What I love so much about the U.S. is the people. They are so kind, so nice. I met a couple of (religious) sisters who told me they cried for my country and people,” she said.

“They said, ‘People here worry about you.’ That made me feel so good.”

HUMA SAFI, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Huma Safi, an Afghan native working with Catholic Relief Services in Kabul, Afghanistan, speaks to an audience at St. John the Evangelist Church, Goshen, about what the conditions are like in her country and how much the Afghan people appreciate the support received from the United States.

AFGHANISTAN AT A GLANCE:

• Afghanistan was a battlefield between Britain and Russia in the 19th and 19th centuries and again during the Cold War.
• Population of 27 million according to 2003 estimate.
• Fifty percent of population has chronic malnutrition.
• Literacy rate is 43 percent males, 14 percent females.
• Only 23 percent of people have access to safe drinking water.
• There are 6,400 schools for boys and 1,357 schools for girls in the entire country. Thirty percent of boys attend school, 15 percent of girls attend school. Only 2,646 of those 7,757 schools have actual buildings.

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In the event that fewer than 3,000 tickets are sold or on or before May 10, 2006, Catholic Charities reserves the right to reduce the initial price offerings by a percentage equal to the percentage of unsold tickets.
Pope Benedict drops tradition of Holy Thursday letter to priests

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Dropping a tradition of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI is no longer issuing a letter to the world’s priests on Holy Thursday, a Vatican spokesman said April 6 that no papal letter would be released this year. He did not say why the pope had decided to discontinue the practice. In 1979, a few months after his election, Pope John Paul II began writing the Holy Thursday letter as a sign of his special concern for the priesthood and the burdens of pastoral ministry. Over the years, the letters covered such topics as priestly vocations, morale among the clergy, spirituality and priestly celibacy. The pope’s last letter to priests focused on the importance of the Eucharist; he signed it three weeks before his death in April 2005.

Send-off of pilgrim cross opens countdown to World Youth Day 2008

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With the unveiling of a logo, the handover of a pilgrim cross and the cheers of young Australians, the “road to Sydney” and World Youth Day 2008 were officially opened at the Vatican. Pope Benedict XVI sent the World Youth Day cross on a two-year trip across Australia, New Zealand and Tonga before a Palm Sunday liturgy April 9. Accepting it were young Australian, eager for the spiritual spotlight that will soon begin to swing across their country. With Australian flags unfurled, the young threw up its arms, in some lively celebration after the liturgy in St. Peter’s Square. “That was the spirit of Sydney on display,” Morrisemma, premier of the Australian state New South Wales, remarked at a press conference afterward. He predicted that young people would find Sydney “the friendliest city and the most welcoming city in the world.”

Vatican confirms pope’s visit to Poland in May

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican confirmed Pope Benedict XVI will visit Poland May 25-28, and the trip will include Pope John Paul II’s hometown and the former Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Formally announcing the trip April 8, the Vatican said the pope would spend one night in Warsaw, Poland’s capital, and two nights in Krakow, the city where Pope John Paul had served as archbishop. Although the document that officially opened the papal trip was not released, the Vatican listed the places the pope would visit each day: May 25, Rome to Warsaw; May 26, the shrine of Our Lady Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, then on to Krakow; May 27, Wadowice, the birthplace of Pope John Paul, and the shrine to Christ’s passion at Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, 30 miles outside Krakow, then returning to the city for the night; May 28, Auschwitz, then returning to Krakow for the flight back to Rome.

Josephinum professor joins staff of Institute for Priestly Formation

OMAHA, Neb. (CNS) — Deacon James Keating, associate professor of moral and spiritual theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, has joined the staff of the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha. Beginning July 1, he will be developing and directing programs for seminary personnel at the institute, located at Creighton University. Father Richard Gabuzda, director of the institute, said Deacon Keating’s “outstanding academic credentials and his years of seminary experience will enable him to be of great assistance to seminary personnel.” Ordained a deacon for the Diocese of Columbus in 2001, Deacon Keating has been on the faculty at the Josephinum since 1993.

Last fresco fragments restored in Assisi basilica

ASSISI, Italy (CNS) — Restorers have replaced the last fresco fragments in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, more than eight years after an earthquake sent parts of the ceiling crashing to the floor. With the aid of computer technology, experts were able to recompose most of the damaged images — including an archway with Sts. Francis and Clare, and a rib vault decorated with a depiction of St. Jerome at his desk. St. Matthew did not fare as well: His image today, high above the main altar, is a series of chromatic stams against a white background. “We preserved a relic of this major work by (Giovanni) Cimabue, but not the work itself,” Giuseppe Basile, who oversaw the restoration project, told a press conference in Assisi April 5. When the vault section fell in September 1997, four people below were killed, Cimabue’s fresco of St. Matthew exploded into more than 120,000 pieces, many of them smaller than a fingernail.

U.S. cardinal supports new probe into Mexican cardinal’s 1993 killing

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The 1993 murder of a Mexican cardinal was drug-related, warranting a reopening of the investigation by Mexican authorities, said Washington Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick at a congressional hearing. He also asked the U.S. government, which is holding several Mexican suspects and witnesses in the case, to aid Mexican authorities in the investigation. Cardinal Alejandro González of Guadalajara, Mexico, was “a martyr in the war against drugs,” said Cardinal McCarrick April 6 in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations. The initial Mexican ruling that Cardinal Posadas was accidentally killed in a crossfire between rival drug gangs was “a travesty of justice,” said the U.S. cardinal. The House subcommittee is the U.S. Justice Department to explain why it does not want to allow Mexican authorities to question the Mexican suspects and witnesses it is holding or to turn them over to Mexican authorities.

A young woman presents a birthday cake to Pope Benedict XVI at the end of an audience with some 5,000 university students at the Vatican April 10. The pope celebrates his 79th birthday April 16.

Catholic University in Washington April 15 at the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. Pope Benedict XVI will spend one night in Washington, April 15, before returning to his Vatican residence.

Cardinal Dullea affirms lay mission in church, world

NEW YORK (CNS) Laypeople are called to serve the church’s mission, both by ministry within the church and by apostolate to the world, U.S. Cardinal Avery Dullea said in a lecture March 29. While some Catholics would like to restrict the use of “ministry” to what the ordained do, Scripture, tradition and official church documents make the use of the term much broader, the Jesuit theologian said. It is also a mission to view lay ministry within the church — a necessary support for strong lay apostolate toward the world — as somehow under-mining lay apostolate, he said. Cardinal Dullea, the Laurence J. McGinley professor of religion and society at Jesuit-run Fordham University, spoke about “The Ministry of the Laity!” in his spring McGinley lecture at the university.

Cleveland bishop’s retirement accepted; Boston auxiliary is successor

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the retirement of Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland and appointed Auxiliary Bishop Richard G. Lennon of Boston as his successor. Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic protonotary of the United States, made the announcement in Washington April 15. Bishop Lennon’s installation is to take place May 15 at Cleveland’s Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. In what was then the National (now U.S.) Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Pilla served as treasurer 1990-92, vice president 1992-95 and president 1995-98. He turned 73 last November and marked his 25th anniversary as Bishop of Cleveland Jan. 6. In an interview last December with the Catholic University of America, Professor of Economics, he said he was looking forward to retirement because after 25 years “it’s time for a change.”

Keating has been on the faculty at Our Lady of Good Counsel since 1993. He earned a doctorate in moral theology at the Catholic University of America and joined the staff of the Institute for Evangelical Catholicism, a research and education institute in Madison. Keating said the institute aims to build an evangelical movement within Catholic Church.

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I love Easter eggs, don’t you? Everything about them is special — from the smudged masterpieces dyed by little children to the jeweled eggs created by goldsmith Peter Carl Faberge.

And yes, the edible ones are favorites of mine, too — spun sugar delicacies or scrumptious peanut-butter chocolate creations (one of my weaknesses), and even the plastic egg-shaped containers with their tasty goodies hidden inside.

But have you ever wondered why it’s an Easter “egg”? I mean, if history had taken a wrong turn, would we be hunting Easter rocks? Would we be carefully dipping turnips into colorful dyes or rolling raccoons down the White House lawn?

And how did a simple bird’s egg become one of the most beloved symbols of our Easter season anyway? If you’ll pardon the puns, “scramble” with me to find some “eggs-citing” answers as we “crack open” the mystery of the Easter egg and get to the “yolk” of the matter.

Let’s start with the egg itself. It’s been called nature’s perfect package — containing everything needed for new life. Some smart guy who lived a long time ago noticed the earth blossomed with new life after the long, cold winter — and the egg also mysteriously produced new life where there seemed to be no life before. This observation led pagan people to believe the egg had special powers.

And so eggs were buried underneath houses to scare off evil (although the scent of decaying “magic” might have something to do with it). Pregnant Roman women thought carrying an egg around with them would foretell the sex of their child, and French brides crushed an egg as they stepped into their new home.

Then along came our ancestors, the early Christians. They borrowed the egg from the pagan rites of spring festivals and gave the whole thing a drastic makeover — instead of symbolizing the rebirth of the earth, the Christian egg came to symbolize the rebirth of the human race as a result of Christ’s sacrifice. And so the Easter egg was born.

And the reason we dye our Easter eggs? That brings us to a couple of Polish legends. The first one tells of our Blessed Mother giving eggs to the soldiers at the foot of the cross. She wept as she begged them not to be so cruel and her tears fell on the eggs, leaving spots of dazzling color.

In the second legend, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb carrying a basket of eggs to eat during breaks while anointing Jesus’ body. When she arrived at the tomb, she uncovered the basket to see the previously white eggs sparkling with all the colors of the rainbow.

Today, eggs are decorated in traditions from all over the world. In Greece, they’re dyed crimson to honor the blood of Christ. Austrian artists fasten tiny plants and ferns around their eggs and boil them to leave a lacy, delicate pattern. And the Polish and Ukrainian intricately decorated pysanki eggs are masterpieces of skill and workmanship.

Eggs also used to be a no-no during Lent (they were considered meat), and Easter celebrations found ways to use all the eggs, which had been sorely missed.

Today, we eat eggs during Lent, but we still celebrate Easter with candy eggs — in Scotland they even deep-fry chocolate eggs — and by using eggs in special Easter foods like hornazo, a traditional Spanish dish.

Whether you eat them or dye them, or simply prefer to admire their beauty, Easter eggs in all their forms are an incredible reminder of the tomb of Christ — and his gift of new life for all of us. Alleluia!

BY KRISTI R. WARD

The incredible Easter egg

Though the weather wasn’t as warm as they would have liked, St. Dominic Church, Bremen, egg hunt participants, from left, Magali Garcia, 8, Selena Andrade, 8, and Gabby Buck, 9, sit together looking over each other’s baskets. The hunt was sponsored by Religious Education and was held with the help of the Adult Religious Education group.

The Young Vincentians of St. Matthew School, grades 3 through 8, worked together to compile Easter baskets, which will be given to needy families with food baskets this Easter season. The students brought in candy and used money from fundraising to buy the baskets and toys. They made baskets for toddlers through preadolescents. This is the third year the Young Vincentians have been making baskets.
Artist instructs St. Pius parishioners how to decorate their own Easter candles

BY JENNIFER OCHSTEIN

GRANGER — Adam Redjinski, an artist from Boston, recently visited with parishioners at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Granger to teach them how to decorate their own Easter and baptismal candles.

Redjinski explains to her students as they gather around her for instruction that the first thing they’ll need to make the candles is a pattern. Redjinski, who has been making the candles for about 40 years, provided patterns that she herself had made over the years.

Redjinski explains to students that after choosing a pattern they will need to trace an outline of the pattern onto tracing paper. Then she instructs students to rub the tracing paper on to the candle to imprint the image from the paper onto the candle.

Next, Redjinski shows students how to take a razor blade and trace around the pattern that has been imprinted onto the candle with the tracing paper. She tells students that once they have their outline, students should use the razor blade to make a groove in the wax. As the excess wax is shaved away from the groove, she explains, the pattern will become clearer and clearer.

Karen King carefully begins to carve out a groove in her Easter candle with a razor blade.

Brynne Weaver places tracing paper around her candle. Weaver’s candle is to be used as a baptismal candle for her upcoming baptism into the church. She said she’s to be baptized on Easter.

Redjinski reads acrylic paint to paint the Easter Candle. Once the patterns are carved into the candle, the grooves are painted.

A closer look at the pattern of the Easter candle that Redjinski carved for St. Pius. Father Scheidt explained that the theme of the candle is water, beginning with Noah’s Ark and ending at the bottom with a depiction of water flowing through the Temple in Jerusalem.

Father Dan Scheidt stands next to the Easter candle that Redjinski carved for St. Pius.

With a small brush, she showed students how to use the brush to inlay the paint into the grooves made by the razor blade on the surface of the candle.

Sherie Wilcox, begins painting the candle she will use during her baptism on Easter. She said of her baptism: “It’s been a long journey. I’m looking forward to being able to be a part of the whole Mass” after becoming an official member of the church.
Diocesan employees garden with spirit

By Kay Cozad

PORT WAYNE — As the winds blow warm and the sunshine returns again following the gentle rains, tiny shoots of color begin to dot the landscape. One cannot fail to notice spring has arrived. Some gardeners among us have already been at work welcoming spring.

Donna Macino has developed an interest in exotic flowers and works in the garden month by month to create growth and beauty almost all year round. She takes particular pleasure in starting her plants from seeds right in her own kitchen, where florescent lights coax germination of over 60 seedlings.

Donna Macino, associate-director of the Office of Catechesis, showcases her flower garden with the garden shed, built by her husband, in the background.

There is a spiritual slant to gardening for this woman, who rises at 5 a.m. to tend her flowers before she goes to work. “The very act of gardening brings you to your knees immediately. You are co-creator with God,” she muses, adding that prayer and gardening go hand in hand for her. The garden is her sacred space as she feels grounded in the quiet of nature. But she knows that gardening is not always easy.

“Gardening is a wonderful analogy to everyday life. Sometimes it’s frustrating, like life. Sometimes things are not under your control, just like life,” says Macino.

As Macino speaks of her orchids and poppies, the delight on her face is evidence of the meaning gardening holds for her. “It is a rooting in faith, hope, possibilities and co-creation. As in Ecclesiastes, there is a time for everything.”

Linda Furge, director of the Office of Campus and Young Adult Ministry, finds peace and contentment wandering around her orchards and flower gardens. Gardening, she says, has always been a part of her life. Like Macino, what began as a large produce garden tended by her husband Bill and four children, over the years has “morphed into ever-expanding landscape and flower beds.” And like Macino, Furge enjoys plants that are unusual or different. Currently she grows roses, dahlias, orchids and cactuses and is attempting to graft roses and clone an aging pear tree.

She finds that it is in gardening, with the turning of the soil, planting, battling bugs and disease and harvesting that she remembers “what is real and good in our wonderful God-created world.” When asked why she gardens, she explains, “I have something in me that must create. It takes time and energy, but since this is my passion and ‘grounding,’ I enjoy every moment I can ‘go out and play.’ For me it’s never work — and as we often tell folks, it’s cheaper than therapy.”

“May you have a bad day at work and come home and garden for a while, and things don’t seem so bad,” says Ryan. Wife Gail and four children, ranging from eighth grade to kindergarten, work along side Ryan to plant, nurture, harvest and can the likes of peas, potatoes, onions, corn, beans and pumpkins, among other vegetables each year.

They live on a five-acre homestead that has plenty of room for the large garden area that is shared with the pigs they raise. Ryan works together with his family to grow God’s bounty and says, “There is nothing tastier than to pick a ripe tomato from the garden to go in a salad.”

For these four diocesan employees and their families gardening not only brings a bounty of fruits for their labor, it nourishes their spirits and brings a balance to their lives. They all agree that gardening grounds them, so it seems as they tend their gardens, they also tend their souls.

Heather Johnson, then 2, admires the zinnias grown last summer in the flower garden at the Johnson home in rural Allen County. Rose and Tim Johnson enjoy gardening, an interest they hope to pass along to their daughter.

The garden nurtured by Linda Furge has taken on a natural look as it works to blend into the accompanying wooded area.
Church as garden — a reflection

“...we are not on earth to guard a museum, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life.”

These words, spoken by Pope John XXIII, represent one of the metaphors he drew upon to explain his reasoning for calling the Second Vatican Council. Now, more than 40 years into that new era of the church’s life, this notion of “church as garden” is still worth exploring, especially in the springtime and at the beginning of the Easter season.

The church is a garden, not a museum. That immediately begs some comparisons. What makes a garden so different from a museum?

The first difference is right there in the quote: the church, like a garden, is entirely free to cultivate faith that is alive, ever growing, ever changing, living quite literally in this world and always needing nourishment.

Another difference is in structure. A museum catalogues every last detail of what it contains, housing its treasures in cases and in designated areas beyond the reach and touch of the viewing public. A garden, while also possessing structure, methodology and guidelines, is far more hands-on, requiring the gardener to roll up her sleeves, get her hands dirty and interact directly in the open air.

Which brings up another major difference: air. A museum is closed, its contents outside and its climate strictly controlled to protect the exhibits and artifacts. A garden is out in the open. Fresh air flows all around the place. Bugs buzz. Rain falls.

Certainly there are dangers in being exposed to the elements, but the elements also offer the garden an opportunity to grow. When a gardener plants in the springtime, he or she knows that the plant must weather the rain and snow and wind in order to develop. Likewise, the church faces challenges every day.

Museum artifacts never encounter the elements, but not only does the church need to weather what is sent their way, but it also needs to develop the sturdy structures and habits needed to thrive in the world. A museum, on the other hand, is not about the past, but is about planning and projecting forward.

The first difference is right there in the quote: life. The church, very much like the garden, must regularly weather the storms of this world in order to develop. A garden, on the other hand, can’t do that; it is about planning for a future that has not yet arrived.

Certainly there are dangers in being exposed to the elements, but fresh air flows all around the place. Bugs buzz. Rain falls.

Another difference is in purpose. A museum has the advantage in an unchanging climate; a garden, very much like the museum, must regularly weather periods of time during which the conditions of the outside world are not conducive to the growth of faith — a winter. It is during these times that the church must draw on its abundant spiritual harvest from the season before and look ahead with hope to the next springtime.

Deaneur is another fact that delineates a garden from a museum. While both require reverence (a museum — a hushed reverence for the history around you; a garden — an intense, connected to creation reverence), one approaches a museum in a reserved manner, intent on taking in the history on display, a garden requires passion, manual labor, patience and an almost parental sense of love and responsibility.

Another difference is relevancy. A museum’s value lies in the historical significance of the artifacts it contains, but in and of themselves the artifacts serve little or no purpose today. A garden, on the other hand, is not about the past, but is about planning and actively executing; it produces a growing, living entity with plenty of purpose in the present and future.

And speaking of the future, a museum remains fairly static for about every step of the journey. A garden, on the other hand, can provide nourishment to feed the human person and beauty to inspire individual and remind him of the greatness of God.

In the garden, one can easily see how the paradigm shift — from museum to garden — very much applied to the church as it underwent the reforms of Vatican II. It is still a healthy exercise to remember these ideas today, although, truth be told, both museums and gardens exist in the world, in the church’s tradition is broad and rich enough to house both of these models — and quite comfortably. But Pope John XXIII did the body of Christ a great service by reminding it of its potential for refreshing beauty and limitless growth.

BY FATHER MICHAEL HEINZ

You have probably heard or read in the news of a recently discovered manuscript — titled to appear in the New Testament texts were

Some remarks on the so-called “Gospel of Judas”

BY FATHER MICHAEL HEINZ

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The document's interest in

The ad for Medjugorje on page 13 of the March 12, 2006, edition of TODAY'S CATHOLIC, I believe, gave rise to confusion with the picture of Our Lady of Fatima at the top of the advertisement. It would seem to say that Our Lady of Fatima endorses Medjugorje. I have not heard that said by anyone before.

The following are some facts about Fatima and Medjugorje.

Fatima: • May 13, 1917 — First of six appearances by Our Lady of Fatima to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. • Oct. 13, 1917 — At Fatima, the sun went out of its orbit before 70,000 people for 10 minutes — something never heard of before or since in the history of the world. • Oct. 13, 1930 — During the pontificate of Pius XI, the bishop of Leiria Diocese, where Fatima is located, declares the Fatima apparitions to be supernatural and worthy of belief by the faithful. • Oct. 31, 1942 — Pope Pius XII consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Later in the same year, the same pope issues the fiat of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. • Oct. 13, 1950 — Pope Pius XII issues the fiat of the Immaculate Heart of Mary the holy year is closed at Fatima instead of Rome, as requested by Pius XII. • Dec. 10, 1963 — Pope John XXIII institutes the feast of the Immaculate of the Rosary in honor of Our Lady of Fatima.

Medjugorje: • May 13, 1981 — Pope John Paul II is shot and could have died except that his body turned sideways and left his body without killing him. • May 13, 1982 — Pope John Paul II goes to Fatima to publicly thank Our Lady for sparing his life. • March 16, 1996 — Pope John Paul II, along with all the bishops and priests of the world, consecrates Russia and the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Father Adam Schmitt Spiritual director, Fort Wayne- South Bend Fatima Apostolate

Spiritual director offers some facts about Fatima and Medjugorje

The ad for Medjugorje on page 13 of the March 12, 2006, edition of TODAY'S CATHOLIC, I believe, gave rise to confusion with the picture of Our Lady of Fatima at the top of the advertisement. It would seem to say that Our Lady of Fatima endorses Medjugorje. I have not heard that said by anyone before.

The following are some facts about Fatima and Medjugorje.

Fatima: • May 13, 1917 — First of six appearances by Our Lady of Fatima to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. • Oct. 13, 1917 — At Fatima, the sun went out of its orbit before 70,000 people for 10 minutes — something never heard of before or since in the history of the world. • Oct. 13, 1930 — During the pontificate of Pius XI, the bishop of Leiria Diocese, where Fatima is located, declares the Fatima apparitions to be supernatural and worthy of belief by the faithful. • Oct. 31, 1942 — Pope Pius XII consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Later in the same year, the same pope issues the fiat of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. • Oct. 13, 1950 — Pope Pius XII issues the fiat of the Immaculate Heart of Mary the holy year is closed at Fatima instead of Rome, as requested by Pius XII. • Dec. 10, 1963 — Pope John XXIII institutes the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in honor of Our Lady of Fatima.

Medjugorje: • May 13, 1981 — Pope John Paul II is shot and could have died except that his body turned sideways and left his body without killing him. • May 13, 1982 — Pope John Paul II goes to Fatima to publicly thank Our Lady for sparing his life. • March 16, 1996 — Pope John Paul II, along with all the bishops and priests of the world, consecrates Russia and the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
I n 1972, Dean Kelley wrote a book called “Why Conservative Churches Are Growing.” Using a combination of theory and data, Kelley argued that conservative Protestant groups, such as Baptists, the Assemblies of God and the Nazarenes were attracting members while liberal Protestant bodies, such as the Episcopalian, Presbyterians and the United Church of Christ were declining in membership.

In more recent years, a number of other researchers have advanced the same argument. Like Kelley, they contend that strictness fosters church growth. Like Kelley, they argue that cultural groups are more likely to attract and retain members than liberal, culture-affirming groups.

But, why? How does strictness foster commitment and growth? According to economist Laurence Iannacoone, strictness strengthens a church in three ways: “raise(s) overall levels of commitment,” “increase(s) average rates of participation,” and it “enhance(s) the net benefits of membership.”

This thesis has gained considerable acceptance among Protestant and Catholic church leaders. Embracing the strictness thesis, these leaders argue that adopting a conservative theology that requires members to set themselves apart from prevailing cultural norms and values increases a group’s chances of increasing its membership and fiscal solvency. Conversely, they argue, a liberal theology that real, firms the prevailing culture attracts fewer people and leads to financial difficulties.

There is no question that, at least in the last 50 years or so, there has been a correlation between strictness and church growth. It is easy to prove that conservative groups such as the Assemblies of God and Jehovah’s Witnesses are growing, while liberal groups such as Episcopalians and Presbyterians are losing members.

But, one should not mistake correlation with causation. To show a correlation between strictness and church growth does not prove that strictness explains the growth. It might, but the correlation could be spurious, and other factors that happen to correlate with strictness might be the real reasons for the growth.

Indeed, a number of studies have shown that, when strictness is considered along with a number of other possible influences, the other factors explain more of the variation in church growth. It is not that conservative or demanding theology is irrelevant; it seems to have at least some impact. However, other factors seem to have even more effect. Let me mention two of them.

First, contextual factors related to population growth and decline in the larger community or in surrounding neighborhoods help to explain why some churches grow and others decline. Even lenient, liberal churches in rapidly growing communities and neighborhoods are likely to grow, while conservative churches in declining neigh-

CATEQUIZ’EM

By Dominic Camplisson

At Easter we focus on the events of Good Friday and after. This quiz looks at an earlier event integral to the paschal events, the Last Supper.

1. According to Mark 14, how were the disciples to know where they would dine with Jesus?
   a. He told them to look for a man carrying a jar of water who would lead them to the house.
   b. He told them to look for a sign “eats” over an all-nightMatzo stand.
   c. He told them to ask a man about a horse.

2. According to Matthew, who speaks up immediately when Jesus says one of the disciples will betray him?
   a. Peter
   b. Andrew
   c. Judas

3. What do we know about the room where Jesus ate the Last Supper?
   a. It was a large upper room.
   b. It was in the house of the high priest.
   c. It was inside the grounds of the temple.

4. What is that room also known as?
   a. The Cenobite
   b. The CellaBite
   c. The Cenacle

5. Since the Last Supper was a Passover meal, what meat would have been served?
   a. roast beast
   b. wine and bread
   c. lamb and bitter herbs

6. Jesus is described as sharing these two items with his disciples:
   a. milk and honey
   b. wine and bread
   c. lamb and bitter herbs

7. The cup used at the Last Supper took on the nature of an article sought in quests in the Middle Ages (at least in stories). What was it called?
   a. the cup which runneth over
   b. the Holy Grail
   c. the Mandela

8. All three synoptic Gospels (Mark, Matthew and Luke) have Jesus make this point (in slightly different words) about the wine:
   a. He wanted it to indicate a new baptism.
   b. He wanted his followers to follow the custom of abstinence (Nazirite vows).
   c. He would not drink it again until he is in heaven with the Father (or the kingdom of God comes).

9. John’s Gospel is different from the others in that his mention of the Last Supper does not include:
   a. Communion
   b. The institution of the Eucharist
   c. The description of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot

10. Most theologians point to this other item in John as referring to the same sacrament:
    a. The roasting of the herbs and provision of salt water for dipping them in
    b. The bread of life discourse (John 6)
    c. The referral to the “Disciple that Jesus hated”

11. What instead does he have do occur at the Last Supper?
    a. Jesus washing the disciples’ feet
    b. Jesus curing the daughter of a centurion
    c. Jesus admonishing Thomas to have more faith

12. According to John, how does Jesus indicate who will betray him?
    a. He said it would be the person he kissed.
    b. He said it would be the person he gives a piece of food to after dipping it.
    c. He said it would be the one he seats at his right hand.

13. Probably one of the most famous depictions of the Last Supper was by this Italian artist:
    a. Leonardo DiCaprio
    b. Leonardo Da Vinci
    c. Lyanos De Sylvando

14. What is unusual about the seating arrangements in this painting?
    a. All are reclining when they should be sitting up.
    b. All are seated along one side of a long table.
    c. All are of equal height, when in reality James the Lesser was shorter.

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

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ANSWERS:
1. a, 2.a, 3.a, 4.a, 5.b, 6.b, 7.c, 8.a, 9.a, 10.a, 11.a, 12.b, 13.b, 14.b
Happiness and joy of heaven is indescribable in human terms

FATHER JOE BRAGOTTI, MCCJ

and some of the criminals that made their ascent to power possible.

that this is also the land of the Uganda Martyrs and of many others after them, who stood in the way of tyranny and paid the ultimate price. I feel the joy of his presence in the fact that I have personally known some of these modern day saints.

From the porch where I am sitting, I see the sprawling expanse of the city. I see the hospital, the clinic, the street, the houses, the streets. I see the community's little house where three sisters, the parish church and the high school. I see the convents of three different local congregations of women, the parishes, and the catechist training center.

I realize once again that, through all the turns and twists, and the abyss between the rich and the poor, the abyss is very much a reality here. Yet, I also see that many Ugandans have broken of the cycle of abject poverty and now lead decent, laborious and fruitful lives. It does me good to see it.

We don’t hear much about people’s needs these days. In a memory of the dead. But 15 or 20 years ago, Uganda was known as the hotbed of AIDS. Thanks to an enlightened government policy, the scourge was exposed and dealt with in the open. Today, Uganda leads the way in making the bereaved and the survivors happy.

The thought of so many dreadful contradictions has been haunting me since I landed last week. Uganda gave birth to some of Africa’s most cruel tyrants, the likes of Idi Amin, Milton Obote the good from the wicked, and the way things are. The Book of Revelation says the saints in heaven wear long white robes, implying there are many people in heaven.

Similarly, the church’s doctrine of the “communion of saints” shows the connection between the holy people on earth, the souls in purgatory and the blessed in heaven. The blessed in heaven are basically all those who have died in the state of grace and have made it to heaven, even if they had to be first purified in purgatory. Among these blessed can be many of our family, friends and acquaintances whom we knew on earth.

Heaven is a truly loving community, where we will be able to know and love God, Jesus, the Blessed Mother, the angels, the saints, as well as our family and friends who have preceded us to this state. We will love as God loves, by using our free will only to do what we will do. There will be no sin, no temptation to sin, no suffering, no sadness.

This is possible because God strengthens his people and protects our conduct by which we know and our will by which we love. A. Winkhoffer says, “God bests in perfection his rational creatures so that they may give him perfect adoration and honor by their love for him. This love far surpasses what a creature is capable of by himself. To perfect his creature, God raises it by grace above itself and bestows his own power on it for love of him.”

Today's Catholic welcomes questions from readers to pose to Father Richard Her, Father Michael Heintz, Father Mark Gurtner and the Office of Worship. Please e-mail your questions to editor@tw.diocese-fwsb.org or mail them to Today's Catholic, That's A Good Question, P.O. Box, Fort Wayne, IN 46856. Include your name, city and an e-mail address or phone number so we can contact you if necessary. Anonymity will be preserved upon request.
dunes and swamps, and on the palm trees. On the north, you see dry, yet colorful, desert plains. mountains that are surrounded by Sinai is a region of incredible Sea on the north. on the east with the Red Sea at its west and the Gulf of Aqaba north.

How do we know God spoke to Moses in the burning bush? FATHER RICHARD HIRE

Jehwo’s flocks, Moses came to Mount Horeb. Here he noticed a burning bush that was not being consumed. God called to Moses from the bush and asked him to free the Israelites from the oppression of the Egyptians. Then God revealed his name: “I am Who am” or Yahweh, i.e., God is the source of all beings. Mount Sinai, or Jabal Musa in Arabic, is a 4,979 foot high mountain often identified with Horeb. Tradition says that St. Helena (d. A.D. 330), the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, ordered a chapel to be built here in the valley around the site of the burning bush. G. Freeman says the pilgrimage Egeria, a Spanish nun in A.D. 384, describes where Moses took Jehwo’s cattle to pasture when God spoke to him twice in the burning bush. The bush was still alive and spouting in a pretty garden. In 1483, Father Felix Faber visited Mount Sinai where he was taken into the Chapel of the Burning Bush. He was required to take off his shoes, as Moses did. The lamps burned day and night.

Today the Chapel of the Burning Bush is behind the altar of the Church of the Transfiguration on the grounds of the Monastery of St. Catherin. G. Freeman says the bush, or its successor, is seen in the courtyard outside, transplanted from where

FaithFest invites teens to discover ‘IT’

BY SARAH ROMPOLA

I f you know any high school student like me — boggling down with school work, managing a hectic work schedule and seemingly never enough time to relax, hang with friends and family, I would highly encourage you to attend this year’s FaithFest at Marian High School on April 22. As I already mentioned, I am an average senior in high school. I currently attend Marian High School, consistently wading in the spring and the many exciting events for seniors.

I go to St. Joseph Parish and am an active part of the youth ministry there and am proud to say I am part of the Diocesan Youth Council. Many people probably do not know what we do or who we are, but we are the driving force behind FaithFest. FaithFest is an amazing day-long youth rally for high school students. The theme this year is “Catholic, yeah! Believe IT ... Speak IT ... Mean IT ... Live IT!” The day is laid out to help teens discover who the “IT” about their faith means.

I had never attended a youth rally before FaithFest last year, but, after investing my time in planning it and experiencing such an amazing day, I encourage everyone to seriously consider attending this year’s gathering. It will be a great day.

Marian hosts the event after last year’s FaithFest was at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. FaithFest tradi- tionally has been staged in the middle of the diocese but finds itself in the western end of the diocese as part of the plan to bring the event to venues across the diocese.

The move last year proved to be a good one since it was the largest turnout at FaithFest ever. I truly believe the enthusiastic teens that came together from all over the diocese are what made the event so special. The diverse group of teens contributed to the uniqueness of the day.

Through the witness of last years guests, Sarah Hart, Tony Melendez and Steve Angrisano, great workshops, time with Bishop D’Arcy and the interactive village, we had a chance to dis- cover and witness faith, fun and fellowship, Mass was celebrated, teens could have been a coffee house with an open microphone so that teens can showcase their talents. And of course, we were all required to be a coffee house with an open microphone so that teens can showcase their talents. And of course, we were all required to take part in the dance and closing Mass.

I can tell you from personal experience FaithFest is a day well spent that will rejuvenate your spiritual life. I hope to see you all at FaithFest!

What are your primary influences in your decision to become a priest?

I am so grateful for the Franciscans who taught me at Bishop Luers — they were of prayer and con- viction. My parish priests in Maine (where I went to grade school), the daily example of my parents in modeling the faith. My father was in church each morn- ing before work. My mother prayed the rosary daily and often said that she would be open to God’s call and more of her children to become a priest or sister.

Why do you like being a priest?

The many opportunities a priest has to be involved in the lives of others is so special. A priest can express God’s love to those who are rejoicing and to those who bear the cross.

Do you have a special interest or hobby?

I live and die with the Red Sox. You will find me twice a week at Fitness USA. I enjoy being on the golf course on occa- sion during the summer months (not as often as I should). I was blessed with the chance to partic- ipate in many sports during my four years at Bishop Luers, and this enthusiasm still persists.

Do you have any pets?

No pets — it has been sug- gested by some brother priests, as pets are not allowed in the seminary. I was a dog person, and I should get a dog. I can’t imagine that at the moment.

Meet The Priest

What do you do for relaxation?

Please note what I stated earli- er about trips to the health spa and being on the golf course, I would like to invest more time in prayer and communication with all or part of the laity.

How do you prefer to be addressed by the laity?

Who could say anything but today a silver plate marks the site under the small altar. The altar has alabaster legs and is enclosed by decorative mother-of-pearl miniature arcades on either side. The walls are decorated with tiles.

Because of his call by God in the burning bush, Moses became the founder of Israel and the founder of the worship of Yahweh as the God of Israel. The fact that Moses was afraid and unwilling to return to Egypt points to a call from God to Jacob. The uniqueness of the name of God as a spiritual self-existing being in a world where people worshiped material things, like the sun and moon, as gods also points to a revelation from God to Moses.

Who is your favorite reading material?

I have purchased a number of books on the priesthood as well as on the sacrament of reconciliation. Our bishop gives a couple of the priests on matters related to spirituality. I was never one to read novels.

What do you think is the best part of being Catholic?

Could who say anything but the reception of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, on a daily basis.

What is your favorite prayer of Scriptural passage?

Although it is difficult to conclude any of my communication with all or part of the Irish blessing: “May the road rise to meet you — and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.”

How do you prefer to be addressed by the laity?

I have found that most people will say “Father Bill.” I certainly would answer those who say “Father Sullivan.” It makes no difference to me.
Both CYO soccer and softball see season openers this week

By Michelle Castleman

FORT WAYNE — With spring break wrapped up for most Fort Wayne area schools, the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) will see the soccer and softball seasons open this week.

CYO soccer

After Nathan Stant attended St. John, Delphos, Ohio, and played club soccer during high school, he went on to play four years at University of Saint Francis. Upon graduating, he coached two years at Blackhawk. He’s now teaching social studies and coaching this year’s St. Charles CYO eighth grade boys’ soccer team.

Of the 16 players on the roster, 11 players can be on the field at one time: one goalie, three to four defenders, four to five midfielders and two to three forwards. Last year’s team was the tournament champ, but Stant says he has no idea how this year’s team will fare depending on many of his players with club experience.

His goals are to prepare his players for high school and win games. The Cardinals will play their games at Krieger and Foster Parks. The regular season begins this week and ends with a seeded tournament in early May.

CYO softball

John Cady will help bring back the softball program to Queen of Angels-Precious Blood girls this season with the help of assistant coaches Louise Aguirre and Christy Brooks. The CYO season starts this week.

Each of the eight teams will face each other once during regular season. Records will not count going into the tournament at the end. Cady feels a real plus for his team is that only two of his 11 players (seventh and eighth grades) have not played organized softball in the past.

His goals for this season are to have fun and win as many games as possible. He would also like to see his team win the year-end tournament.

Jack McCartney and the girls from St. Therese-St. John Fort Wayne are looking forward to their second year with a CYO softball program. McCartney begins his 24th year of coaching with 14 girls on his roster — grades 5 through 8.

They will be led by three eighth graders and hope to incorporate more speed and another power hitter into their attack this year.

While practicing in their gym and on the parking lot, they have been focusing on all aspects of the game.

Greg Byerly, Maureen Dumat, Shelly Stiethorn and Linda Loegring, assistant McCartney. Their games will be held on the diamonds at St. Charles and Havenhurst this season.

Reigning track champs gear up

By Michelle Castleman

NEW HAVEN — The St. John Baptist New Haven boys track team took the city title in 2005 and is looking forward to another great season. They have several experienced athletes returning and many new upperclassmen with a lot of talent coming out for the first time this year.

Coach Greg Lawrence started coaching Raider track eight years ago after several years of coaching in Warsaw. He reported that his team will be his largest yet, with nearly 80 boys and girls participating in grades 5-8.

His group also consists of a few runners, jumpers and throwers from St. Louis Academy and St. Joseph, Monroeville. Assistant coaches include Linda Heldens and Mark Watts both new this year and helping the “throwers.” Scott Voelker is in his seventh year and works with the distance runners. Clay Franke, hurdle specialist, started with Lawrence eight years ago. College student, Jeremy Fendel and several high school alumni are also donating their time to the program.

Lawrence is excited to have such a hardworking, enthusiastic group. He feels he has a well-balanced attack and should be competitive. He hesitated to make any predictions for the upcoming season, but stressed his longtime favorite motto, “You can’t coach desire.” The team will compete in three regular season meets. Then, the city showdown, which typically highlights the older runners, will conclude the season in mid-May. After that, Lawrence has helped put on an unsanctioned meet for just fifth and sixth graders the past few years. He hopes that will happen again this spring.
**South Bend agencies unite to prevent homelessness**

**By Lisa Kochanowski**

SOUTH BEND — One agency fighting to prevent homelessness is good, but 13 service agencies coming together for one cause is even better.

This is the goal of the fourth annual Homeward Bound 5K Walk scheduled for April 23, 2 p.m. at the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend.

“It has been a joint effort between St. Joseph and Elkhart counties in north central Indiana since 2003,” said Erin M. Powell, special events coordinator for the Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph County and co-organizer of the event. “The Homeward Bound Walk gives local charities an opportunity to work together to provide awareness about housing and homelessness issues, as well as raise much needed funds for programs that support our local community.”

**Elementary School Principal**

**Most Precious Blood School, Fort Wayne, seeks candidates for the position of School Principal. The ideal candidate is a faithfully practicing Catholic with excellent interpersonal skills who is ready to be the Religious, Educational and Managerial Leader of a Catholic elementary school. All candidates must be eligible for an Administrative license.**

Most Precious Blood is a strong urban parish community with a school that is committed to Catholic education in a true family-like atmosphere. PB has an enrollment of 175 in preschool through 8th grade, with an experienced, dedicated faculty.

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Application deadline: April 21, 2006

Position to begin: July 1, 2006

**CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Lima Central Catholic, a 382 students (grades 9-12) school in Lima, Ohio, invites qualified applicants for principal position, beginning July 1, 2006.

The 13 agencies involved in this years walk are SPA Women’s Home, Hope Rescue Mission, United Religious Community, Habitat for Humanity of St. Joseph County, Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph County, Guidance Ministries, Servants of the Streets, St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County, The Center for the Homeless, Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Family Services Elkhart/Helping HAND, Madison Center and Life Treatment Center.

Anyone can get involved in a variety of ways. Walkers can form teams and raise funds for a particular agency or for a general fund that will be divided between the different agencies. Registration begins at noon. The afternoon will include fellowship, food, music and fun for the whole family.

For more information visit www.homelesswalks.org or call the St. Vincent de Paul Society at (574) 251-4906.

**Medjugorje 2006 National Conference**

University of Notre Dame

May 26, 27 and 28

Tony Melendez is an internationally known singer and songwriter. His 1997 performance for Pope John Paul II in Los Angeles was an unforgettable moment. Born without arms, he played the guitar with his two-fingered left hand and a bow; the theme song he composed for the trip, “Te Quiero” (I Love You), has been interpreted in many languages. Melendez has performed in hundreds of concerts and has written and recorded numerous albums. In 1996, the Children’s Defense Fund honored him with the citizens’ award for his inspiring music and personal accomplishments.

The International Pilgrimage Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima has travelled around the world since 1947 and has been seen by millions. Cars and masses of people have converted as they have passed the statue. The statue will be on display throughout the conference, and Msgr. Michael (coordination of the statue) will give a talk on its history.

Dr. Theresa Karmazinik Parks was instrumental in producing the first video presentation of the events in Medjugorje. The Karmazinik family were the first American family to visit Medjugorje. Theresa is the founder of Rachel Vincent Ministries, an international outreach to women on a variety of women's issues.

Eduardo Verástegui is a well known and popular Mexican singer and actor. He is one of the major stars in America and has appeared on major network dramas and music videos. His view of life and his entertainment career changed significantly after his trip to Medjugorje in 2005. He is now on life for the Catholic faith and Our Lady.

Fr. Anthony Bue, CR, is author of the highly acclaimed book “A Mother’s Story” an inspiring diary about the life of a contemporary parish priest amidst the turmoil of today’s culture. Fr. Bue is the pastor of St. Matthias Kentia parish in Chicago, Illinois.

**Conference Schedule**

**Sunday, May 28**
7:15 a.m., Dawn open 8:30 a.m., Morning session 1:30 p.m., Procession and Benediction

**Saturday, May 27**
7:15 a.m., Dawn open 9:00 a.m., Morning session Holy Mass Guest speaker (all sessions) 1:30 p.m., Afternoon session 6:30 p.m., Evening session Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction

**Friday, May 26**
6:00 p.m., Doors open 7:00 p.m., Conference begins (first speaker) Candlelight pray meeting to the Lady of Good Success

Sponsored by: Queen of Peace Ministries, Box 761, Notre Dame, IN 46506
Phone: (574) 288-5772
Web site: www.QueenOfPeaceMinistries.com
e-mail: maryconference@bcglobal.net

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**TODAY’S CATHOLIC**

April 16, 2006
WASHINGTON — A trailer highlighting observations of experts featured in the upcoming TV documentary “Jesus Decoded” is available on www.jesusdecoded.com.

The four-minute, 44-second trailer is the latest addition to the Bishops’ Catholic Communication Web site developed by the U.S. Catholic Church in light of popular media such as “The Da Vinci Code.” The program will be offered to TV stations affiliated with the Media of South Bend, “Jesus Decoded” offers a solid Catholic response to “Da Vinci Code” believers, concentrating especially on the first three centuries of the development of the church. The program includes interviews with international scholars versed in art, history and Scripture, including:

- Salesian Father Francis J. Moloney, a renowned biblical expert who most recently served on the faculty of the Catholic University of America.
- Sister of St. Joseph Maria Pascuzzi, associate professor of the New Testament at the University of San Diego who is recognized for her knowledge of the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul.
- Marist Father Justin Taylor, a biblical scholar and expert on Christian origins and New Testament professor at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem.
- Robert Randall Coleman, Ph.D., an art expert and associate professor at the University of Notre Dame.

The Web site also features articles on Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church that present the facts and rebut the fiction presented in “The Da Vinci Code” and other popular books.

**Trailer for ‘Jesus Decoded’ documentary on Web site**

The hour-long documentary “Jesus Decoded” is featured in the upcoming TV documentary “Jesus Decoded” offers a solid Catholic response to “Da Vinci Code” believers, concentrating especially on the first three centuries of the development of the church. The program includes interviews with international scholars versed in art, history and Scripture, including:

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- Sister of St. Joseph Maria Pascuzzi, associate professor of the New Testament at the University of San Diego who is recognized for her knowledge of the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul.
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The Web site also features articles on Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church that present the facts and rebut the fiction presented in “The Da Vinci Code” and other popular books.

WASHINGTON — A trailer highlighting observations of experts featured in the upcoming TV documentary “Jesus Decoded” is available on www.jesusdecoded.com.

The four-minute, 44-second trailer is the latest addition to the Bishops’ Catholic Communication Web site developed by the U.S. Catholic Church in light of popular media such as “The Da Vinci Code.” The program will be offered to TV stations affiliated with the Media of South Bend, “Jesus Decoded” offers a solid Catholic response to “Da Vinci Code” believers, concentrating especially on the first three centuries of the development of the church. The program includes interviews with international scholars versed in art, history and Scripture, including:

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WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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

MISC. HAPPENINGS

Marriage encounter plans weekend
Fort Wayne — A worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend will be April 28-30 at the Signature Inn. Registration fee is $40. A donation is taken on Sunday. Contact Mike and Julia Roszkowski at (574) 243-0743 for information.

Health and safety fair planned
South Bend — Our Lady of Hungary Parish will have a health and safety fair on Tuesday, April 18, from 2 to 5 p.m. in the school gym. The fair will offer resources and provide education about assisting individuals and families. Free hearing, cholesterol and blood sugar testing available. Free bike helmets, face painting and games. Children must be accompanied by a parent. Admission is free.

Bishop Luers hosts preview night party
South Bend — Bishop Luers Knight preview party on Friday, April 21, from 7-9 p.m. at Signature Inn. Registration fee is $40. A donation is taken on the door. Raffle tickets are $1 each or 6 for $5.

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Disciples in Mission

“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”

Going forth as disciples

“...let the light shine in your lives. Do not wait until you are older in order to set out on the path of holiness. Holiness is always youthful, just as eternal is the youthfulness of God. Communicate to everyone the beauty of the contact with God that gives meaning to your lives. In the quest for justice, in the promotion of peace, in your commitment to brotherhood and solidarity, let no one betray you.” — Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 2002 Evening Vigil Address, Toronto, Canada.

Opening prayer

Loving and faithful God, through our life in Christ, you make us a new creation. Send your Holy Spirit upon us now with the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment and courage. Help us to live as your disciples and share the good news of Jesus Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:3-8

Commentary

We are here together because God has touched our lives. Some of us have experienced the power of God in prayer. Some of us have known God’s healing presence and consolation in times of sickness. God has touched us all in some way, and this means that each of us has a story of faith—a story that is meant to be shared. It was the same for the very first followers of Jesus Christ...the very first Christian disciples. Their lives were touched by God in some way, and this means that the very first Christian disciples and share the good news of Jesus Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection and connection

• What do I think are the most effective ways I am achieving this goal right now? The most effective ways our group is achieving this goal?

Action challenge

• How can I/become even more mission-minded like Christ? What specific actions... ways can move me/us towards this missionary attitude?

Easter season is to look at our- selves and our faith-sharing group through the lenses of these three evangelization goals: to look at our strengths as an evangelizing person and as an evangelizing community and to point out areas for further evangelizing actions.

• Goal I: “To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.” This goal focuses on personal growth in holiness ... on the experience of conversion and renewal in each individual, every parish and diocese, every institution and every ministry.

• Goal II: “To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to the faith.”

• Goal III: “To foster Gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family and the common good of our society, that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.”

The U.S. bishops have given us a handbook document called “Go and Make Disciples.” In this document on evangelization, the bishops ask all the baptized to serve the Lord, may the light of Easter season is to look at our- selves and our faith-sharing group through the lenses of these three evangelization goals: to look at our strengths as an evangelizing person and as an evangelizing community and to point out areas for further evangelizing actions.

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Closing prayer with commissioning rite

Have one large lit candle with until smaller candles, one for each member of the group. Leader: Jesus is the light of the world...

All: Glory and praise be to God.

Leader: Glory and praise be to God, who called each of you by name. Come forward now and receive the light of Christ, which is entrusted to you anew.

The candles of all are lit from the paschal candle.

Leader: Let us now pray together our commitment to serve God and our church with an evangelizing spirit through Disciples in Mission.

All: Lord Jesus, true light, you know each of us by name and have called us to follow you. Increase our faith so that today we may become more fully chil- dren of the light as together we “put out into the deep.” Make us attentive to the call of the Spirit and fire us with energy to live, love and be led by God’s reviv- ing Spirit. We ask you this, for you are our God forever and ever. Amen.

Leader: As you go forth as a Disciple in Mission to love and serve the Lord, may the light of your candle remind you that the greatest gift you can ever give to God is the gift of yourself. Go now in God’s light, having been touched by the flame of his love, to share it with others.

All: Amen.

Written in 598 questions and answers, this 200-page volume offers a quick synopsis of the essential contents of the faith as promulgated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Its format makes it a unique tool for parents, pastors, teachers, principals, and catechists.

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The complete series of Disciples in Mission literature can be found at www.disceofweb.org/DM

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All: Amen.

Join Us!

Novena Divine Mercy Chaplet
Good Friday to Mercy Sunday
3 PM in St. Jude church
FORT WAYNE

Sixth Worldwide Mercy Sunday
April 23, 2006  Divine Mercy Sunday Devotion
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
(Reconciliation during these two hours) 3:00 PM: Divine Mercy Chaplet • Sermon - The Message of Divine Mercy • Procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

President: Father David Ruppert  St. Jude Church - Randallia Dr., at E. State Blvd., Fort Wayne www.stjudefw.org/adoration

TODAY’S CATHOLIC  APRIL 16, 2006