Let this year be a year of joy. Jubilee refers to liberation, a time of joy and thanksgiving for the graces and blessings God has given to this diocese over 150 years. We should greet the year with humility. This is always the right stance before God as Mary has shown us. Like her, we also pray that the word of God may penetrate hearts during this year. This will happen if we make it a year of prayer and thanksgiving: a year of repentance and openness to the Holy Spirit.

It is a time to lay a foundation for the future so those who come after us in this holy place will be blessed. It is a year to give thanks for all that has happened. It is a year to strengthen our communion with our bishop and, through him, with the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter.

Bishop D’Arcy proclaims opening of jubilee year

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — Gloomy skies and torrential rains couldn’t dampen the spirits of those who attended Sunday morning Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on New Year’s Eve. December 31 marked not only the feast of the Holy Family this year but also the inauguration of the diocesan Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year in Fort Wayne. Bishop John M. D’Arcy presided over the special Mass opening the diocesanwide Jubilee Year saying, “On the feast of the Holy Family, we hold in our hearts the family of this diocese.” As he spoke of the selfless love between husband and wife, he reminded the congregation it was symbolic of the love Jesus Christ has for his flock. Bishop D’Arcy also spoke of the importance of family, saying, “The future of humanity passes by way of the family.”

During his homily, Bishop D’Arcy also set forth the hope that the planned events throughout this jubilee year will “make each parish a family of God.” The numerous activities include a call back to faith for non-practicing Catholics, parish missions, reconiliation, regional confirmations and the continued travel of the Jubilee Pilgrim Cross culminating its journey at the Eucharistic Congress on the University of Notre Dame campus, scheduled for Aug. 18.

The bishop concluded his remarks with a request for prayer saying, “I ask for prayers for the diocese and the people to accept the call to faith and unselfish giving. As the diocese flourishes, we can give back to God what he has given us over the last 150 years.”

Father Robert Schulte, vicar general, who concelebrated Mass, said of the sesquicentennial year ahead, “It’s an opportunity to look back on 150 years and how far we’ve come and (it) gives us a hope into how far we can go in the future.”

In this year of prayer, evangelization and the pursuit of holiness, Bishop D’Arcy is grateful to be bishop of this diocese and says, “I joyfully look forward to the coming jubilee year.”

The theme for the jubilee is “Behold the Face of Christ: His steadfast love endures forever.” Bishop D’Arcy will celebrate the opening of the Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year in South Bend on Jan. 7 at the 9 a.m. Mass at St. Matthew Cathedral.
Fostering vocations comes from homes, parishes and bishop

News & Notes

Even in Christmas week the work continues

Now that Tony Steinhacker has become Father Tony Steinhacker, we have 17 young men preparing for the priesthood. So, the work of fostering vocations must continue. It is done primarily in the home and in the parish, but the bishop has a key role to play. With the help of our vocation office, Father Bernard Galic and his assistant, Mary Szymanek, scheduled two Andrew Dinners this week, between Christmas and New Year’s Day. In the Gospel of John, we read that Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to the Lord. So, priests are asked to bring young men to these dinners; not just any young men, but those whom they believe have a vocation to the priesthood. These evenings are very encouraging. The invitation to the young men came from priests. I think that counting both dinners, we had between 15 and 20 young men, most of them in high school but a few in college.

The first night was held at St. Pius X Parish, Granger, with Father Bill Schooler as host. In my usual brilliant planning, I thought it best to take the circuitous route, up 69 and down the toll road, which I understand is now owned by some company in Europe or wherever. It was a good decision because St. Pius is right next to an exit. I made the mistake of asking the young woman who took the toll where St. Pius Church was. “Take a right,” she said. Excessively obedient, I took a right and followed a drive throughout St. Pius Parish. It is not a place where you can ask directions, but I must have passed every home in the parish, and wound up just south of the Michigan line before I could find lights, stores and a gas station. I was quickly sent south to Ontario Road and Fir Road and St. Pius Parish.

There was still time to talk to the young men. They showed an exceptional video on the priesthood prepared by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and had talks from two of our seminarians, Fr. Chris Kiefer, the former lep- rechaun of the Notre Dame cheerleaders and a graduate of Notre Dame, and Kevin Bauman, who chaired the modern language department at Notre Dame and has taught Spanish. So, there was still an opportunity for some words from the bishop.

I was very impressed with the young men who were present. They came from Marian High School, Saint Joseph’s High School, Penn High School and other places. After joining them for night prayer in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, noting a beauti- ful new tabernacle brought west from Boston by Father Dan Scheidt, I was able to have a late supper.

A delightful visit then with Father Schooler, and I heard about the extraordinary crowds for Mass at St. Pius, as in all our churches. Also, I was pleased to hear about the very large number of confessions at St. Pius before Christmas.

The next day, there was a meeting of the Serra Club at Holy Family in South Bend following a Mass. Thanks to the Serrans for their work on behalf of vocations.

Later in Fort Wayne

In Fort Wayne, we met at St. Charles Borromeo Parish. Here the two talks were given by Jake Runyon and Tink Coonan. Jake told us that his decision came when he was 15 and was at Denver World Youth Day with Pope John Paul II. He noticed the priests and how happy they were. Tink (I think it stands for Terry), whose brother Matt is also studying for the priesthood for our diocese, told about his spiritual journey through St. Vincent de Paul Parish, the Life-Teen Program, which had a strong influence, and the University of Dayton. Once again, we retired to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel for night prayer. Young men came from Bishop Luers, Bishop Dwenger and Carroll high schools.

Other events

Our vocation office does much more than this. A group of priests and sisters visit each high school. Father Galic tells me how much the spirit has improved since they first started over 10 years ago. Priests and religious also visit the fifth and eighth grades in our parish schools.

A number of vocation events are being planned for the Jubilee Year. Among them is a program entitled Called By Name in which layty give names to the bishop and the vocation office of young people whom they think may have a call to be a priest or religious. For the second year in a row, our seminarians will sponsor a retreat for young men out of high school who might be interested and consecrated life. This initiative came from the seminarians themselves. They learned some of it from other dioceses and have adapted it to our own situation.

There is another program which shows their wonderful imagination. I will tell you about that at another time. It deserves special mention.

Christmas in this diocese

Once again, it was my privilege to celebrate this Holy feast with our people. This year, I had the good fortune of driving to and from South Bend with our very dedicated, energetic and totally devoted master-of-ceremonies (and interim head of the Office of Worship), James Fitzpatrick.

There was the usual huge crowd on Christmas Eve at St. Matthew Cathedral Church. A delightful meal served and cooked by the indefatigable rector of the cathedral, Father Michael Heintz.

Back through the night and a chance to rest before the great honor of celebrating the midnight Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, followed by egg casserole, quiche and coffee cake with Father Robert Schulthe, our wonderful and devoted vicar general of the cathedral. With us were Father James Stytle and two visiting priests, Father Pius from Nigeria and Father Edward from Sri Lanka. We enjoyed each other so much it was hard to break, even though it was 2:30 in the morning.

Then there was a delightful morning Mass at the University of Saint Francis Chapel on television. In fact, both the midnight Mass and the morning Mass were televised. A new evangelization. Not new in content but new in adorin, in method and expression.

A quiet day then, with much thanksgiv- ing to God. These great beasts become more and more cherished as I realize that there are not too many of them left for me as bishop of this diocese. I will stretch it out and take as many as I can.

And now the jubilee

It was my privilege to announce it at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 31, as I will this coming Sunday at St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend. I hope you have a chance to read my pastoral letter, which is in this edition. I thank Tim Johnson and his excellent staff for prepar- ing this historic edition, which will be sent to every home in the diocese. I hope everyone will take out a subscription. How else will you know about what is going on in this Jubilee Year, and how else will you know of the work that Christ is doing in our diocese?

A special thanks also to Craig Klugman, editor of the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, and to Rosa Hernandez, the editor of the Fort Wayne, South Bend Tribune, front-page article on our Jubilee Year, which appeared in the Journal Gazette last Sunday. Let us hope that the South Bend Tribune will do as well.

Mince pie

I must say a word of thanks to many people from all over the diocese who somehow knew about my favorite holiday delicacy, mincemeat pie. Pieces of this delicacy came from everywhere, and I have eaten most of them. Enough. Time to go back on a diet.

I will be heading to my hometown for a few days to visit my family, especially my sister, Mary, whom I commend to your prayers in her serious illness. While my home parish has closed, I have been invited by a neighboring pastor to celebrate a Mass there for my jubilee on Jan. 14, at St. Columbkille’s Parish. Columbkille is an Irish saint and I remember the parish of which he is patron as a great Irish enclave, a place of great vitality with a parish school and even a high school. My family will be there and hopefully a few of my dear parents.

Hope to see you next week.
We stand on the threshold of our observance of the 150th anniversary of the founding of our diocese by Blessed Pope Pius IX. This presents us an opportunity, a moment of grace and a pastoral challenge.

To read the history of our diocese is to note with reverence the struggle of every generation to follow Jesus Christ and build a Catholic culture: to honor the family; to foster vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life; to erect churches so hearts and spirits can be raised to God in a worthy manner. These were the goals of those who went before us in this place.

As one looks back over the years, one finds evidence everywhere of the life of faith and of prayer, which must always accompany growth in faith. This is shown in a variety of ways.

From the earliest days we find devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; constant devotion to Our Lady and the erection of churches in her honor. Also, there is the building of schools and the establishment of catechetical programs for those in public schools so the young may meet Jesus Christ and so that the Catholic tradition of honoring faith and reason may be respected.

A particularly noteworthy part of the history of our diocese entails the establishment here of some of the great religious communities coming from Europe, followed by the flourishing of those congregations. This century and a half is marked by the presence of Jesus Christ, our savior, fostered by prayer and his presence in the Eucharist, evident in the letters they left behind and which still inspire us.

It seems appropriate to speak of four of these missionries. First, there is Rev. Edward Sorin, the intrepid French missionary, the founder of the University of Notre Dame. He came accompanied by several Brothers of Holy Cross. Listen to his assurance of the Lord's presence accompanying him and his companions in the rough Indiana wilderness:

‘This very evening we have hung upon in our little chapel our sanctary lamp only the second to be found in this vast diocese. It burns now where our nearest neighbor across the woods we see the lamp that lights up the moon dwelling where our god resides, we know full well that we are not alone. Jesus Christ dwells in our midst and we take our courage. We come to visit him and in the night as in the day our eyes are fixed upon the tabernacle.” — Letter of Edward Sorin to Rev. Monsignor Edward Sorin, M. O’Connell.

Holy Cross Father Edward Sorin is the founder of several parishes in the South Bend area and of the University of Notre Dame.

Then there is Mother Theodore Guerin, recently declared a saint, founder of the Sisters of Providence, and one of the founders of the Catholic school system in our diocese. On her arrival in Indiana, Mother Guerin expressed the deep desire of herself and her companions to experience the presence of Christ in the Eucharist before doing anything else.

“We had agreed among ourselves that our first visit would be made to the Blessed Sacrament, and that we would not speak to anyone before having satisfied the longing of our hearts.”

Mother Theodore’s devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, her desire to come to visit him and in the night as in the day our eyes are fixed upon the tabernacle, inspired us.

We also learn of Angelique Campeau, a lay catechist who worked alongside Father Stephen Badin, the first priest ordained in what became the United States, in catechizing the Potawatomi Indians. She remains an inspiration to many lay catechists today.

We also see in the history of our diocese the extraordinary witness of Msgr. Julian Benoit, the intrepid French missionary, the builder of Holy Cross Father Emmanuel Inconceivable Sacrament who can be called the founder of the church in Fort Wayne area.

I mention these few because they are typical of the early spiritual founders, and because we need to learn of their spirit so we might know more clearly from whence we came and also what it is that God is asking of us living together the challenge of this year of jubilee.

Sir, we want to see Jesus

As we look to the past for inspiration, we must realize that the year of the jubilee points ahead. As we look to the holy men and women who established the church here and preached the Gospel and lived it, we take them to face the questions that the times and the prevailing culture are putting to us as followers of Jesus Christ.

We also see in the history of our diocese the extraordinary witness of St. Mother Theodore Guérin’s tapestry hangs at St. Peter’s Basilica on the day of her canonization, Oct. 15, 2006. A pilgrim group, representing the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, attended the canonization. She is the first saint canonized from Indiana and is considered one of the founders of Catholic education in the diocese. The feast of St. Mother Theodore Guerin is May 26.

Our call then in this jubilee year, the call of every parish and of all our ministries and apostolates is first of all a call to prayer. When as individuals and parishes our habit of prayer grows strong, then we will be accompanied by the Eucharist before doing anything else.

It is a call to prayer, a call to holiness. We must be with him, and also with his face. We must be with him, and also with his face.

IT IS looking for preachers of the Gospel to speak to it of God whom they know as being close to them, as though seeing him who invisibly. The world expects of us, and abnegation. If these signs of sanctity are wanting, our words will not reach the hearts of men in our time. There is a grave danger that they will be vain and sterile.” — “Evangelii Nuntiandi,” Pope Paul VI

How then can we meet this need, this hunger so evident in our times? What means can we take so that the people of our time are helped to contemplate the face of Christ and so that the spiritual hunger of our times can be met? In short, how can this year of jubilee help us to live our vocation to come to know Jesus Christ and help others to know him?

What I am suggesting myself is that we embrace this as a year for the pursuit of holiness. It is a year to be marked by prayer in the parish and by efforts of evangelization rooted in prayer.

What I pray for, under God’s grace, is that this year of prayer and outreach, of repentance and return, of sorrow for sin and hope in Jesus Christ will give light for the years that follow. The jubilee must be seen as a spiritual retreat. We are called to become a church that prays and prays more intensely.

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Christ called the apostles to “come and apart and rest” with him awhile before sending them out. So it must be with us. (cf Lk 5:12-16) The apostles of today are called to bring the Gospel to the Christian paradoxs — to be with him, and also to be sent out by him. It must guide us still.

What Pope John Paul emphasized again and again that there is no effective evangelization without contemplation. Our going forth will not bear fruit unless time is
first spent with him. This is time for prayer. We must do both, not necessarily one first and the other second, but both together. Here are the means that I will ask each parish to employ, remembering always that we are beginning something, or rather renewing something that many did before us. What we do as a diocese this year will light the way for the years that follow.

The parish mission

This is a time of prayer and evangelization. I request every parish to have a mission, which will include outreach and invitation to Catholics who have left the practice of their faith. In order to make this possible, I ask every parish to schedule their mission between Jan. 1, 2006 and Dec. 1, 2008. Thus, we include the year just completed, and this gives parishes a full three-year period allowing time to schedule and prepare a truly parish-wide mission in every parish. It is recommended that the Office of Spiritual Development be used in that program. Priests, religious and laity from our diocese present the instructions on the word of God. When this happens, both the presenter and the listener are served spiritually. It is a more complete time of renewal. If a parish does choose another group of missionaries, they must use the preparation methods of evangelization as perfected by our diocesan office.

This includes personal contact, a letter from the pastor as well as a phone call to each parishioner, and a time of intense intercessory prayer before and during the mission. This preparation involves the whole parish, led by the pastor, in prayer, outreach and preparation. The Office of Spiritual Development stands ready to give help to all parishes in the preparation, including those who might choose a missionary from outside the diocese. The mission must include opportunities for the sacrament of penance, as well as instruction on both penance and the holy Eucharist.

During Lent 2007, there will be several simultaneous efforts to draw people closer to Christ and his church.

The media

There will be extensive use of television, radio, billboards and other instruments made possible by a grant from Our Sunday Visitor, inviting everyone, but especially inactive Catholics, to “come home” to Christ and the church.

Mercy Day

Following a diocesan-wide effort, which will include a 1-800 phone number for those seeking counseling and help before returning to the sacrament of penance, all priests will make themselves available, on a particular day, for the sacrament of penance at a time and date to be announced.

Wells of Hope

This is an original instrument prepared for our diocese by our Office of Spiritual Development. It has already begun and will include the training of disciples to go two-by-two to visit people who might be interested in returning to the practice of their faith. This splendid effort can also be linked with the parish-wide mission. In the visit, people can be invited to attend the mission.

Expansion of eucharistic adoration

Every parish should consider increasing the hours of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and should make clear intentions of prayer for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

Intensified efforts to reach, love and serve the poor in each parish

The encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est,” calls us to this effort. “The church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the sacraments and the word of God.” For the church charity is not a land of welfare activity which could equally be left to others, but is part of her nature, an indispensable reflection of her very being.” —”Deus Caritas Est,” Pope Benedict XVI.

Renewal of the sacrament of penance

This is to take place on the diocesan level through Mercy Day, which will be accompanied by extensive media efforts to call people back to this sacrament and to the full practice of their faith, and by a special telephone number through which people can receive counseling and discuss personal problems, which may have prevented them from returning to the practice of their faith. As valuable as this intense effort will be, our priests are well aware that efforts to draw people to Christ who await them in the sacrament of penance and in the celebration of the holy Eucharist must be ongoing throughout the year in every parish.

Family life

Parishes and pastors must look for ways, in collaboration with the diocesan Office of Family Life, to help parents form their families as communities of faith, prayer and service. Pope John Paul II set forth this beautiful vision for Catholic family life in the following way: “Catholic parents must learn to form their family as a ‘domestic church,’ a church in the home, as it were, where God is honored, his law is respected, prayer is a normal event, virtue is transmitted by word and example, and everyone shares the hope, the problems and sufferings of everyone else. All this is to advocate a return to this outdated style of living: it is to return to the roots of human development and human happiness.” —“Family at the Heart of the Race track,” New York, 1995.

As part of this intensified effort to help build a Catholic culture in the home, the parish should look for opportunities to present to married couples and to couples preparing for marriage the beauty of the church’s teaching on marriage, family, sexuality and the human body.

Evangelization and catechesis of young people

A recent study entitled Soul Searchers has examined the efforts of various churches and religious groups to reach young people with the message of the Gospel. The study underlines the vital role that when Catholics engage and educate young people, especially teenagers, there is a strong response. Alas, it found, with some encouraging exceptions, that Catholics do not do this adequately. In great part, we have failed to show our young people the face of Christ. We have not heard and attended to their cry, the cry given to the Apostle Philip on the day of the great feast, “We want to see Jesus.” As part of the jubilee year, I ask every parish to assess the effort it is making for the sanctification and instruction of young people. I pledge to work with our Office of Youth Ministry, our Office of Catechesis, our Office of Young Adult Ministry and our Office of Volunteer Ministry to help build a Catholic culture in the home, the parish should look for opportunities to present to married couples and to couples preparing for marriage the beauty of the church’s teaching on marriage, family, sexuality and the human body.

Diocesan youth director Cindy Black initiated XLT, praise and worship music, reflection and time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. XLT appeals to high school and college age Catholics to draw them into worship. The first diocesan XLT took place Sept. 28, 2006 at St. Mary Church, Fort Wayne.
The Jubilee Pilgrim Cross continues its journey across the diocese from parish to parish with academic and religious congregation visits included. In 2007, the cross journeys onward to South Bend and will culminate at the Eucharistic Congress on Aug. 18 at the University of Notre Dame. The cross is shown in procession to Most Precious Blood Parish last spring.

The events

The main event is the Eucharistic Congress to be conducted on Aug. 18 at the University of Notre Dame. It will include an ecumenical service; catechists at different locations throughout the campus; eucharistic adoration; the rosary at regular intervals at the Notre Dame grotto; opportunity for the sacrament of penance; special programs for young people; and an exhibition of art. It will conclude late Saturday afternoon with the celebration of the Eucharist at the Joyce Center. The entire diocese will be called to attend this event. There will be no parish Masses that Saturday afternoon throughout the diocese, no weddings, funerals or athletic events and no parish confessions, as all the priests will be at Notre Dame where they will be hearing confessions and presenting catechists.

There will be two diocesan regional confirmations in September — one in South Bend and one in Fort Wayne — showing the unity of our young people and our future to her, knowing that her prayer of intercession will bring countless blessings and graces in the years to come. We will entrust this beloved diocese to her and pray for all those who come after us in this holy place.

The beautiful jubilee image, typical of many of the works of art in our diocese, also shows our theme: Behold the Face of Christ, and also the millennium admoni- tion of Pope John Paul II: “Contemplate the Face of Christ and Contemplate It with Mary.”

Together, let us seek and behold the face of Christ. I call all in our diocese, our priests, our religious, all our parishes and all our people to seek the face of Christ in prayer; in reparation for sin, especially through the sacrament of penance; in outreach and evangelization; in improved ministry to and with our young people; in the training of catechists and programs of adult religious education; through works of charity for those in need. May God bless our journey, our jubilee year. Place it in the hands of Our Lady, our patroness. Together, let us seek the face of Christ. His steadfast love endures forever.

Brandon Cruz  Jeff Hazen  Bob Snyder                              Louise Snyder   Mary Merckx   Dick Koschnick

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The Jubilee year. Not an end, but a beginning

Like those who went before us, we are called to do those things which will strengthen the church for decades to come. Our jubilee year, then, is not an end, but a beginning.

Our goal is to establish strong foundations in certain key areas of pastoral life, to put in place a structure for faith and prayer, which will bring forth fruit in the years to come. It may be some time before this year of planting brings forth the desired fruit. That is the way of grace and the way of salvation. As Cardinal Ratzinger once said to me at an “ad limina” visit, “That is salvation history. One person sows and another reaps.”

But let us begin.

I ask each parish to initiate conversations and planning in the following areas:

1. A program of prayer and outreach including, but not limited to, a parish mission.

2. A program of prayer for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, which will include eucharistic adoration. The Office of Worship will be providing help to every parish.

3. An evaluation of the present parish youth ministry program to be conducted in close collaboration with our Office of Youth Ministry. As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in conversation with parish priests in northern Italy, it may be that smaller parishes may have to be linked together. A program of youth ministry in the parish should include the four foundations, which are indicated above. Our Office of Youth Ministry is ready and eager to help.

4. The training of catechists. Many parishes take advantage of programs prepared by the diocese for the training of catechists and for adult religious education.

The catechetical program in a parish can only fully flourish when there are strong programs of adult education. A number of parishes have made great advances in this area and every parish is called to this. Many adult Catholics are hungry to know their faith.

5. Every parish should reflect in prayer the need of the Church in the East, in the West, and in the South. Let us give it the prayerful attention which it deserves. Similarly, all our parishes and all our people to seek the face of Christ in prayer; in reparation for sin, especially through the sacrament of penance; in outreach and evangelization; in improved ministry to and with our young people; in the training of catechists and programs of adult religious education; through works of charity for those in need. May God bless our journey, our jubilee year. Place it in the hands of Our Lady, our patroness. Together, let us seek the face of Christ. His steadfast love endures forever.

To contemplate the face of Christ and to contemplate it with Mary

On Dec. 8, we will celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of our diocese. On that day in the cathedral church dedicated to her under this title and in all the parish churches in the diocese, we will consecrate our diocese, our people and our future to her, knowing that her prayer of intercession will bring countless blessings and graces in the years to come. We will entrust this beloved diocese to her and pray for all those who come after us in this holy place.

The jubilee year will bring forth a hundredfold. Let us make it a joyful year for joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Celebrating Christmas at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI said the world still needs a savior, despite technological advances that make humanity consider itself the “self-sufficient master of its own destiny.”

At Midnight Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, the pope said the birth of Jesus Christ should draw attention on all the suffering and abused children in contemporary society.

In a Christmas Day blessing “urbi et orbi” — to the city of Rome and the world — he said recent developments like space travel, genetic engineering and the Internet only accentuate man’s need for spiritual salvation.

“In this postmodern age, perhaps he needs a savior all the more, since the society in which he lives has become more complex and the threats to his personal and moral integrity have become more insidious,” the pope said.

The Mass and blessing, broadcast around the world, were the public highlights of the pope’s Christmas, but the 79-year-old pontiff also marked the festivities in quieter gatherings with friends and colleagues.

An old friend drove down from his home in Bavaria with three small Christmas trees — which were decorated and placed in the papal apartment — and several batches of Bavarian cookies. A separate gift of venison meat arrived from Germany in time for Christmas dinner.

On Christmas Eve, as a crowd gathered for the unveiling of the Vatican’s own larger-than-life Nativity scene in St. Peter’s Square, the pope made his way to the packed basilica for midnight Mass.

Young children from five continents brought flowers to a statue of the baby Jesus in front of the altar, a moment that highlighted the liturgy’s international atmosphere.

In a sermon, the pope said the meaning of Christmas was quite simple: God “makes himself small for us.”

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In a sermon, the pope said the meaning of Christmas was quite simple: God “makes himself small for us.”

This is how he reigns. He does not come with power and outward splendor. He comes as a baby — defenseless and in need of our help,” he said.

“In this way God teaches us to love the weak ones. In this way he teaches us respect for children,” he said.

The pope said Christmas should draw the people’s attention to all children who suffer and are abused in the world, “the born and the unborn,” particularly those who are hungry, unloved, forced to beg or “placed as soldiers in a violent world.”

He encouraged the sign of Christmas — a newborn baby lying in a manger — corresponds with the essentially straightforward message brought by Jesus: “To love God and love one’s neighbor.”

“This is everything — the whole faith is contained in this one act of love which embraces God and humanity,” he said.

He said this core message has sometimes been turned into something long and complex, especially by Scripture experts who “became entangled in details and in particular problems, almost to the extent of losing an overall perspective.”

In the season of giving at Christmas, the pope said, people need to reflect on the spirit of Jesus’ selfless love.

“When you give gifts for Christmas, do not give only to those who will give to you in return, but give to those who receive from no one and who cannot give you anything back,” he said.

At noon the next day, in an event broadcast to some 60 countries, the pope offered his blessing and pronounced Christmas greetings in 62 languages, including Chinese, Arabic and Latin.

“May the birth of the Prince of Peace remind the world where its true happiness lies; and may your hearts be open your hearts” to Christ as the savior of the world.

He urged an end to civil strife in Sri Lanka, and prayed that fratricidal conflicts in Darfur and other African areas would cease.

“May the birth of the Prince of Peace remind the world where its true happiness lies,” POPE BENEDICT XVI

The pope said the catalogue of suffering includes those misled by “facile prophets of happiness,” who struggle with relationships, loneliness, alcohol and drugs, and who “choose death in the belief that they are celebrating life.”

All this adds up to a “heart-rending cry for help,” he said. It illustrates that despite humanity’s material progress it always needs a savior to help choose between good and evil.

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“May the birth of the Prince of Peace remind the world where its true happiness lies,” POPE BENEDICT XVI
President Gerald R. Ford brought healing to wounded nation

BY JERRY FILTEAU

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In his brief, unelected tenure in the nation's highest office, President Gerald R. Ford restored integrity and character to the White House and brought a measure of healing to a country badly wounded and divided by the Watergate scandal. Ford, who had a bout with pneumonia last January and two heart treatments in August, died Dec. 26 at his home in Rancho Mirage, Calif. He was 93.

In a Dec. 27 statement, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called Ford "a great and good man who served his country with distinction."

"As a healing presence for the nation at a time when it was much needed, President Ford earned his country's lasting gratitude," said Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash. "We pray for the repose of the soul of our 38th president and express our heartfelt condolences to his wife and family."

During his 30-month presidency, South Vietnam fell to the communist forces of the North, high inflation zoomed into double digits by the end; under his successor, President Jimmy Carter, inflation dropped to less than 6 percent by the end; under his predecessor, Richard M. Nixon, of any crimes he may have committed in the Watergate cover-up. It was an action that provoked far wider and deeper anger than he had expected, but it prevented a recession.

Ford's most important act in that effort, taken a month after he was sworn in, was to pardon his disgraced predecessor, Richard M. Nixon, of any crimes he may have committed in the Watergate cover-up. It was an action that provoked far wider and deeper anger than he had expected, but it prevented a recession.

In 1975, as thousands of Cambodian refugees, immigration law reform and issues of humanitarian aid and human rights in U.S. foreign policy.

In August 1973, as thousands of refugees from Indochina were pouring into the country, he visited the resettlement offices of the U.S. Catholic Conference (now U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) at Fort Chaffee, Ark., to pay tribute to the contributions of the USCC, which was then doing well over half the refugees.

He nearly doubled funding for the U.S. Food for Peace Program and in 1975 speech at Notre Dame warned against letting inflation and economic problems at home lead to withdrawal from U.S. responsibilities toward poorer nations. "There is no safety for any nation in a hungry, ill-educated and desperate world," he said.
WASHINGTON (CNS) — However people feel about U.S. policies abroad, the troops on the ground carrying out those policies have earned our thanks and respect, said Cardinal Edwin O’Brien of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, said in a Christmas letter to Catholic military chaplains. “We know that on this Christmas Americans are divided, at times radically, as to the proper path to follow in our present military engagements,” he wrote. “While our military members can feel caught up in the middle of these divisions and confusions at home, they must not doubt our respect and admiration as they seek to bring about peace and harmony to lands and people torn by violence.” He said, “countless soldiers and their families go out to them, fervently hoping for an end to civil unrest in areas where we have invested so much of our precious treasure — lives lost, bodies and spirits sorely, permanently wounded, and families who must cope with the often destructive results of extended separations.”

Vatican official decries spirit of division in public debates

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishop Gerald R. Barnes of San Antonio, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee onDomestic Justice and Development, said in his letter accompanying parish education week guidelines for Catholic high schools that the public debate over immigration is “spiritually divisive.”

Bishop Barnes, who heads the U.S. bishops’ “Due to Political Tensions”

WASHINGTON, West Bank (CNS) Six friends, members of a local Christian community, had been killed in a suicide bombing that had killed many other people, said Cardinal Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. “One does not compensate for a murder, but we must not forget that we are all brothers and sisters,” he said.

Saddam’s appeal of his November conviction for killing 148 people in northern Iraq in 1982 is under review by court.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Saddam Hussein was caught up in the middle of these engagements,” he wrote. “While our military members can feel caught up in the middle of these divisions and confusions at home, they must not doubt our respect and admiration as they seek to bring about peace and harmony to lands and people torn by violence.” He said, “countless soldiers and their families go out to them, fervently hoping for an end to civil unrest in areas where we have invested so much of our precious treasure — lives lost, bodies and spirits sorely, permanently wounded, and families who must cope with the often destructive results of extended separations.”

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Children watch Bethlehem Christmas procession

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (CNS) — Christmas in Bethlehem, the West Bank town of Bethlehem Dec. 24. Only a few pilgrims were among the crowd outside the Church of the Nativity due to political tensions.

Palestinian children watch the traditional procession in celebration of Christmas in the West Bank town of Bethlehem Dec. 24. Only a few pilgrims were among the crowd outside the Church of the Nativity due to political tensions.

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**Sister Prejean to speak at Little Flower Parish**

_SOUTH BEND_ — Sister Helen Prejean, noted author of "Dead Man Walking" and opponent of the death penalty, will speak at Little Flower Church in South Bend on Jan. 12, 7 p.m. The talk is open to the public. Her discussion will be "Choosing Life: A Prophetic Voice in the Tradition of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The event is sponsored by St. Vincent de Paul Society of Little Flower, St. Joseph, South Bend, St. Joseph, Mishawaka, and St. Casimir, Kearn Road Menomonee, Holy Cross, Saint Mary’s College Justice and Peace offices, St. Stanislaus, Sisters of the Holy Cross, St. Matthew, Sacred Heart, Catholic Peace Fellowship and the Center for Peace and Nonviolence.

Little Flower Church is located at 54191 N. Ironwood, South Bend.

**South Bend to hold annual right to life march, program**

_SOUTH BEND_ — The annual Right to Life March and Respect Life Program will be held on Sunday, Jan. 14, in South Bend.

The march starts at Knights of Columbus Council #553, located at 553 E. Washington St. at 2 p.m. and proceeds to St. Joseph Church for a brief prayer service and then returns to Council #553 for the respect life program, which starts at 3 p.m.

Associate professor Carter Sneed, faculty member at the University of Notre Dame, has been invited to speak on stem-cell research and human cloning. There will be a free simple supper and bread.

For more information, call Bill Schmitt at (574) 232-6777.

**Saint Joseph’s club encourages free trade**

_SOUTH BEND_ — Students from the Saint Joseph’s High School S.E.C.O. (social and ecological concerns organization) put on a special little spin on holiday gift buying by offering the second annual Fair Trade Christmas Café. This special event, that brought out dozens of students, faculty and family members, was held in the school’s Little Theater. Local merchants Ten Thousand Villages and Just Goods were present with a wide selection of fair trade items like socks, shirts, candies, coffee, jewelry and miscellaneous items. Students performed a variety of musical compositions as entertainment and visitors were invited to enjoy coffee, tea and snacks.

“The goal was awareness,” said S.E.C.O. member Maria Young. “We wanted people to see it’s not impossible to buy fair trade items and it’s not very expensive.”

S.E.C.O. member Mark Jacobs thought the event went very well and was happy with the turnout. This is the second Fair Trade Café event they held this school year and he felt it was better attended then their first project.

**The St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth School Youth Choir visited and sang for the residents of St. Anne Home before Christmas.**

“It was the best one out of two,” said Jacobs.

According to a club brochure available at the event, “based on the foundations of formal Catholic social teachings, S.E.C.O. is a social justice club. Focusing on the inviolable dignity of each human being, S.E.C.O. strives to build a society of conscientious living that protects and promotes the life of every individual from ‘womb to tomb.’”

Club leader, teacher Kathy Byrne, said the group has been together for the last two years. The dozen or so active members of the group meet weekly to discuss projects and topics. They choose an issue as a group and then pick a moment when they can plan something that will help bring out their issue or message.

Some of the club’s activities include social justice campaigns, dinner-and-a-movie sessions and weekly recycling within the school. They hold chocolate campaigns where they use the chocolate holidays to raise awareness, hold fair trade cafés four times a year and a mission trip in the spring.

Jacobs said the group is a great example of living out the Christian teachings of treating all people with dignity and respect. He feels that if people purchase goods and foods at fair wage, from fair trade providers, then people will stay out of a life of poverty and live a life filled with dignity. He feels this is one important way he can live out his Christian beliefs and enjoys being a part of a group that encourages people to help others.

The group hopes that the Fair Trade Christmas Café also inspired people to start looking at all of the purchases they make. Along with having fair trade goods available, there were also foods grown by people who are ecologically aware of the environment.

**Bishop Luers’ scholarship recipients announced**

_FORT WAYNE_ — Each year at Bishop Luers High School students are offered the opportunity to apply for scholarships that are made available from people who feel a Catholic education at Bishop Luers is very important. Criteria are set up by the donors and need to be met by the students applying for the scholarships.

This year after the students had received their scholarships they were given a questionnaire pertaining to the kind of work that they had received. The students were asked how they felt about earning the scholarships.

Students felt proud of the fact that they had won the scholarship and were grateful to the donors. They understand the importance of a Catholic education, and the financial burden it can be to their parents.

_Scholarship recipients of 2006-2007 were the following: Jay Wyss and Madison Carroll — Donald M. Perry Scholarship; Hayley Eckert — Stan Klug Memorial Scholarship; Nichole Molitor — Msgr. J. William Lester Scholarship; Rachel Williams and Dan Davis — Larry Wodertz Memorial Scholarship; and Xavier Serrani — The Deb Jur Memorial Scholarship._

Those interested in setting up a scholarship at Bishop Luers High School for the 2007-2008 school year are asked to call Kathy Skelly or Brenda Price at (260) 456-1261.

**Matthew 25 Health and Dental Clinic adds three to board of directors**

_FORT WAYNE_ — Matthew 25 Health and Dental Clinic has named three new members to its board of directors: Joyce Eberly, Dan Garman and Chad Stuckey. They began their three-year term on Jan. 1.

Eberly is a long-time community volunteer and fundraiser, serving on numerous boards. Garman works for Parkview Healthcare and is the president of service line coordination and public advocacy. Stuckey is president and senior creative director of Brand Innovation Group, a regional branding and consulting company.

Matthew 25 Health and Dental Clinic is the only full-time, full-service clinic of its kind in the region. With a staff of over 400 healthcare and lay volunteers, Matthew 25 provides free medical, dental and vision services to the uninsured, low-income residents of Allen County. To learn more, visit matthew25online.org.

_Our Sunday Visitor; Sadlier publishers announce collaboration_**

_HUNTINGTON_ (CNS) — Two of the leading Catholic publishing companies in the United States will collaborate to develop, produce and distribute Catholic materials for parish and school use.

The agreement between William H. Sadlier Inc., which produces catechetical materials for school and parish religious education programs, and Our Sunday Visitor, which has six national publications; produces more than 500 books, pamphlets and programs; and is the nation’s largest producer of Catholic offering envelopes,

“is unprecedented collaboration of shared vision, complementary skill sets and understanding the needs of the Catholic marketplace,” said Gregory R. Erlandson, president of Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, in a statement.

William Sadlier Dinger, presi- dent of William H. Sadlier Inc., said the new relationship “pro- vides an opportunity to develop superior new products and to dis- tribute complementary products which will meet the needs of Catholic parishes and schools.”

Examples of projects aimed at meeting the catechetical needs of parishes and schools are Catholic Vacation Bible School, produced in cooperation with Augsburg Fortress, which is being reprinted for the summer 2007 market, and Take Out: Family Faith on the Go, a monthly minimagazine intended for religious education, school and intergenerational programs.

_Bishop Luers announces January events_**

_FORT WAYNE_ — Bishop Luers High School freshman registration will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 16, and Thursday, Jan. 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. each evening. The business office will be available to answer financial questions. Financial aid and scholarship information will be available.

Bishop Luers High School will host their sixth annual Spirit Breakfast, "...Living the Gospel," on Friday, Jan. 19, at Lester’s Banquet Hall, 1502 Bluffton Rd., from 7 to 8:30 a.m. The guest speaker will be Terry Tescula from Erin’s House. Tickets are $15 per person and sold in advance.

On Jan. 20 from 7 to 9 p.m., the Bishop Luers Boys Basketball Program is sponsoring a Casino Knight, an evening of great adult entertainment in the Bishop Luers Café. Tickets are $10 per person, which will include hors d’oeuvres and admission to the event.

For information call (260) 456-1261.

_Correction_**

The Dec. 4 issue of Today’s Catholic should have listed Sister Alordia Carney, OLVM, as the sister who delivered a site of appreciation for the Ana Casas family at the Mass of remembrance celebrated at St. Patrick Church in Fort Wayne.
Evangelization: An act of love

BY GINNY KOHRMAN

Opening prayer
O Lord, you call us to be your disciples. By the power of the Holy Spirit, transform our hearts. Use us to proclaim to all the message of your kingdom and the gift of salvation. Give us the courage and boldness to share our faith with others. May your grace and love touch the hearts of those who search. We pray for all who are estranged from your church. May Christ lead all of us to reconciliation and unity of mind and spirit. O Mary, our Lady looking upon the crucified Lord, may you be a little more like him whom I love the Lord, Pope Benedict XVI, in “Deus Caritas Est,” writes, “Being Catholic is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.” By baptism into the life of the Trinity, we are set on a course of love, led by the Holy Spirit. Baptism gives us the grace to thrive in our Christian life, but it requires of us cooperation and dedication through faith. When Jesus pointed out the demands of the Christian life when he said, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all of your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mt 22:37-39). Jesus was the perfect witness of love for the Father and for his neighbors. By our baptism we dedicate our lives to loving God and neighbor, as did Jesus.

Love the Lord
The Sesquicentennial Jubilee logo contains the image of Our Lady looking upon the crucified Christ, with the words “His Steadfast Love Endures Forever.” The Gospel account of the Incarnation, life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest story of love ever told. It is a love for his Father so much that he was willing to die rather than defy the will of his Father. “My Father, if it is possible, save me from this cup.” In Matthew 26:39, Jesus prays in agony of spirit, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not what I want, but what you want.” In Mark 14:35-36, Jesus prays “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want.” Jesus knew the cup was the cup of death and the rejection of his Father, his love would be rejected. Jesus prayed, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay near to me; I need you.” Jesus wanted to see his Father in the love of his Father. Pope Benedict continues, “Love grows through love. Love is ‘divine’ because it comes from God and unites us to God; through this unifying process it makes us a ‘we’ which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is ‘all in all.’” — “Deus Caritas Est,” 18. Our ability to reach out to fellow inactive Catholics must flow from a personal loving relationship with God and a corresponding commitment to the Christian life.

Love of neighbor
Dorothy Day once wrote in her journal regarding outreach to the poor, “I cannot get over the feeling that if we loved enough, if we were patient enough, if we prayed enough, we would move hearts, change lives, and would save the lost...” (“On Pilgrimage, Day”). I believe this quote also pertains to active Catholics who weekly gather around the eucharistic altar.

Instead of talking and worrying about friends or family members who are no longer active in the Catholic tradition, we must pray for the courage and love to begin the conversation with them. If we consider the Catholic faith our greatest love and treasure, why would we hesitate to talk about that gift which we hold so dear in our hearts? Many active Catholics think they do not know enough about the teachings of our faith. Others are afraid of offending someone. But evangelization does not have to be difficult. The greatest way to evangelize is to tell others what a difference God and the Catholic faith has made in our lives. Evangelization begins when we share our own faith stories with another. Everyone loves a good story, and others will be fascinated and interested in ours. Telling our faith story may provide the opportunity for others to share with us their reasons for becoming inactive in the Catholic faith.

As we do so, we place our trust in the Holy Spirit, whom we have received in baptism and confirmation. If we have faith, the Holy Spirit will give us the opportunities and guide the words we say. Pope Benedict XVI says, “The Spirit is the energy which transforms the heart of the ecclesial community, so that it becomes a witness before the world to the love of the Father, who wishes to make humanity a single family of God” — “Deus Caritas Est,” 19.

I am convinced that the high numbers of inactive Catholics challenges us all to increase our love of both God and neighbor. During this 150th Anniversary Year of our diocese, let each of us, through prayer, compassion, holiness and love, encourage at least one family member or friend to return to our Catholic faith. We can begin by reaffirming how much God loves them. We can tell them what a difference God’s love and the Catholic faith has made in our lives. And we can be persistent, yet encourage and guide them gently with love.

Closing Prayer:
Dear Jesus, Free us from fear, and help us to bring back our family members who have been scattered afar. Gather us together once again in our parish homes through love. Amen.

Jubilee Pilgrim Cross

Dec. 15-Jan. 5, 2007 St. Vincent de Paul
Jan. 5-12 Queen of Peace
Jan. 12-19 St. Bavo/Marian High School
Jan. 26-Feb. 2 St. Joseph/The Mount

Click on Events Calendar
You can always come home:
A journey back to the faith

BY FATHER ED ERPOLDING

The following narrative was written by Father Ed Erpelding. Although the names have been changed, the story happened in reality. It reveals the path of coming home, returning to the practice of the Catholic faith. It also shows the impact of the Wells of Hope experience that is a part of the 150th Jubilee.

The pleasant temperatures, the brightly colored foliage and the wonderfulness of the day were still on my mind as I mused following the morning Mass service. My mind wanders to the beautiful jubilee image, The beautiful jubilee image, typical of many of the works of art in our diocese, shows our theme: Behold the Face of Christ, and also the millennium admonition of Pope John Paul II: ‘Contemplate the Face of Christ and Contemplate It with Mary.’


Jean listened with care and concern when he told his life story.

Jim Smith rang the door bell. I escorted him into the parish office. Once in the office, I asked him if it would be okay if I began with a prayer for guidance from the Holy Spirit. He readily gave his approval. After our prayer Jim shared with me that Jean Lebeau, who had participated in our parish training program, which prepared church members to accept the call to evangelism and where Jean learned how to reach out and share Catholicism and the unchurched. He related that Jean listened with care and concern when he told his life story. He was pleased that Jean was straightforward in answering his questions. When he didn’t have the answers or was uncertain, he had assured him that his pastor would be willing to answer these and many other questions. After being away from the church for 16 years, he felt that he had much to learn about the teachings and practices of the church. At the end of this first meeting, he asked for a follow-up appointment for himself and his wife Bette. The appointment with them was scheduled for the following week.

In the weeks that followed, arrangements were made for them and their children to receive catechetical instructions. This was the first marriage for Jim and Bette, who had been baptized Catholic as infants and had spent some years in parochial schools. The preparation for blessing their marriage became a joyful time of learning, reconciling and healing. The three children, ranging in age from 9 to 13, partic-ipated in the parish RCIA program for youth and, gradually, grew enthusiastic about becoming members of the church. Thanks to the alertness and effort of Jean, the marriage of Jim and Bette was blessed and the three children were received into the church at the Easter vigil.

Wells of Hope offers invitation to faith renewal and healing

In response to the overwhelming need and desire to reach out to those who are no longer active in the Catholic faith, with the enthusiastic approval of Bishop John M. D’Arcy, Ginny Kohrman and Sister Jolene Heiden, SSND, of the Office of Spiritual Development and Evangelization, along with Linda Furge of the Office of Campus and Young Adult Ministry, spiritual director Gervase Bastian and Father Ed Erpelding, pastor consultant, have developed Wells of Hope.

This process of evangelization assists active Catholics in reaching out to those who are no longer active in parish communities. The essence of the process is rooted in Scripture, inspired by the story of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, found in the Gospel of John 4:5-42.

Thirty-nine parishes throughout the diocese of Wells of Hope and have participated in training provided by the Office of Spiritual Development in Fort Wayne and South Bend. These parishes are now in the process of forming and training Wells of Hope teams who will become active in the process. Parishioners selected for the Wells of Hope teams demonstrate those qualities exhibited by Jesus in the Scripture story, such as confidence in self and their faith in God, nonjudgmental listening skills, empathy, a desire to share their faith with others and the ability to maintain confidentiality with information shared.

Gervase Bastian says many Catholics may feel unqualified for this type of outreach ministry. We should remember, however, that “God calls us forward and then provides within us the transforming power to help others.” Following formal training, Wells of Hope team members, in cooperation with their pastor, contact those who are currently away from the parish community, reaching out by phone, notes and personal visits.

“They’ll visit in twos, for moral support,” adds Father Erpelding.

Each step of the process is modeled after Jesus’ work with the woman at the well, says Kohrman. “We approach those we are visiting with concern and love, gently guiding them to the living water of truth, reconciliation and possibly reunion with their Catholic faith tradition.”

As relationship is built, team members provide a safe and loving ear for those to “tell their story, believing they become the wells of hope for those in search of the Living Water,” says Sister Jolene.

She adds, “We won’t solve all their problems, but we can walk in truth and love along with them.”

Father Erpelding notes that those visited will have left the church for a variety of reasons. “There’s a lot of misinformation and a lot of hurt out there. Some think they can’t be part of the church community and that is not true. We’ll work with people at their own pace in building relationships. There is no timeline for conversion and commitment,” says Father Erpelding.

Bringing inactive Catholics back into relationship with Christ through relationship with church community members is a lofty goal that must be ongoing. The Wells of Hope mission will not only reach out to inactive Catholics but will empower active Catholics in realizing their potential to share the Gospel. As Father Erpelding says wisely, “The Gospel has the power to heal.”
Jubilee Pilgrim Cross faithfully makes its way across the diocese

As the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, many events and activities will mark this historic occasion. During this Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year as the church invites both active and inactive Catholics to renew and strengthen their faith, it calls all to reconciliation and evangelization.

One unifying activity that began in August of 2005 was the commissioning of the Jubilee Pilgrim Cross by Bishop John M. D’Arcy at the diocesan World Youth Day event at the Sacred Heart Parish Center in South Bend. The simple 8x5-foot hollow, wooden cross bearing the inscription “His Steadfast Love Endures Forever,” then began its two-year journey across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

The Pilgrim Cross has made its way to many of the 84 parishes within the diocese and has also visited other sites, including area high schools, universities and religious communities. Its pilgrimage will end in August of 2007 at the Eucharistic Congress to be held at Notre Dame.

Many of the parishes across the diocese have had the opportunity to receive and display the traveling cross in their parish for a week with suggested activities, including veneration, Stations of the Cross and prayer services. Parishioners, both young and old, have been invited to publicly pass the cross from parish to parish as an evangelizing tool for their community.

As the cross is a reminder of the great love Jesus has for all, so the Jubilee Pilgrim Cross serves as a witness of gratitude for the many blessings this diocese enjoys and as a call for reconciliation and peace within families, communities and countries and around the world.

St. Jude Parish carries the Jubilee Pilgrim Cross to St. Charles, in Fort Wayne

Mass servers in procession at the All Schools Mass at the Joyce Center in March 2006 carry a colorful banner. The event brings together students from all the Catholic grade schools at each end of the diocese. The Mass is celebrated by Bishop John M. D’Arcy. The All School Masses are scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 31, at 10 a.m. at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

All Schools Masses all around highlight

Father Jan Michael Joncas to speak at Liturgy Day

The diocese’s Office of Worship will host Father Jan Michael Joncas who will speak about the new forms of celebration of the Mass at the Feb. 1 Liturgy Day. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 225 Gilliam Dr., Warsaw.

Father Jan Michael Joncas will offer presentations on the revised Order of Mass approved by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June of 2006. Father Joncas is known for his music that has touched thousands of Catholics. He is an associate professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., and he also teaches at the University of Notre Dame. This is an opportunity for clergy, liturgists, musicians, pastoral ministers and anyone involved in parish ministry to learn about the new changes coming.

Cost is $25 and advance registration is required. For information, visit the diocesan Web site, www.diocesetwsb.org.

Mercy Day celebrates reconciliation in jubilee year

Beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing throughout the Lenten season in this Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year, all parishes across the diocese will extend a welcoming hand to inactive or under-active Catholics.

According to Linda Furge, director of the Office of Campus and Young Adult Ministry and jubilee coordinator, the diocese will conduct an extensive media campaign to make people aware that “Catholics Can Always Come Home.” Wells of Hope will be underway in many parishes as a way to reach inactive Catholics based on Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. Another invitation to come home is Mercy Day. Mercy Day is scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, and invites both active and inactive Catholics to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. All priests of the parishes across the diocese will be available from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 8 p.m. to hear confessions in their area churches. These times will again be publicized during the Lenten season.

It is the hope of the diocese that this special day will provide an opportunity for many to “examine their faith life and return to — or increase — active participation in the sacramental life of the church.”

In conjunction with Mercy Day, a toll-free phone line (1-877-MERCY4U) will be in service throughout Lent to provide a confidential and anonymous venue for those with questions on any subject regarding the Catholic faith. The lines will be manned by priests or trained lay or religious persons and will have day and evening hours as well as on Sunday afternoons. There will also be a Web page on the diocesan Web site at www.diocesetwsb.org available to pose those questions.
Following months of unique and meaningful opportunities to celebrate the Catholic faith planned throughout the Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year, the diocesan faith journey will reach a pinnacle on the campus of the University of Notre Dame with the Eucharistic Congress. This day-long event is a diocesan-wide gathering to publicly and joyfully witness to and celebrate the Catholic faith. Scheduled for Aug. 18, the Eucharistic Congress will offer pilgrims from around the diocese many religious activities and exhibits. Beginning at 10 a.m. with an ecumenical prayer service at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, the events offered include two sessions of a variety of workshops for adults, young adults and teens, hourly recitation of the rosary at the grotto, confessions indoor and outdoors under yellow umbrellas, eucharistic adoration, Stations of the Cross and several family activities.

The annual junior high confirmation rally will take place during the congress as well as the chance to see exhibits of parish photos and student artwork. Tours of the Snite Museum will be offered throughout the day. This faith-affirming day will culminate in a closing liturgy for the entire diocese, with Bishop John M. D’Arcy as the main celebrant, at the Joyce Athletic Conference Center, beginning with a prelude at 4 p.m.

There is no charge to participate in the Eucharistic Congress, but a freewill donation will gladly be accepted to offset the costs of the day.

Our Sunday Visitor Foundation has also provided a generous grant to help make this historic event possible. There will be lunch available for purchase on campus as well as picnic areas for families and parishes to gather.

Linda Furge, of the Office of Campus and Young Adult Ministry and jubilee coordinator, reports, “As the high point of our Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year, Bishop D’Arcy hopes that everyone will take advantage of this unique opportunity to celebrate and grow in his or her individual faith journey.”

The University of Notre Dame will be the host site for the diocesan Eucharistic Congress on Aug. 18.

On Dec. 8, we will celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of our diocese. On that day in the cathedral church dedicated to her under this title and in all the parish churches in the diocese, we will consecrate our diocese, our people and our future to her, knowing that her prayer of intercession will bring countless blessings and graces in the years to come. We will entrust this beloved diocese to her and pray for all those who come after us in this holy place.

Prayerfully, two to be ordained

Bob Lengerich, left, and Jason Freiburger, below, ordained as transitional deacons in 2006 by Bishop John M. D’Arcy in the chapel at Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, will be ordained to the priesthood on Saturday, Oct. 27, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.
LOOKING FORWARD  

DIOCESE CELEBRATES 25TH AND 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Doris Mitchell, touched by her husband’s words when renewing their vows, closes her eyes, intently listening at the anniversary Mass celebration held in September at St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend. The couple celebrated 50 years of marriage on May 11, 2006. As part of the 150th Jubilee, 25th and 50th wedding anniversaries will be celebrated in September and October of 2007. Dates will be confirmed later.

NOT JUST YOUR ‘ORDINARY’ MUSEUM

To achieve a real sense of the 150-year history of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, visitors may explore the Cathedral Museum, located on the garden level of the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center in downtown Fort Wayne. The photos of the diocesan bishops are displayed near the entrance of the museum. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and closed on holidays. Today’s Catholic will offer a brief history of the episcopacies of the diocesan bishops in future issues.

What is behind the logo of the Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year?

BY TIM JOHNSON

The Catholic Church is a faith rich in symbols. Our church crucifixes and other sacred images truly signify Christ, who is glorified in them. St. John Damascene, as quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, notes, “The beauty of the images moves me to contemplation, as a meadow delights the eyes and subtly infuses the soul with the glory of God.”

The Sesquicentennial Jubilee image, a static-cling decal located in the envelope packet in this week’s Today’s Catholic, shows Our Lady looking up to the face of her Son at his death on the cross. The image is adapted from the marble images at the altar of St. Patrick Church in Fort Wayne. The altar was designed by H.W. Schwarte from the DaPrato Company of New York and Chicago and quarried and hand carved in Pietrasanta, Italy, and placed in the church in 1912. Through computer technology and graphic manipulation, Kristina Schott, a graphic artist and parishioner of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, was able to take photographs shot by Neal Bruns and produce the image that has become the sesquicentennial logo. This was one of many designs presented to Bishop John M. D’Arcy to review.

Bishop D’Arcy told Today’s Catholic that he hesitated to use the logo at first. “The jubilee year is a year of joy,” he said. But the image grew on him because “all graces come from Christ’s death. From the pierced side of Christ came forth blood and water and the church has always seen that as a reference to the Eucharist and baptism. It is from his death and resurrection that we have been saved.”

Pope John Paul II, in the new millennium, encouraged everyone to contemplate the face of Christ and to contemplate it with Mary who knew that face better than anyone, from Christ’s birth to his death on the cross. Also, at the foot of the cross, Christ said to Our Lady, “Mother, behold your son” and to St. John, “Son, behold your Mother.” These concepts and the historical significance that the image “seemed to be faithful to the people who came here in the early days” won the bishop’s favor. Bishop D’Arcy said, “It just fit in perfectly,” and was enhanced by the traveling Jubilee Pilgrim Cross being carried now throughout the diocese and completing its journey.

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Calendar of Sesquicentennial Jubilee events

- Dec. 31, 2006
  - Opening of the Jubilee Year, Fort Wayne, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- Jan. 7
  - Opening of the Jubilee Year, South Bend, St. Matthew Cathedral
- Jan. 31
  - Catholic All Schools Mass, South Bend, JACC, 10 a.m.
- Feb. 3
  - Liturgy Day with Jan Michael Joncas
- Feb. 6
  - Catholic All Schools Mass, Fort Wayne, Memorial Coliseum, 10 a.m.
- Feb. 21, Ash Wednesday
  - Wells of Hope outreach to inactive Catholics, 1-877-MERCY4U phone line, OSV media ad campaign for Mercy Day.
- March 20
  - Mercy Day
- April 15
  - 50th anniversary celebration of Bishop John D’Arcy
- April 29
  - Regional anointing of the sick, Fort Wayne, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- May 13
  - Regional anointing of the sick, South Bend, St. Matthew Cathedral
- May 26
  - Adult confirmations, South Bend, St. Matthew Cathedral
- May 27
  - Adult confirmations, Fort Wayne, Cathedral of Immaculate Conception
- June 2
  - Diaconate ordinations, St. Matthew Cathedral
- Aug. 18
  - Eucharistic Congress, University of Notre Dame
- Sept. 16
  - Regional confirmation, South Bend, JACC, 2 p.m.
- Sept. 30
  - Regional confirmation, Fort Wayne, Memorial Coliseum, 2 p.m.
- Sept. - Oct. (dates to be announced)
  - 25/50th wedding anniversary Masses, Fort Wayne and South Bend
- Nov. 4
  - Ordination to the priesthood, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- Nov. 15
  - Celebration of religious and consecrated life, Donaldson, Indiana
- Dec. 8, holy day of obligation, Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
  - Reconsecration of the diocese to Mary.
- Jan. 6, 2008
  - Epiphany
  - Closing of the Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year.

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- Volunteer and companion services
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We’ve been taking care of Fort Wayne for more than 100 years by providing hospice services in your home, or in a nursing home, or at our Hospice Home in Fort Wayne. Our staff is trained and equipped to respond quickly to the needs of patients and family members.

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This special Sesquicentennial feature is brought to you by Visiting Nurse

Looking Forward
How your will can create a Catholic legacy

FORT WAYNE — According to Giving USA, 70 percent to 90 percent of Americans contribute annually to at least one charity during their lifetimes. However, of those Americans who make a will (about 35 percent according to Consumer Reports), only 8 percent leave a bequest to charity. This is largely due to the fact that many people believe in order to designate a charitable bequest and even to make a last will and testament one has to be wealthy. However, this is not the case and so often families have had to face difficult financial situations and legal proceedings because no will or estate plan had been properly prepared.

If someone dies without a will, state laws determine how the decedent’s possessions will be distributed. Most people, however, have chosen to serve in such capacity and avoidance of family conflicts are all benefits in choosing an institution to serve as personal representative."

Care of minor children
In the case where the decedent has minor children, a common question is “Who will take care of my children?” A property guardian manages the assets, which have been left to the children, whereas a personal guardian is appointed to raise the children. A will can name the guardian whom you would want to take care of the minor children. Without a will, the court would appoint a guardian(s) who might be someone you would not have chosen.

Disposition of assets
If the decedent dies with a will in place, probate assets owned by the decedent would pass to heirs according to the terms stated in the will. Probate assets do not include assets held with another such as joint tenants with rights of survivorship or assets such as life insurance and retirement plans in which benefits would be paid out to named beneficiaries. A will outlines the individual’s final disposition of the residual or remaining estate assets after all final debts and taxes have been paid and specific bequests have been made. The residual estate can be left to a single beneficiary, either outright or in trust, or to two or more beneficiaries in stated proportions.

Leave a Catholic legacy
Bequests are gifts made through a will that provide support for a parish, school or other diocesan agency. Charitable bequests also provide significant tax benefits. There are several bequest options to consider. First of all, with a specific bequest, a specific dollar amount or specific asset from the estate is left to charity. Another type of bequest is the residuary bequest. This bequest directs that either all or a percentage of the estate’s residue is to be given to the charitable organization(s).

For information on will bequests, contact Elisa Smith, director of planned giving with the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, at (260) 422-4611 or e-mail her at esmith@fw.diocecesfwb.org.

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

CHARITABLE BEQUEST RECEIVED

Msgr. John Suelzer, right, pastor of St. Charles Parish in Fort Wayne, meets with Elisa Smith, left, diocesan director of Planned Giving, and Erika Dornseif, trust officer of STAR Wealth Management (SWM), to receive a charitable bequest for the parish and school from an estate.

As family members are dealing with the grieving process of losing a loved one,” states Erika Dornseif, trust officer for STAR Wealth Management in Fort Wayne, “a corporate fiduciary can step in and lighten the burden of settling the estate. Experience in estate administration, availability to serve in such capacity and avoidance of family conflicts are all benefits in choosing an institution to serve as personal representative.”
Today's Catholic heralds the sesquicentennial

F

First we had the anticipation of Christmas. But just like that Advent that prepared us for Christmas, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has been experiencing another sort of Advent — preparation for the 150th anniversary or sesquicentennial of the founding of the diocese.

The feast of the Epiphany has a long-standing tradition of announcing or heralding the events of what is to come this year and that is what I have set out to do with this issue.

Some of you may be wondering, if you are not a subscriber, “why did I get Today’s Catholic this week?” The newspaper is coming to you this week, as it will three more times this year, as the messenger of the diocesan sesquicentennial. Four times this year, we will reach every registered parish household in the diocese. This issue contains a calendar of events for the year ahead as well as the pastoral letter from Bishop John M. D’Arcy. Inside this issue is an envelope that contains the sesquicentennial image and the 150th Anniversary Jubilee prayer and a prayer for vocations on the reverse. Families and individuals are asked to make these prayers a part of your prayer life.

On Feb. 18, every household will also receive an issue that will help you understand your mission as a Catholic evangelizer. Coming for the 150th anniversary jubilee year. Four times this year, we will offer a quick preview of the Eucharistic Congress in the Aug. 18 issue this week. This issue will contain a map, guides and a worship aid for the event.

Secondly, by the time the embryo has made her way down the Fallopian tube and is ready to implant (around seven to nine days post conception), she is no longer a “potential life.” Scientifically, a fertilized egg referred to as a zygote and remains so only for the first day after fertilization. After that point, the zygote becomes an embryo. By the time of implantation, the embryo has reached the stage of what typically has between 100 and 200 cells, which have begun to differentiate. Some of these cells will form the placenta and the cells that will form the fetus. These latter cells that will form the fetus are referred to as the inner cell mass and, incidentally, these are the cells that are exploited in embryonic stem-cell research.

Thirdly, EC and other birth control devices that prevent “conception” are not an abortifacient, this, of course, is that an agent that ends a pregnancy is an abortifacient, not an “egg” — from infertility, but a very early abortion and would perhaps be less sanguine about its easy availability to the millions of women and men who use these methods.

Blessed with a fantastic teacher

The students and families of Holy Cross Parish in South Bend are blessed with a remarkable teacher — Miss Melissa Scott. Miss Scott as she is affectionately known to her students — past and present — displays a remarkable enthusiasm for her students and their activities, a strong commitment to education and an even stronger commitment to her faith.

Not only is Miss Scott a remarkable and insightful teacher, but perhaps the most enthusiastic supporter of Holy Cross athletics. She has dedicated hundreds of hours as an unpaid coach for various school teams, such as volleyball, softball, baseball and basketball. As a parent of four children who have all attended or are attending Holy Cross, I am constantly amazed at Miss Scott’s ability to participate in so many school activities. In fact, it is much more likely that Miss Scott will be at the next school basketball game or fundraiser than anyone else from the parish.

On top of all of her amazing time management and enthusiastic support for Crusader events, Miss Scott is always at Sunday Mass to set a good example for the students who look up to her and admire her. Miss Scott has been the confirmation sponsor and/or godmother to many parish children and also serves as a eucharistic minister. In short, she is the ideal role model for young Catholics. Please join me in congratulating Miss Scott, thank you for the many blessings you bring to our children at Holy Cross.

Jamie O’Brien Granger

Edited about Catholic radio

I am really excited about WHLY becoming a Catholic station. With an increasing number of Christian radio stations in our smart area, I’ve been dreaming of a Catholic radio station here as well. I always thought WHLY would be good call letters for a Christian station since they look like they mean “holy” as well as “Hollywood.” I’m glad the station is keeping the call letters.

Paula L. Sparr

South Bend

Financial fresh start for the new year

Happy New Year! The New Year’s holiday always brings with it lists of do’s and don’ts in any number of areas. One admonition on improving your health, spirit, finances and natural beauty, I think we should begin the new year focusing on some basic financial goals that can enhance the chances of success and happiness in the year ahead.

• Deal with the holiday bills completely and quickly. Find a way to address any shopping excesses carried over from December. Knocking these obligations out early in the year create a positive financial environment for months that follow.

• Maximize the matching money. January 15 is the deadline to enroll in employers’ benefits plan.

Many companies match contributions on 401k plans. A full 20 percent of eligible participants still fail to take advantage of this.

Sign up for the plan and defer 5 percent of your income. This provides a very inexpensive way to provide some financial security to your family. A good quality term insurance product can provide coverage equivalent to five years worth of your income at a reasonable cost. The security this provides can be quite valuable.

• If you have a life, make a will. If you have a house, car, or business partner, take a little time with an attorney and make a will. Having a will is critical for assuring that the estate is handled properly. Failing to do so assures they will be unhappy.

When you make your will, consider a charitable bequest to the church or other worthwhile entity.

• Balance your checkbook. This is personal finance 101, but many people actually do not do it. Balancing your checkbook can relieve stress and result in improved information and decision making. It is also empowering and the individual achieves a sense of mastery over the checkbook.

• Get a life insurance check up. If you are under 50 and in good health, life insurance can be a very inexpensive way to provide some financial security to your family. A good quality term insurance product can provide coverage equivalent to five years worth of your income at a reasonable cost. The security this provides can be quite valuable.

This allows your final act to be one of generosity and consequence.

• Save 5 percent of your after tax income. Financial planners often say the most important thing to save at least 10 percent of your income. This is true. However, most do not. So start saving at least 5 percent of your after tax income from there. It is important to establish the discipline and watching the balances will inspire more savings.

Keith Davis is a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne and president of STAR Wealth Management in Fort Wayne.

DOLLS AND SENSE

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Keith Davis is a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne and president of STAR Wealth Management in Fort Wayne.

More than one copy?

Did you receive multiple copies of Today’s Catholic in your mailbox this week? This could mean several things. Please check the address section of today’s newspaper to see if they are assigned to you. Also, you may be registered at more than one parish. Perhaps you changed parishes and did not inform the former parish of the move. You would still be on their register. Please let the new parish know.

If your label indicates a change is necessary, please contact Kathy Voirio at Today’s Catholic, (260) 456-2824, or through e-mail at kvvoirio@fw.diocesefwb.org with the corrections.

Turning point for Latin America?

By Samuel Gregg

Few realize it, but May 2007 could be a decisive moment for Catholic Latin America. In the midst of a region paralyzed by economic and political crises, Latin America’s Catholic bishops will meet in Brazil for the Fifth General Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) to consider the profound challenges confronting the area. The importance attached to this event by the Catholic Church is evident from the fact that Pope Benedict XVI will be attending.

Some of the difficulties to be addressed at this CELAM meeting were identified in the event’s main preparatory document, drafted by key Latin American bishops and published in September 2005. These include a still-heated religious formation received by many Catholic Latin Americans, syncretistic tendencies among some Catholics, and some Latin Americans’ failure to act consistently with what they say they believe in their practices.

The same document also points out the importance of confronting Latin American societies.

It refers to corruption as a disease disfiguring virtually every sphere of Latin American life, especially politics and the judiciary. The directness with which the bishops speak about corruption’s evil causes and catastrophic effects is almost without precedent in Latin America.

Then there is the bishops’ condemnation of “a growing tendency to apply to Latin American religious leaders ... of a populist nature.” “They promise paradise,” the bishops add, and engage in the politics of grand gestures, often at the cost of undermining basic human rights.

Though no names are mentioned, there seems little question the bishops have in mind figures such as Presidents Chavez of Venezuela and Morales of Bolivia. Such populists have subtly — and sometimes not-so-subtly — attacked the Church’s presence in Latin America.

Given Latin America’s high poverty levels, no one should be surprised that the bishops devote considerable attention to this subject. They repeatedly refer to growing economic inequalities and declining living standards throughout the continent.

The text indicates that some bishops view globalization as part responsible for such problems. This is somewhat odd, given that it is precisely the failure of much of Latin America to integrate into the global market that has contributed significantly to the region’s persistently high poverty.

This becomes clearer when we consider China and India’s progress over the past 10 years. Through their continuing assimilation into the global economy, millions of Chinese and Indians are escaping poverty. Of course, poverty still plagues these nations. But no one questions that real poverty is being steadily reduced in Asia through China and India’s embrace of free trade and economic liberalization. The same, incidentally, is true of El Salvador and Chile.

Some Latin American bishops’ reluctance to acknowledge these facts may reflect the persistence of what some call “soft-liberationist” thought in their ranks.

As a serious intellectual force, liberation theology is now widely dismissed as largely irrelevant throughout Latin America, a relic of the 1970s. Yet its residual effects can be found in some.

Latin, Page 19

Anyone can find God in Jesus

The Sunday Gospel

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

Feast of Epiphany Mt 2:1-12

This weekend the church celebrates the feast of the Epiphany, one of the greatest of the Catholic feasts. Together with Christmas, and the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, it provides not only an occasion to rejoice in the salvation given us by Jesus, but also through the readings an opportunity to reflect upon the reality of salvation in our lives.

The first reading this weekend is from the mid and last section of Isaiah. After long, dry years of exile in Babylon, the Jews, residue of the Jewish nation decimated generations earlier by the Babylonian conquest of the two Hebrew kingdoms, are able to return to their ancestral homeland. This reading calls upon Jerusalem, the heart of the ancestral homeland, to rise in joy and thanksgiving, singing the glory of God.

For the prophet, Jerusalem’s distinctiveness lies in her being the center and capital of the Jewish people was being reaffirmed in the return of the exiles and the construction of the Temple. Jerusalem would be the site of worship of the One God of Israel. Jerusalem was never an ordinary capital in the sense of administration or even commerce. Its dignity lay in the fact of its religious importance.

The Epistle to the Ephesians provides the reading.

In the days of the first century AD, as the Christian community was in its infancy and gradually forming, a certain question arose. Christianity grew from the Jews. Its founder was Jewish. The apostles were Jews. Even the location of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus was in Jewish territory.

Part of the Jewish religion was a strong ethnic sense. So, amid all these circumstances, the question surely arose as to whether or not there was a place for persons not of Jewish background in Christianity.

This reading is among others in the New Testament that insisted that salvation is for all. God’s love is for all.

St. Matthew’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. Actually, Matthew’s Gospel is the only Gospel among the four to report the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem.

This reading, and the full description of this visit, are of overwhelming interest. Every detail is important. The Magi, certainly pagans, thrust for God. God assists them in their search by leading them by a star to the newborn Lord.

Very important is the fact that not even the brutal King Herod, with all his cunning and all the resources at his disposal, can thwart God’s plan nor stop others from finding God, in Jesus, if they earnestly turn away from sin and heed the star that is the Light of the World.

Reflection

Long centuries of venerating the story of the wise men have produced images very dear to us but not in the Gospel text. For example, no mention is made in Matthew of how many Magi, or Wise Men, came to Bethlehem. The legend is that they were three in number.

Leaving the number unstated, however, gives a certain openness to the story. Without number, human beings from all places and at all times yearn for a sense of purpose in life, for genuine joy, and for hope. All fear death.

Regardless of ethnic condition, or past circumstances, anyone can find God, in Jesus, if they earnestly turn away from sin and heed the star that is the Light of the World.

Readings

Sunday: 60-61:6 Pf 72,7,8 10-13 Eph 3:2a-3,6 Mt 2:1-12

Monday: Is 41:1-4,6-7 Ps 29:1a,2, 3a-c,4, 5b,9-10 Lk 3:15-16,21-22

Tuesday: Heb 2:5-12 Ps 59:6 Mk 11:12b-28

Wednesday: Heb 12:18Ps 105:1-4, 2:19-29

Thursday: Heb 7:3-14 Ps 95:6-11 Mk 10:13b-16

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

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

The Catechism

By Dominic Camplisson

As we celebrate the Epiphany, this epic quite looks at a variety of terms with this (Greek) construction.

1. What is the meaning of Epiphany?
   a. manifestation (making known)
   b. captivity (bondage)
   c. releasing (granting manumission)

2. What is an epistle in the Bible best described as?
   a. a weapon
   b. a letter
   c. a rule, as in a monastic rule

3. What modern title is derived from the Greek Episcopos?
   a. elder
   b. bishop
   c. epiphod

4. “Episcopalian” is the most widely used name for an American church, which is derived from and related to this British church:
   a. the Church (Kirk) of Scotland
   b. the Church of England (Anglican)
   c. the Church of Wales (Cymru)

5. This Greek and Latin term is used of bishops whose consecration is either invalid or flawed in some other way:
   a. not in the Gospel text
   b. episcopal vagancie
   c. prebyste non legalis

6. The Epistles of St. John are a satirical pamphlet mocking the teaching of this order of preachers:
   a. the Basilians
   b. the Benedictines
   c. the Dominicans

7. The Epistula Apostolorum is an apocryphal text known commonly in English as:
   a. autobiography of Jesus
   b. the letter of Mary Magdalene
   c. the Testament of Our Lord in Galilee

8. An epitrachilion is worn by the priest in these:
   a. Latin rite churches
   b. eastern churches
   c. Muslim mosques

9. In the same group (b above) an epispodion is:
   a. embroidered veil
   b. bishop’s hat
   c. prayer mat used by a Sufi

10. Episcopates was a follower of this philosophy, which was ultimately eclipsed by Christianity:
    a. Islam
    b. Stoicism
    c. Protestantism

11. The followers of that school of thought (10 above) are mentioned in Acts 17, along with these thinkers who followed this path:
    a. Epicureanism
    b. Episodialists
    c. Epicentrics

12. Despite the complex sounding name, Epimaniakon simply liturgical:
    a. books
    b. bowls
    c. cuffs

13. Epiphany was a 4th century bishop and is credited with an ambitious work that attempted to do this:
    a. a weapon of confession and purgation
    b. the prayer that the people tithe or otherwise support the clergy
    c. prayer mat used by a Sufi

14. The epics in the Mass generally refer to
    a. the prayer of confession and purgation
    b. the prayer that the people or otherwise support the clergy
    c. the prayer that the Holy Spirit made Christ present in the Eucharist

15. An epigonation is part of the liturgical vestments of these:
    a. the Basilians
    b. the Benedictines
    c. the Dominicans

Answers:
1.a, 2.b, 3.b, 4.a, 5.b, 6.c, 7.c, 8.b, 9.a, 10.b, 11.a, 12.c, 13.b, 14.c, 15.a
God wants us to pray for what we need, accept the Father’s will.

During a time of serious sickness a certain religious, not of this diocese, discouraged her from praying for a cure and would not promise to pray for her relief, but said it was better to suffer. This seems wrong to me. Anonymous, Mishawaka.

Certainly our Lord wants us to pray for what we need. If we are sick, we should pray for healing and relief and others should be enlisted to pray for us also. However, when we pray for what we need we should always do so with the intention of accepting whatever God wills with regard to our situation. Remember how Jesus himself prayed the Garden of Gethsemane, “Father, take this cup away from me, but not what I will, but what You will.” So we should call this person we should trust that however God answers our prayers will be the best thing for us because God always does the best thing. It may serve him to heal us. It may serve you to allow the sickness to continue.

Can we change God’s mind with our prayers? In some things, no, we cannot. God’s will can be already set with some things because he has already willed it to be the best thing. In other things, yes, we can. Just as a loving father listens to his children and attends to their needs, so God comes to our help when we ask him with love. Of course, we do not know what is already set in God’s will and what he waits for us to ask for. This is why we must simply always pray with hope and trust in his love and care for us.

Nor with regard to suffering, it may be that God allows us for a time (sometimes even for a long time) to continue in suffering. This does not mean that God likes or wants us to suffer. However, suffering has a way of bringing us intimately close to God when we offer it to Jesus in union with his suffering on the cross, and, above all, God wants us to be intimately close to him.

Some Catholic parishes place the U.S. flag in the sanctuary. We are a church of strong symbols and a universal culture. What is the place for the American flag in a Catholic Church? Anonymous.

There are no regulations, neither in the Code of Canon Law nor in any liturgical books, governing the display of flags in Catholic churches. The question of how and when to display flags would really fall to the discretion of the diocesan bishop. In this diocese, there have been no regulations given by the bishop. By default, then, it falls to the wishes of the pastor.

However, it makes good sense to say that the sanctuary is not the proper place for the displaying of flag-like symbols. In Catholic churches, the sanctuary is the area which is designated for the altar, ambo, celebrant’s chair and the tabernacle. This area of the church should have as its focus what is proper to the celebration of the Eucharist. The proper place for flags would be in the nave of the church (that is, the place where the pews are) or in the vestibule of the church.

By the way, it must be kept in mind that there is absolutely no requirement to have flags in churches at all.

Father Mark Gurtner, pastor of Our Lady of Mary Help of Christians Parish, Fort Wayne, answered this week’s question. Contact him through e-mail at dwengerpriest@yahoo.com

Today’s Catholic welcomes questions from readers. E-mail your questions to editor@tw.diocese-fw.org or mail them to Today’s Catholic, That’s A Good Question, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856. Include your name, city and an e-mail address or phone number so we can contact you if necessary. Anonymous will be preserved upon request.

Moving on to a new home

We are moving, finally. We have been trying to find a bigger place and simultaneously get closer to the Catholic high school for five years. When my husband took a new job almost two years ago, and I fell in love with the house (and my husband), we switched directions and Catholic high schools, and just continued our search.

As a family, we felt the whole school (maybe the whole city) was looking for a place for us. I’d receive phone calls from this person or that, suggesting an opportunity here or there. Family and friends rallied around us, and my husband and I contacted developers and builders, tried working with a realtor, and spent hours pouring over the county maps and property sites online, strategizing, then cold-calling people with property possibilities. We walked every lead.

Finally, an opportunity popped up. A lovely Marian High School family spotted a home for us, which was put up for sale by owner. “Theresa!” Patti said over the phone, “I just came in the door and saw your neighbor’s house is up for sale. It has big bedrooms and looks like what you might want. I hear the inside is immaculate.” The word “immaculate” caught my attention. With nine kids would I ever have an “immaculate” house? Well, I could dream about one, but I could never find the owner, we went right through; we loved it and bought the house in a week. The house is just perfect for our needs. It is 10 minutes from school (the drive for the high schoolers now is 40 minutes each way). It is just outside the city (lower taxes) and on a bit of land so we can all spread out, the kids can ride bikes, and I can have a healthy organic vegetable garden for produce to feed our family. And, of course, the eating area in the new place is such that we can all sit down to dinner together. It’s great.

But, (and I know this would happen sentimental sap that I am), I already miss this old house. Not the house, exactly, but the familiarity of it. I know every creak in the floor, every bump that could possibly go in the night, and the memories here are so vivid — memories of bringing home five babies, celebrating 13 Christmases, good times enjoyed and bad times endured. That spot in the family room next to the sliding glass door is where I rocked Melissa Therese, after I brought her home from the hospital on a snowy New Year’s Day, 1995. I can see her snuggled up in her yellow baby blanket sleeping blissfully. . . . Out that window in the kitchen I watched my little boys (now nearly grown men at 18 and 19) eagerly run to the new swing set early on a bit of land so we can all spread out, the kids can ride bikes, and I can have a healthy organic vegetable garden for produce to feed our family. And, of course, the eating area in the new place is such that we can all sit down to dinner together. It’s great.

Even bad memories make up the fabric of our lives here. The day we moved in the cottonwood trees were bursting their seeds and we discovered a shelf in the garage. That spot near the front door is where my brother-in-law broke the news to me that I had lymphoma. Out that window I stared and prayed the night God took my youngest brother.

Good and bad, this is where we experienced love, sadness, hope, joy. This is where I began to learn to trust God and myself. Now he is inviting me to trust again, in a new city, in a new home.

What will these new walls have to tell in another 13 years? I am realizing it is not the physical place that matters as much as the people in that place. Yes, we are moving. Literally. Figuratively, We are not static. We go forward. Poet Robert Frost said, “In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life: it goes on.” As Christians, we also know that this life here is but a momentary speck on the timeline of an eternity which waits for us. It is “practice” for the real life with God for which we have been des- tined. Thank you, Lord, for the beautiful memories in this home. Please bless us in the next. We’re ready to follow where you lead. We’re ready to move on.

Theresa A. Thomas is the mother of nine children and a member of St. Mary of the Annunciation Parish in Bristol.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

By Patricia Kasten

Gospel for January 7, 2007
Matthew 2:1-12

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for Epiphany, Cycle C, the visit of the Magi to the newborn King of the Jews. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

THE SEARCH

MOTHERBOT DJC ECGAEDUJSEHT HJOPBKWL AIHH E D LURAUKE RHE LEDSNOFFERED HLHACTPJHRSATBAMYRRTONY EUKIMIYEWES BOLEASTBXTCCPRSEELPOEPNFHTREASURESIUDNOUNFDNWPEO

LATIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Catholic Latin Americans’ ongoing tendency to blame the rest of the world for the region’s economic problems, instead of acknowledging that Latin America’s economic difficulties primarily stem from mercantilist economic structures and basic failures to uphold property rights and the rule of law. Compared to Western European Catholicism — characterized by mass apostasy, often mediocre bishops, and declining vocations — Latin American Catholicism is in good shape. It enjoys deep reservoirs of authentic faith, a con-

Dr. Samuel Gregg is director of research at the Acton Institute and author of “On Ordered Liberty” (2003), “A Theory of Corruption” (2004), and “Banking, Justice and the Common Good” (2005).
The civil disobedience of the Magi

As we move through the Christmas season, maybe you think it has nothing to do with the political season we just survived. The Magi were latecomers to the Christmas narrative. But they tell us a lot about Christmas as a political event. As Benedict XVI last year at World Youth Day in Cologne.

1164 the relics of the Magi were formally transferred from Milan, across the Alps to Cologne where, in the words of Benedict, the people “proclaim to best exquisite reliquary of the whole Christian world and raised above it an even greater reliquary: Cologne Cathedral.”

So what do the Magi have to do with politics? In their day there was not just a limit to the power of the state. The Magi proclaimed, one, by defying Herod’s conditions to tell him where the Child was so “that I too may go and worship him.” (Mt 2:8) He was, of course, a lying politician, which some may regard as a redundancy. When the Magi had departed for home, Joseph was warned by an angel to take the Child into Egypt because Herod wanted to kill him. Joseph obeyed and he and Mary joined the Magi as the first practitioners of civil disobedience in the Christian era. What got into the Magi to make them challenge the King? At World Youth Day, Benedict explained that the Magi had come seeking the prophesied “King who was to be intimately united with God, a

RIGHT OR WRONG?

by CHARLES E. RICE

The Magi sent a news flash to the world that there is a law higher than the state. That higher law, however, like law, must ultimately sense only if we can identify its lawgiver and discern his intent. That lawgiver is the Child whom we behold, the vicar of that Child, told the youth at Cologne, “Here in the Sacred Host he is present before us and in our midst ... as he was then in Bethlehem.” So Christmas tells us a lot about how to keep politics in perspective. That is so because that Child himself is still a current event.

So Christmas tells us a lot about how to keep politics in perspective. That is so because that Child himself is still a current event.

Professor Emeritus Charles E. Rice is on the law school faculty. He can be reached at rice1@nd.edu.

Nineveh lies in modern-day Iraq

Why did the ancient Assyrians fail to conquer Jerusalem?

The state of Assyria in northern Iraq centered around four cities: Ashur, Arbil, Nimrud and Nineveh. Nineveh, across the Tigris River from Mosul, was the third capital of Assyria. Here you can see palaces and the church of the prophet Jonah.

J. Ferguson says the booty from military campaigns and tribute from vassal rulers that flowed into the royal coffers were used to adorn the temples and palaces of the Assyrian capitals. Thus the prophet Nahum said of the end of the Assyrian world: “There is no end to the treasure, a mass of everything you could desire.” — Gal. 6:7b-8

In their movement westward, the Assyrians conquered Damascus in Syria in BC 732 and Samaria in Israel in BC 721. Then their King Sennacherib invaded Judah and menaced Jerusalem in BC 701 during the reign of the Jewish king Hezekiah (BC 716-687) who paid tribute of silver and gold to Assyria. Although Sennacherib proclaimed that he was ready to help against the strength of Assyria, Hezekiah, with the help of the prophet Isaiah, stood his ground and firmly retained his power.

Suddenly an unforeseen calamity forced Sennacherib to abandon his conquest of Jerusalem, and he returned to Nineveh. The Bible says the angel of the Lord smote the Assyrian camp, and Sennacherib struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Modern scholars suggest that: 1) moves against Jerusalem were stopped with the plague or severe illness and could not fight, or 2) maybe there was an attempt to overthrow the government at Nineveh, and Sennacherib had to return.

Father Richard Riche

FATHER RICHARD RICH

In February 1962, I was ordained to the priesthood and began serving as a seminarian. In my years at the University of Notre Dame, I became involved in theosophy and constructed a pool and tunnel to bring the water down to the west side of the city. Today you can walk through the 512-meter long “Hezekiah’s Tunnel” where the water is knee-deep beginning at the Gibbon spring and ending at the pool of Siloam. The water is divided: one third is for the needs of the city, and two thirds is for the needs of the city. In the year 2600 BC, King Hezekiah built the tunnel to bring the water from the spring of Siloam into the city. The tunnel was built to supply the city with water in case of a siege.

Father Richard Riche is the pastor of Queen of Peace Parish in Mishawaka. His history column runs every other week in Today’s Catholic. 
SOUTH BEND — The basketball teams of the Inter-City Catholic League (ICCL) will open the 2007 portion of the season on Sunday, Jan. 7, at Saint Joseph’s High School in South Bend, where the John Bosco Division will be in action, and at Marian High School in Mishawaka, where the Martin De Porres Division swings into play. Currently, undefeated teams in the John Bosco Division are St. Anthony and Corpus Christi, each with 3-0 records.

St. Joseph of Mishawaka, with a 3-0 mark, is the unbeaten squad in the Martin De Porres Division. All 3-0 in the Gold League, DeKalb High School — St. Anthony vs. Christ the King; St. Joseph, South Bend, vs. Hoyt Rozum; St. Thomas, Elkhart, vs. Corpus Christi; St. Matthew vs. Holy Family.

Schedule at Marian High School — St. Monica vs. St. Anthony; Adalbert; St. Bavo vs. St. Jude; St. Michael, Plymouth, vs. St. Pius, Mishawaka; St. John vs. St. Joseph, Mishawaka.

Holiday Hoop Fest scores another success in its 10th year

BY MICHELLE CASTILEMAN

FORT WAYNE — In its 10th year, the 2006 Holiday Hoop Fest was a great success according to coordinator Denny Jamison. The tournament was held downtown at different locations over the Christmas break and zipped with four brackets of 31 teams for 55 games in five days.

“This was not a record year — a few years back we had 58 teams with 70 some games,” said Jamison. “It’s not always easy getting teams to participate over the holidays, but the weather cooperated and we had great attendance.

The stats will show four overtimes in this year’s record books. The St. Vito seventh grade lady Panthers were involved in two, winning the first and losing the second. In this same bracket, St. Jude came out on top beating Zam Lutheran 30-28 in a championship thriller. Third place ribbons went to the girls from St. John, Fort Wayne.

In the eighth grade girls’ bracket, Kurt Patterson’s Cardinals faced St. Peter’s Lutheran three times before finally taking home the blue ribbon. St. Charles sent St. Peter’s Lutheran to the loser’s bracket first in early play by a score of 34-32. St. Charles then lost to them 35-18, which for them to match up one more time when the Cardinals pulled off a 72-22 win.

“We were very similar teams,” said Patterson. “We matched up well and both had quick guard sets and good post players.

The Cardinals improved their overall record to 10-2. They are 3-0 in the CYO Gold League. Patterson feels the team is really starting “to come around after a bad beating by DeKalb in the season opener.”

IICL basketball returns to the hardwood Jan. 7

BY ELMER J. DANCH

In seventh grade boys’ action, St. Vincent came out on top with a championship victory over runner-up St. Charles, 39-28. St. Jude came in third place, while Chris Yaney’s St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth team battled out of the loser’s bracket after an opening loss to Herb Wieder at St. Louis-St. Rose Twins to finish in fourth place.

The eighth-grade green team from St. John, Fort Wayne was impressive runner-up finish despite playing without three of their starting line up. The team had two players on vacation and another broke his arm during the tournament. They lost to Memorial Park 54-28 in the championship game.

“I was very pleased how our team played with heart and determination,” said Coach Todd Martin. The Panthers list 12 players on their roster and are now 11-4 overall, with 7-0 in the CYO Gold League. Greg Kaiser stepped up and led all scoring. St. Vincent hopes to participate in a “Kids Helping Kids” tournament at Sipez in mid-February then have their sights set on the CYO Gold League tournament.

St. Aloysius finished a strong third, while St. Joseph, Hessen Cassel, (sixth and seventh and eighth combined team) finished in fourth place in the eighth grade boys’ bracket.

For complete bracket information and scores go to allprosports.net/2006hoopfest.
Stallone back in church, back in theaters

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Sylvester Stallone grew up Catholic, stopped going to church after he tasted fame and fortune, but now considers himself a churchgoing Catholic again.

Stallone's shift back to church started when his daughter Sophia was "born sick," Stallone told Catholic News Service in a Dec. 7 telephone interview from Dallas to promote his new movie, "Rocky Balboa."

In November 1996, at age 2 months, Sophia underwent open-heart surgery at the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center.

The operation went well, and Sophia, now 10, is doing "great," Stallone said. "She's the No. 1 athlete in her class."

Stallone tried to find the words to describe what brought about his self-imposed exile from Catholicism.

"I don't know. Life," he said. "Your career is going, you're not communicating with your family."

The weight of celebrity was "very heavy," he added. "I didn't have any strong foundation behind me of people that would keep my feet on the ground. I was extremely seduced by the newfound freedom."

Things started turning around for Stallone, he said, before his marriage in 1997 to his third and current wife, Jennifer Flavin.

"When I got married everything changed," he said. "When my daughter was born sick, and I realized I really needed some help, I started putting everything in God's hands, his omnipotence, his all-forgiveness."

"I actually embrace that, and the rolling of their eyes (is) a 100 percent natural valid reaction. I rolled my eyes when I thought of it," Stallone said. "You can't judge anything until you see it. When you see the film, it's about actually being able to listen to your heart and not so much your mind, following the guidance of someone much more powerful than you: Jesus."

"In 'Rocky IV,' the first person we saw was Jesus," he said, referring to an opening scene of the boxing club where there is a big mural of Jesus on a back wall.

And if a sixth "Rocky" movie isn't enough, there's "Rambo IV: Pearl of the Cobra" in the works.

"It's also a Christian movie," Stallone said. "Here's how it is. I believe that you can have a Christian theme but you can't hit it too heavy. You can't hit 'em over the head with a hammer. You have to be subtle about it."

Stallone described the plot to "Rambo IV" in pre-production: "Rambo is a borderline atheist. He doesn't believe in anything anymore. His job is to bring a group of Christians upriver into a very hostile territory, and they're there to bring the word of God and medicine and dentistry to these natives. He has conversations with some of these Christians and he doesn't see it their way. They get captured, and ... he starts getting influenced by their faith in the face of such incredible odds."

"I think it may work," he added.

Mark Pattison is media editor for Catholic News Service. When you keep your eye on TV, what do you see? What are your likes or dislikes? What are your concerns? Write your comments to: Mark Pattison, Catholic News Service, 3211 Fourth St., NE, Washington, DC 20017.

Actor Sylvester Stallone makes a fist at the premiere of "Rocky Balboa" in Philadelphia Dec. 18. Stallone came back to portray the heavyweight champion for a sixth return to the big screen since "Rocky" opened in 1976.

"Let me put it this way," Stallone added. "I didn't have any strong foundation behind me of people that would keep my feet on the ground. I was extremely seduced by the newfound freedom."

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New York (CNS) - Following are capsule reviews of movies issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting.

"Eragon" (Fox 2000)

Reasonably diverting, if predictable, fantasy adventure for youngsters about a farm boy (Ed Speleers) who, after the death of his uncle, learns it’s his destiny to become a dragon rider battling an evil king (John Malkovich) and his henchman (Robert Carlyle) in a mythical kingdom, all the while assisted by a retired dragon rider (Jeremy Irons). The script, based on a novel by Christopher Paolini, trotts out every cliché known to this genre, but the special effects, especially involving the hero’s majestic dragon (voice of Rachel Weisz) are well done. Action violence, magical hocus pocus. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG.

"The Pursuit of Happyness" (Columbia)

Feel-good tale based on the true story of a selfless medical supply salesman (an ever-appealing Will Smith) who, after his wife (Thandie Newton) walks out, raises his 5-year-old son (Jaden Smith) on his own while pursuing a new career path as a stockbroker in an unpaid internship while enduring financial struggles, homelessness and other obstacles. Smith’s character does all he can to nurture his son under trying circumstances and projecting admirable decency throughout. The USCCB Office classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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MISC. HAPPENINGS

First Saturday devotions
Fort Wayne — The World Apostolate of Fatima will hold devotions of reparation at St. Joseph, corner of Brookland and Hyde on Jan. 6. Confessions will be heard beginning at 7:15 a.m., meditation at 7:30 a.m. and the rosary at 7:45 a.m. with the Mass to follow. First Saturday devotions are also held at St. Patrick, Arcola; St. Rose, Monroeville and St. John, New Haven.

SAJES luncheon brings humor
South Bend — The SAJES will meet for Mass Jan. 10, at St. Matthew Cathedral at 11 a.m. Mass will be followed by a potluck luncheon that will feature Charlie Adams humor and inspiration. RSVP to Sister Agnes Marie Regan at (574) 899-9439.

Oplatke dinner planned
South Bend — The American Red Cross Women’s Board for Free Poland will have an Oplatke dinner on Sunday, Jan. 14, at 1:30 p.m. at the Z.B. Falcon Hall, corner of Sheridan and Western Ave. Advance ticket sales only by Jan. 5. Tickets are $12.50 for adults, $6 for children under 12. Contact Dolores Liwosz at (574) 259-7001 or Z. Sobot at (574) 272-3392.

Christmas music concert
South Bend — St. Adalbert’s St. Cecilia Choir, together with the Chaper Choir of St. Mary’s Polish National Catholic Church will present a concert of Christmas music on Sunday, Jan. 7, at 3 p.m. at St. Mary PNNC, 1601 W. Sample St. Free admission.

Center for Hospice to Offer Living With Loss group
South Bend — The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care, Inc. will begin a Living With Loss Group on Tuesday, Jan. 9 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Sunnybrook Ct. The group will meet for six weeks. Registration is required by calling the Life Transition Center at (574) 255-1064 or (800) 413-9083. There is no charge to attend.

First Sunday rosary for all families
Fort Wayne — The First Sunday rosary for families will be at MacDougal Chapel on Sunday Jan. 7, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. with Father Bob Schulte and Sister Gertrude attending.

Knights plan fish fry
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a fish fry on Friday, Jan. 5, from 5 to 7 p.m. Adults $7, children (5-12) $3. Chicken strips for $7 and shrimp for $8 will be available.

Square dancing is back
New Haven — Square dancing at Besancon Hall will be Saturday, Jan. 13, and Feb. 10 from 6-10 p.m. Tickets are $15 per couple or $10 per single. Music by Breakaway. Proceeds will benefit St. Louis Academy.

Award nomination deadline extended
Fort Wayne — The “Father Tom O’Connor Light of Christ Award” deadline for nominations is extended to noon on Friday, Jan. 19. The committee is seeking persons of faith, high-school age or older, whose activities serve as an example to youth in the area of peace and justice. Application guidelines are available online at www.diocese-fwsh.org and from the St. Mary Church office, (260) 424-8231.

Sister Virginia, 65, St. Monica
Sister Virginia, 65, St. Monica, 1601 W. Sample St. Free admission.

Maxine J. KINDER, 84, St. Peter
Maxine J. KINDER, 84, St. Peter

GOD STORY

Saint Paul Catholic School
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Faith in Education

Saint Paul Catholic School is located in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It is a K-12 Catholic school serving students from Pre-K through grade 12. The school is co-educational and is part of the Diocese of Fort Wayne. It offers a comprehensive academic program and is committed to providing a faith-filled education that prepares students for college and careers. Saint Paul Catholic School is accredited by the Indiana Catholic Schools Association and the State of Indiana Department of Education. The school provides a safe and supportive environment for students to learn and grow spiritually, intellectually, and socially. It has a strong tradition of excellence in academics, extracurricular activities, and community service. Saint Paul Catholic School fosters a strong sense of community and encourages students to be active participants in their education and faith life. It is a school where students are challenged, supported, and encouraged to reach their full potential. Saint Paul Catholic School is dedicated to providing a quality education that is rooted in the values of the Catholic faith. It is a school where students are prepared for success in college and their future careers while also being grounded in the Catholic faith. It is a school where students are encouraged to be good citizens and to make a positive impact on the world around them.
Seminarian Jake Runyon, who is studying at Pontifical College Josephinum, celebrated the Christmas liturgies at his home parish, St. Louis, Besancon, with Father Steve Colchin. Shown here, they are amidst a sea of poinsettias on the altar.

The sight of two crucifixes reminds us that the shadow of the cross is never far even from the infant Jesus, as Simeon prophesied eight days later at his circumcision to Mary his mother “This child is destined to be the downfall and rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed, and you yourself shall be pierced through with a sword...” (Lk 2:33). Or as the verse from “We Three Kings” foretells “Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume...”

Wise men at St. Dominic Parish in Bremen, Nikolas and Hunter Swihart and Brandon Van Campen, carried up the gifts during the offertory.


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