SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS — Indiana’s five Roman Catholic bishops and major superiors of religious congregations of Indiana met Monday at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to celebrate the life of St. Mother Theodore Guérin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence.

The bishops concelebrated Mass in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Archbishop Daniel Buechlein of Indianapolis presided.

“It was an opportunity for us to offer thanksgiving for St. Mother Theodore Guérin. We’re so conscious that we have our own local saint in our part of the country. It’s an extraordinary privilege and a blessing. We’re interested in helping to spread the knowledge of Mother Theodore,” Archbishop Buechlein said.

Indiana’s Catholic leaders gathered for their annual meeting before the Mass, where they heard from Sister Denise Wilkinson, general superior of the Sisters of Providence; Sister Marie Kevin Tighe, director of the office of the Shrine for St. Mother Theodore Guérin; Sister Jeanne Knoerle, executive director of Residential Services at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, and Teresa Clark, the artist who designed and created the model for the statue of St. Mother Theodore that will be placed in the Marian Garden outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. later this year.

SOUTH BEND ANTICIPATES ST. PATRICK’S DAY

A St. Patrick’s Day Celebration begins Saturday, March 17, with a 9 a.m. Mass at St. Patrick Church in South Bend. Bishop John M. D’Arcy will preside. The Jefferson Blvd. parade will follow at 11 a.m. Festivities will continue with the East Race Greening, Celtic music and a corned beef dinner at St. Patrick Social Center.
After a good confession, the soul is as innocent and pure as it is at baptism.

THE FORGIVENESS OF CHRIST

I am grateful that as a bishop I continue to hear confessions. In great part it is because of our program of parish missions, sponsored by the Office of Spiritual Development. I thank those pastors who have a mission on a regular basis. I have required that every parish have one within a three-year period surrounding the observance of our Jubilee Year.

‘Everything our Redeemer has accomplished has passed into the sacraments.’ (Pope Gregory the Great cited in the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

The Gospels show Christ forgiving others and he continues this through the sacraments of baptism and reconciliation.

I am grateful also that so many of our parishes schedule the sacrament of penance not at the convenience of the priest, but at the convenience of the people. Sometimes, pastoral questions arise about the sacrament.

Here are a few that I hear.

It is claimed that a priest who had been in a particular parish many years ago said that it was sufficient to go to confession once a year. How should one answer this? The question is this: Should one strive for the grace of overcoming sins.

This week, I will also lead the penance service and hear confessions at Bishop Dwenger High School during my annual visit.

Another good example of the fidelity of the priests to this sacrament who staff both of our cathedrals. Perhaps it is their location, the grace of the cathedral church, or, more likely, it is the fidelity of priests over the years, but at both St. Matthew’s and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, confessions are heard frequently, and the priests make themselves available at the convenience of the people. There is also great availability of priests at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

IT IS PROPER TO HAVE CONFESSIONS DURING MASS?

I often say the noon Mass at MacDougal Chapel next to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, or, on the first Friday of the month, the 5 p.m. Mass. I believe it is proper to have confessions during Mass.

I am grateful also that so many of our priests make themselves available at the convenience of the people. For many, this is the only time they can go, and we must never turn away the sinner.

I was pleased also to close a mission at St. Joseph Parish, Fort Wayne, with Father Timothy Wrozek. Father Tim is filling in part-time as administrator of St. Patrick, Fort Wayne. It was a great joy to be with him at St. Joseph.

ODDS AND ENDS

I met this week with the very dedicated leadership of our 20th Annual Bishop’s Appeal. It looks like it will be the second highest in our history. Our parishes will have about $1.5 million returned to them after going over goal.

I am off tomorrow to Terre Haute. It is the annual meeting of bishops and religious superiors. It will be quite special because we will be honoring our new-canonical saint, St. Mother Theodore Guérin. There will be a Mass in her honor in the very church in which she is buried. I will pray for you all there and share it with you soon.

See you all next week.
Biblical scholars reject filmmakers’ claim about tomb of Jesus

BY JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

JERUSALEM (CNS) — Catholic biblical scholars and an Israeli archaeologist rejected filmmakers’ claim that a tomb uncovered nearly 30 years ago in Jerusalem is the final resting place of Jesus and his family.

Dominican Father Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, a biblical archaeologist and historian in the New Testament at the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem who was interviewed for the film two years ago, said he did not believe there was any truth to the claim.

“It is a commercial play that all the media is playing into,” he said. “It’s very old, it’s very vague. You can’t prove anything with statistics.

“The DNA tests could only prove that they are human, but certainly did not prove any familial connection, he said.

Father Murphy-O’Connor noted that Klein had written about the findings a decade ago and even though it was all out in the public domain nobody had been interested in it.

According to press reports, the filmmakers said they worked on the project with world-renowned scientists, including DNA specialists, archaeologists and statisticians.

They said the ossuaries were common during the first century and the cave was in use for 70-100 years by the family.

Other books, films and articles about the tomb, including a full-page feature in London’s The Sunday Times, a British Broadcasting Corp. documentary film and a book called “The Jesus Dynasty” by James D. Tabor, have been published and produced on the topic in the years since the tomb’s discovery.

At the New York press conference, Jacobovici said he thought the so-called “James ossuary,” purported by its owner, Oded Yosef, to have belonged to James, the brother of Jesus, was also from the tomb, and he cited a forensic technique used to determine this.

He did not mention that in 2003 the Israel Antiquities Authority declared the inscription on the James ossuary a forgery that Golani is currently on trial for

Their preparation for the three sacraments of initiation for candidates, because they are already baptized, the program of formation and preparation is different, although there are often parallels with the RCIA and members of both groups often meet together in their parish formation programs.

Since 1993, when the Official Catholic Directory began recording separate statistics for adult baptisms and entries into full communion in the church in the United States and U.S. territories, the combined total of adults welcomed into the church has generally been running in the range of 154,000 to 162,000 a year. There were three above-average years: about 171,000 each year in 1999 and 2000, and more than 178,000 in 2001.

In most years receptions into full communion have outnumbered the numbers of adult baptisms and entries into full communion in the church in the United States and U.S. territories, the combined total of adults welcomed into the church has generally been running in the range of 154,000 to 162,000 a year. There were three above-average years: about 171,000 each year in 1999 and 2000, and more than 178,000 in 2001.

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Priest finds strong faith among Amman’s Chaldean Catholic refugees

BY JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) — At dusk, a handful of men and women begin to trickle into a stone-faced apartment building in Amman’s Jabal Lweibdeh neighborhood. At the staircase leading to the entrance of the building a small sign proclaims “Chaldean Catholic Vicariate.”

The people have come to attend the Wednesday Sacred Heart devotion and Mass said by Father Raymond Moussalli, patriarchal vicar, who was sent by the Chaldean Catholic Church in Baghdad five years ago to minister to the burgeoning Chaldean community in Jordan.

“The people feel their faith is strong, and that Jesus is with us all our lives. Maybe this is a temptation from the devil,” he said. “The situation here really affects people. ... I try to visit them in their houses, but I can’t visit them all. I am alone here. But they are very happy a priest comes to visit.”

Since his arrival he has performed 100 marriage ceremonies, 60 baptisms and 20 funerals, he said.

“Before, many people would send their dead back to Iraq for burial. Now it is terrible and not possible,” he said, adding that he expects to be performing more funerals and burials in Amman.

“Most Jordanians do not welcome the Iraqis,” she said. “We are a poor country. We need a solution — resettlement in Jordan or in a foreign country, and we hope that they will be allowed to work and send their children to school. There is no way they can go back to Iraq.”

The only escape routes left for Iraqis trying to flee their war-torn country lead to Syria or Iraq. “They ask why this is happening to them,” he said.

“Overall the situation is very difficult,” said Ra’ed Bahar, director of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine in Amman. “Most of the refugees are poor, and this country does not have the resources” to deal with the situation.

“The arrival of the Iraqi refugees in this landlocked nation of some 5 million people — more than half of whom are former Palestinian refugees — has caused prices to skyrocket, making the cost of living for the average Jordanian almost prohibitive, said Hania Bsharat, assistant director of the Extremely Vulnerable Individuals project of Caritas Jordan, the local church’s charitable agency.

“Most Jordanians do not welcome the Iraqis,” she said. “We are a poor country. We need a solution — resettlement in Jordan or in a foreign country, and we hope that they will be allowed to work and send their children to school. There is no way they can go back to Iraq.”

“My father is dead and I have nowhere to go abroad. Here they have no house, no work, no studies. It is terrible ... this Bush peace. We don’t understand the war. You are against Saddam Hussein, not against the people of Iraq.”

Many Iraqi families have been separated because of the situation in their country, he said, and they face great emotional strain and come to him asking for material and spiritual help.

“They ask why this is happening to them,” he said.

While he can’t give them material help, he tries to “give them Jesus,” he said.

“I answer them that we need to have patience, that Jesus is with us all our lives. Maybe this is a temptation from the devil. We have to be very strong in our faith,” he said. “The situation here really affects people. ... I try to visit them in their houses, but I can’t visit them all. I am alone here. But they are very happy a priest comes to visit.”

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“Before, many people would send their dead back to Iraq for burial. Now it is terrible and not possible,” he said, adding that he expects to be performing more funerals and burials in Amman.

“Most of the people who come seeking our help are (also) depressed,” she said, sitting in the Caritas offices in downtown Amman. “They don’t want just health care.”

The elderly, young mothers with babies, women in wheelchairs — their faces all darkened by the same grim resignation — line the walls in the reception room as they wait for social workers to do the initial assessment. Later, they will visit with one of the seven caseworkers, who will then visit their homes to help determine the degree of need and amount of help Caritas can provide.

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When they manage to cross into Jordan, the Iraqis arrive in Amman with no legal status and no rights, having escaped from threats of kidnapping, murder and daily bombings that leave hundreds of people dead every week. The refugees lack health care, employment and educational opportunities for their children.

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“We don’t want just health care.”
NOTRE DAME — United States Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. will deliver the 2007 commencement address at Saint Mary’s College. Commencement takes place at noon on Saturday, May 19 in front of LeMans Hall. Alito was nominated to the Supreme Court by President George W. Bush, and was sworn in on Jan. 31, 2006. He previously served as a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, having been appointed by President George H.

New ND $14 million building to house Institute for Church Life, Center for Social Concerns

BY DENNIS BROWN
NOTRE DAME — Gifts totaling $14 million, primarily from Michael and Sheila Geddes and Thomas and Mary Cabot, will fund the construction of a new building for the Institute for Church Life (ICL) and the Center for Social Concerns (CSC) at the University of Notre Dame.

To be called Geddes Hall, the building will be approximately 64,000 square feet in size and will include a chapel named after the Cabot family. The facility will be located on an expanded site in the same area as the current Center for Social Concerns. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2008 and completed by the fall of 2009.

“The Institute for Church Life and the Center for Social Concerns are important components in Notre Dame’s Catholic mission to better serve students, society and the church,” said the university’s president, Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. “The new building will provide the expanded and enhanced space which the institute and center need because of the growth in demand for their services and programs. In addition, it will help foster many synergistic opportunities for the two entities to work more closely together on programs involving students, alumni and other Notre Dame constituents in service to the church and society. We are deeply appreciative of the extraordinary generosity of our donors in making this important growth opportunity possible.”

Michael Geddes earned his bachelor’s degree from Notre Dame and a master’s of business administration degree from Harvard University. A member of Notre Dame’s Board of Trustees, he is chairman and president of Geddes and Company of Phoenix, a private investment and consulting firm he founded in 1978. He also is chairman of several other Phoenix-based companies engaged in engineering, consulting, financial services and real estate.

Geddes is active in numerous civic and service organizations in Phoenix and serves as a trustee liaison on Notre Dame’s Institute for Church Life Advisory Council. He has been awarded an honorary monogram from Notre Dame and was the 2006 recipient of the University’s Rev. Edward F. Sorin, CSC, Award.

Thomas D. Cabot is a 1944 graduate of Harvard University, where he studied the then-emerging field of electronics. He served in World War II as an officer in naval aviation and spent his business career in venture capital and worldwide petrochemicals.

Cabot currently is in the top management of a dozen family-owned companies and trusts in Massachusetts, Maine and Colorado, including the Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation, which he helped to create to promote philanthropy within his parents’ 98-member Cabot family. Mary Cabot has been equally involved in these as well as other activities. The youngest of their six children, James, is a 1990 graduate of Notre Dame.

The Cabots have been active in nearly every aspect of education, primarily in Greenwich, Conn., and with the Archdiocese of Bridgeport, Conn. They now reside in Naples, Fla., and have been members of the ICL Advisory Council since 1996. They are the primary sponsors of the CSC’s international Summer Service initiative, which helps those in need in underdeveloped nations and broadens the experiences and perspectives of the Notre Dame students who serve.

Byron Williams, executive director of the CSC, said: “We are so pleased to have had the opportunity to host the leaders of Indiana’s Catholic congregations, Sister Denise said. “They seemed eager to hear more about Mother Theodore. We are grateful that the group chose to come to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to share in Mother Theodore’s legacy and spirituality. They will help amplify the story about our beloved foundress through the state that she adopted as her own.”

St. Mother Theodore was canonized Oct. 15 in 1953, by Pope Benedict XVI. She started Catholic schools throughout Indiana, a practice that was maintained for generations of sisters after her. St. Mother Theodore founded the Sisters of Providence in 1840. She died in 1856.

As part of the morning program, the women and men religious watched a video presentation on the making of St. Mother Theodore’s coffin, which now rests with her remains at a shrine inside the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The shrine is open to the public.


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Theodore’s intercession. Sister Jeanne spoke about how the current practices of the congregation have their foundation in St. Mother Theodore’s spirituality, in particular the practices of prayer, forgiveness, reconciliation and reliance on Providence.

“We are blest to have a Hoosier saint, someone who breathed our air and who trod our sod. The Sisters of Providence are especially blest in knowing their foundress, Mother Theodore, who was not only a woman of holiness, but a genuine superstar in the history of American Catholicism,” said Bishop William Higi of the Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana, who offered the homily.

“In St. Theodore Guerin, God has given us a model of holiness and an example of trust in divine Providence. Today, we have gath- ered to praise God for this treasure, we seek our Hoosier saint’s interces- sion, we marvel at her accomplish- ments, and we pray with an attitude of gratitude for those who have helped us,” Bishop Higi said.

“To me, this day was like a pilgrimage. Mother Theodore could be called the foundress of Catholic schools in Fort Wayne. The sisters have had a tremen- dous influence on our diocese, especially in the Fort Wayne area. She is very close to us,” said Bishop John M. D’Arcy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Bishop D’Arcy said the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is planning a celebratory liturgy in honor of St. Mother Theodore later this year.

“I know so many of the Sisters of Providence. I worked with many of them in Indianapolis for 28 years and now in Evansville. I have very good friends here. It is kind of like coming home for me to be here. The sisters taught many in my family, including myself,” said Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger of the Diocese of Evansville.

He said it is important for the local bishops to stay connected with St. Mother Theodore’s mes- sage because they have a voice greater than the Indiana church and are able to share the message with the universal church.

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Polish leaders express praise for new head of Warsaw Archdiocese

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Two months after Pope Benedict XVI’s first choices as archbishops of Warsaw, Poland, resigned amid accusations of collaborating with communists, the pope named a 57-year-old bishop to take the post. Archbishop Kazimierz Nycz, who had been bishop of Koszalin-Kolobrzeg, was named archbishop of Warsaw March 3. Newspapers have published quotations from the file that communist Poland’s secret police kept on the cleric, saying that he repeatedly had refused to cooperate. A Polish priest’s new book describes how the secret police attempted over the course of 12 years to recruit Archbishop Nycz as an informer but gave up in the face of his refusals. Archbishop Stanislaw Wielgus was named archbishop of Warsaw in December, but resigned during his installation Mass Jan. 7 after two separate commissions said they had seen signed documents indicating he had “deliberately and secretly collaborated” with Poland’s secret police. In an interview with Vatican Radio March 4, Archbishop Nycz said that from the time of his appointment and in key moments of the Vatican. The pope said Christ demonstrated in key moments of his own life that prayer is not an “evasion of reality” but a way to “deepen the acceptance of life’s responsibilities and God’s will.”

“Dear brothers and sisters, prayer is not an accessory, an optional, but rather a question of life or of death. In fact, only someone who gave up in the face of his refusals. Archbishop Stanislaw Wielgus was named archbishop of Warsaw in December, but resigned during his installation Mass Jan. 7 after two separate commissions said they had seen signed documents indicating he had “deliberately and secretly collaborated” with Poland’s secret police. In an interview with Vatican Radio March 4, Archbishop Nycz said that from the time of his appointment and in key moments of his own life that prayer is not an “evasion of reality” but a way to “deepen the acceptance of life’s responsibilities and God’s will.”

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A R O U N D  T H E  D I O C E S E

STUDENTS JUMP ROPE TO FIGHT HEART DISEASE

The students at St. John the Baptist School in New Haven raised $2,058.85 during their Jump Rope for Heart event held during Catholic Schools Week. All donations benefited the American Heart Association to help fight heart disease and stroke. The students accounted for over $1,000 of the total amount raised. Deb Buechner, the school coordinator, congratulated these top fund-raisers on a job well done. Their efforts helped St. John School surpass the school goal of $2,000. In the photo are Autym Keller, Austin Pranger, Aaron Rorick, Alexis Adams, Olivia Hunt and Eric Tabel.


DONALDSON — Several community events are planned next week to celebrate the March 16 inauguration of Dr. Ronald L. May as the fifth president of Ancilla College in Donaldson.

A music recital featuring Vivian Taylor as soprano and Herman Taylor as organist is scheduled at 7 p.m. on March 13 at the Ancilla Domini Chapel at the motherhouse of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ adjacent to the college campus. A reception will follow at Cana Hall at the PHJC Ministry Center.

On March 14, Ancilla will host a College Community Fun Night at 7 p.m. at Charger Arena, located at the LifePlex on U.S. 30 west of Plymouth.

The public is invited to visit the Ancilla campus on March 15 during an open house at the Ball Library from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Ancilla College is a liberal arts institution of higher learning sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. The college’s religious tradition is Roman Catholic, and its climate is ecumenical.

The college serves a diverse population, empowering students to achieve high academic goals, lifelong learning, successful careers and passionate lives.

It is located in Donaldson just south of U.S. 30 west of Plymouth.

For more information on the inaugural events call the college at (574) 936-8898.

Local advisor earns first membership in Round Table

PARK RIDGE, Ill. — Outstanding product knowledge and client service have enabled Edwin R. Eckerall Jr., of the Knights of Columbus in Fort Wayne to earn his first membership in the prestigious Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT).

Achieving membership in MDRT is a distinguishing career milestone, attained only by those who have demonstrated exceptional professional knowledge, expertise and client service. The Round Table’s membership represents the top life insurance and financial service professionals worldwide.

Eckerall attends St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne.

IShma state results for Bishop Luers students announced


On Feb. 24 at Warren Central High School in Indianapolis, several students placed in the solo ensemble vocal-piano category. Each Bishop Luers student who participated received gold with a total of 38 gold medals given to Bishop Luers students.

The following students participated:


• Bishop Luers Women — Tessa Derickson, Amber Gottfried, Allison Jackson, Elizabeth Clinger, Andrea Allphin, Danielle Quinn, Erica Brewer, Amanda Krouse, Emily Van Dyke, Talissa Drew, Krista Swainder, Elizabeth Harrison, Katie Schultheis, Jeannie Gibson, Abby Niederman and Hannah Schindler.


Any student who qualifies for ISSMA Solo and Ensemble State Contest results from Saturday, Feb. 17, at North Central High School included a gold in instrumental by junior Mandi Lazzaro who performed “Chromatic Fox Trot” by George Hamilton Green.

Shaughnessy to speak at New Eve Project at USF

FORT WAYNE — The New Eve Project will take place on Thursday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Saint Francis Student Center. Caitlin Shaughnessy will discuss Healthy Dating Habits: A Forum for Women.

Shaughnessy is counselor for the Women’s Care Center and a 2006 graduate from the University of Notre Dame. She was one of the founders and organizers of the Edith Stein conference there last spring at Notre Dame and wrote her senior thesis on Pope John Paul II’s vision of the dignity and vocation of women and where it intersects with and diverges from secular feminism.

Shaughnessy currently works full-time as a counselor and chastity outreach coordinator for the Women’s Care Center in South Bend-Mishawaka and is preparing for her wedding this summer. She will also be speaking at this year’s Edith Stein conference about her experiences as a counselor.

Organists receive ISSMA recognition

INDIANAPOLIS Gayle Elizabeth Arend, a freshman at Lakeland High School in LaGrange, and Kelly Landrigan, a senior at Homestead High School in Fort Wayne, are two parish organists who also placed in the Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) competitions Feb. 17 and Feb. 24.

Arend, who plays piano and keyboards for Masses at St. Gaspar Church in Rome City, received a first-place gold medal on Feb. 24 for her solo piece, “Juba” by R.N. Dett. Arend is the daughter of Rick and Mary Arend. She follows in the footsteps of her grandmother Rita Girard, the parish organist at St. Mary of the Assumption in Decatur.

Landrigan, a graduate of the diocesan Organist Training Program, plays organ and piano at St. Aloysius, Yoder, competed at the state level on Feb. 17 and received gold for clarinet in Division 1 trio. On Feb. 24, Landrigan and her sister Michele took gold for Division 1 piano. They are the daughters of Dan and Linda Landrigan.

Catholic school teacher named South Bend’s citizen of the year

SOUTH BEND — The South Bend Catholic School community has announced the 2007 Catholic schools’ Citizens of the Year.

Bethany Crocker, a teacher at Holy Cross Catholic School, has dedicated her time to every aspect of the school, including her teaching responsibilities, coaching athletic teams, coaching academic quiz teams, and participating with other extracurricular activities, participating in and facilitating fund-raising activities, and taking students home after school when their parents have conflicts. In addition, Crocker lives with her grandkids near the school and helps strengthen her neighborhood with her daily involvement.

Bristol Catholics announce activities

BRISTOL — Bristol Catholic Singles Group, founded by St. Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church, has announced their upcoming singles’ events. Participants range in age from 18-50. Single parents are welcome in the group, but children are not allowed at the events.

The group will also host a girls’ bowling team and a pizza at the church on Friday, April 27. Time will be announced.

For check for events in What’s Happening of Today’s Catholic or visit the Web site at www.bristolcatholics.com. For information e-mail Jeanne or Joe Drust at info@bristolcatholics.com.

Christ Child Society raises funds with raffle

SOUTH BEND — The South Bend Christ Child Society was founded in 1947. It has provided more than 113,000 children with new clothing and has recently launched a two-month fund-raising drive on a 50-50 raffle, which will end March 28.

The society’s membership has grown from a handful of members to more than 500 today, according to President Mary Liddell.

“From a handful of babies our organization has grown to help clothe in 1947, during recent years our group has worked diligently and successfully to help clothe more than 4,000 infants and youngsters annually,” Liddell said.

The society generates 100 percent of its fund-raising to assist in this work, receives no state or federal funding and has no employees, she said.

The tickets for the fund-raising raffle are $10 each and may be purchased from any member, by mailing a contribution to Christ Child Society, P.O. Box 1286, South Bend, IN 46624 or by calling (574) 272-0960.
**Pro-family agenda advances as General Assembly reaches halfway point**

By BRIGID CURTIS AYER

INDIANAPOLIS — After two months of steady legislative action, the Indiana Catholic Conference's pro-family agenda advances as the Indiana General Assembly reaches the halfway point.

Bills designed to help immigrants, poor families and marriages are moving forward and gaining momentum for the final two-month stretch before the April 29 adjournment deadline. Bike registered for the opposite chamber will be considered by the other body. For example, bills that passed the Senate will “crossover” to the House for consideration. Bills that passed the House will “crossover” and go to the Senate for consideration. There is no guarantee that if a bill passed one house it will pass the other. Committee chairs still decide which bill is heard and can move through the process. Several bills supported by ICC did make the cut and could be considered and passed.

While some bills did not make the cut, overall many significant issues are still alive. Several pro-family issues cleared the first hurdle. Income tax credits for the working poor, protection of marriage and programs to help those most in need have a chance to become law. Now the process starts up again. Bills must get a hearing, pass committee and floor votes. This phase will end about mid-April when the last phase of the process begins — conference committee. ICC will be a part of all the steps. The session deadline is April 29.

**A legislative update**

By GLENN TERBE

We have reached the first benchmark of the session, commonly referred to as “crossover.” In the coming weeks bills that passed the opposite chamber will be considered by the other body. For example, bills that passed the Senate will “crossover” to the House for consideration. Bills that passed the House will “crossover” and go to the Senate for consideration. There is no guarantee that if a bill passed one house it will pass the other. Committee chairs still decide which bill is heard and can move through the process. Several bills supported by ICC did make the cut and could be considered and passed.

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Lent is all about relationship

Sometimes it is easy to think of the season of Lent simply as a set of rules and requirements, days of fasting and abstinence, giving up the customary foods or habits. But the real depth of Lenten experience occurs when the season plays out in the lives of real people, how these practices affect them and how a particular Lenten experience calls them back to God. This is the third installment of a series that looks at how the season of Lent plays out in the everyday lives of different Catholics.

While Lent is a time for looking inward, Joyce Racine asserts that it is also a time to work on relationships — with God, others and self. And while so many themes of Lent are solemn, she believes that the season is also a time for joy.

Joyce Racine is not some rebel or troublemaker. She is actually the RCIA director at St. Jude Parish, Fort Wayne, and it is her experience with RCIA that has given her yearly Lenten experience these unique qualities.

Up to the beginning of Lent, she and the class go over various aspects of what the Catholic Church is all about, but once Lent starts, the lessons end, and the focus shifts to prayer and living in a faith community.

“I’m not the teacher,” explains Racine. “I’m just in there with people.” However, she is best at pointing out the things that others might not notice about them or themselves that may have become habitual and gotten in the way of their relationship with God.

This community approach to Lent is reflective of the interactive approach Racine takes to the entire RCIA program, allowing the spirit to work as the candidates learn from one another.

“‘The saints were just ordinary people who did extraordinary things,’ Racine notes, ‘and sometimes we see God doing extraordinary things in our relationships.’”

This could include helping each other have a successful Lent, Racine says, as friends are often best at pointing out the things that people might not notice about themselves that may have become habitual and gotten in the way of their relationship with God.

“‘And so that will be my focus for Lent, to really walk closer with Jesus,’ she says. ‘And, if I’m going to do that, well then I’d better act more like him. And if I’m going to do that, then I’m certainly going to reach out to others as he would and treat them with the kindness that he would.’”

Relationship with God is also highlighted on Ash Wednesday when the faithful are told to repent and believe the good news and to remember they are dust. The dust of this life, the fleeting things people are called to turn from, are the things that take time and energy away from a better relationship with God.

Joyce Racine speaks to her RCIA class at St. Jude Parish, Fort Wayne. Her work with RCIA has made Lent a community experience for Racine and has convinced her that relationship — with God, others and self — is a key component of the Lenten journey.

For Racine, Lent is about relationship, and likeness of God. “‘I say, ‘Take this from me, and let it go, and I promise you, I will give me the grace and the strength not to take it back.’”

Racine — that it can be a time of growth, a time of turning away from what is not really best for oneself.

“‘Lent, to me, is a time of fast-ing of something that is ungodly in me and that I want to improve,’” Racine explains. “And hopefully, by the time Lent is over, it’s going to be a part of me.”

This is where Lent becomes about relationship. One of the first RCIA lessons is on how people are created in the image and likeness of God.

“We talk that night about how that God part of us wants to grow,” Racine says, “but whatever’s going to grow within us is what we practice. And if we’re practising bad habits, that’s going to take over. But if we really spend time with God and you’re in that relationship, you feel the love, and when you’ve got love, you can’t help but give it away.”

And again Lent becomes about relationship.

The other aspect of Lent for Racine — that it can be a time of joy — first emerged over 30 years ago when she received a note from a priest friend, who signed off, “Happy Lent!”

Racine’s first response was to think that “happy Lent” was an oxymoron. Growing up, Lent was always a time of suffering and sacrifice, a somber time, but since she respected the priest, she knew that there had to be something there and that she needed to figure out what it was.

Racine concludes, “When I’m living like I should be, when I’m really working on it, there is that happiness, there is that joy, there is that peace beyond understanding that comes from that.”

One of her RCIA students once described it as the joy that comes from one’s religious life and every-day life being one, the joy of being whole and authentic.

A significant part of the happy or joyful Lent for Racine is the element of surrender, of taking something ungodly in oneself to God and letting it go, cutting the tie from one’s religious life and everything that comes from that.”

“I say, ‘Take this from me, and give me the grace and the strength not to take it back.’”

And not taking it back, really letting it go, is a real challenge, one that can only be met when people let the God part in them grow.

St. Vincent Girl Scouts help Women’s Care Center

FORT WAYNE — While working towards their community service bronze award, members of the sixth grade Girl Scout troop at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Fort Wayne collected items for the Women’s Care Center in Fort Wayne. The Women’s Care Center assists woman in crisis pregnancy situations, offering an alternative to abortion.

The girls in the sixth grade Scout troop of St. Vincent de Paul School in Fort Wayne recently earned their Bronze Award by collecting and delivering items the Woman’s Care Center in Fort Wayne. The Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne staffs the Crib Club at the center, which through the distribution of coupons, allows Woman’s Care Center clients to obtain such items as baby diapers and wipes, car seats, gates, baby outfit, receiving blankets and onesies. Many of the girls have expressed interest in volunteering at the Woman’s Care Center.

The girls made presentations to the WINGS (Women in God’s Society) Bible study group, to the sixth grade classes at the school, advertised their collection of items in the St. Vincent bulletin and collected donations at the church and in the sixth grade classrooms. A $250 grant was also given to the girls through Youth As Resources of Allen County.

The girls shopped, and delivered baby diapers and wipes, car seats, gates, baby outfits, receiving blankets and onesies.

The Woman’s Care Center will use these gifts in the Crib Club. Clients of the Woman’s Care Center earn coupons to use at the Crib Club by attending parenting and birth prep classes at the center. They also receive coupons by going to doctor visits and other social services throughout the community. They can then use their coupons to purchase baby items in the crib club shop.

Lenten recipes

TODAY’S CATHOLIC 9 MARCH 11, 2007

Today’s Catholic

Don CleMMER

Tilapia Piccata

Mild tilapia is an ideal pairing for stronger flavors such as lemon in this easy to prepare dish.

Ingredients
• 2 Tilapia fillets
• salt and pepper
• 1 Tbsp flour
• 2 Tbsp lemon juice
• 2 Tbsp minced parsley
• 4 slices lemon
• 1 jar picante sauce

Instructions
Pat tilapia dry and season lightly with salt and pepper. Dredge in flour, shaking off excess. Heat butter in a nonstick skillet over moderate heat until it bubbles. Add fish and cook for 3 minutes. Turn fish and continue cooking until fish flakes when tested with a fork. Remove fish from pan. Add lemon juice and parsley to pan; cook 30 seconds, stirring to loosen contents in the pan. Pour over hot fish. Garnish with lemon slices. Makes 2 servings.

Tilapia Piccata

MILD TILAPIA IS AN IDEAL PAIRING FOR STRONGER FLAVORS SUCH AS LEMON IN THIS EASY TO PREPARE DISH.

Don CleMMER
The Christian steward models the life of Jesus

BY HARLEY VERMEULE

S

 stewardship is a fairly new term in the vocabulary of the modern American Catholic. Yet the idea of giving and receiving, of stewardship is older than Christianity itself — dating back to the creation of the world in the Book of Genesis. God created all things and God gives his creation to human beings, who are made in his image and likeness. We are not made to be passive recipients, merely accepting and consuming God’s gifts. To take these gifts for granted is an extreme misinterpretation of our role in a relationship with a loving Father. We are made, however, to be like God and share the gifts of his creation, just as God shares.

Our stewardship is a relationship with our Creator. Stewardship is an invitation to each of us to draw closer to God out of love for God. Bishop Scheidt’s response to: “What does God want to do through me?” The focus of stewardship is on the giver, our loving Father, not on the gifts.

The last example of a Christian steward. Jesus lived a life one with God, living and acting as he kept his focus on God and God’s will moment to moment. We, too, as Christian stewards are called to collaborate with God in his work of creation and re-creation throughout all of history.

Jesus shows us how to live as the image and likeness of God. To be like God is to be like Jesus — Christ-like. Jesus spent his entire earthly existence relating to the Father and seeking to do the will of the Father. Are we not called to live the same?

Stewardship is an invitation, a call to vocation that is rooted in our biblical tradition, which reveals our relationship with God. God is the creator and giver of all gifts. We are the caretakers, “the stewards,” placed here to care for God’s gifts. A good steward takes on the same spirit of Jesus and lives as Jesus — always concerned about pleasing the Father. Always asking, “What would God have me do?”

Those who give of themselves to the building of God’s kingdom, to the life and mission of the church, are “disciples of Jesus.” Being a disciple of Jesus means that we respond to the call of Jesus to follow him paying the loan of teachings. His way of life becomes our way of life. Stewardship constitutes a way of life that is both privileged and challenging. Becoming a disciple of Jesus leads naturally to a life of stewardship and results in intense joy.

A disciple’s response

Our American bishops communique this understanding of stewardship in their 1993 pastoral letter Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response. “The life of a Christian steward models the life of Jesus. It is challenging and even difficult, in many respects, yet intense joy comes to those who take the risk to live as Christian stewards.” We are called to use our own gifts to participate in and support the church’s mission of proclaiming, teaching, serving, sanctifying; there are many opportunities to serve through God’s church. Each of us has the fundamental obligation that originates from the sacrament of baptism. The U.S. bishops point out that giving is “unique, it is the power of disciples and a duty that they be generous stewards of the church given freely of their time, talent and treasure.

The U.S. bishops’ pastoral letter, Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response, does not provide a formal definition of the word steward. The gift of life, our time, our talent, the question, “Who is a Christian steward?” Then they provide us with four characteristics that describe a Christian steward. The Bishop’s Pastoral Letter on Stewardship expresses a Christian steward as “one who receives God’s gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord.”

Gratitude

The first characteristic of a Christian steward is one who lives with gratitude. A Christian steward is “one who receives God’s gifts gratefully.” Gratitude presumes that we first acknowledge God as the giver of all gifts — the true owner of all that we have and all that we are. A profound sense of gratitude to God provides us a true perspective of our reliance on God — as children of God and as disciples of Christ.

Accountability

The second characteristic of a Christian steward is one who lives with accountability. A good steward is “one who cherishes and tends God’s gifts in a responsible and accountable manner.” A true disciple knows that he or she will be held accountable for how all God’s gifts have been managed or used. We are not solely responsible for what we do, or fail to do, with the talent and our possessions. As disciples of Jesus, we are also very responsible for proclaiming his Gospel for building up his kingdom, and we will one day render an account of our stewardship of this awesome responsibility.

Generosity

The third characteristic of a good steward is one who lives with generosity. The bishops describe a Christian steward as “one who generously shares God’s gifts with others out of a profound sense of gratitude.” Generosity may be the most powerful attribute of a Christian steward because it impels us to live outside of ourselves — often in ways that seem to contradict our own interests. The Scriptures and the lives of the saints give countless examples of disciples who lived a radical life of selflessness. Their lives were counter-cultural, and they pushed the extreme in following Christ by living generously and won true spiritual freedom and lasting joy.

Give back to the Lord with increase

The fourth characteristic of a Christian steward is one who gives back to the Lord with increase. Stewardship makes it clear that God wants us to take the gifts that we have been given and develop them — not just for our own sake, but also for the common good and the building of the kingdom. A Christian steward is called to be productive and to make a profound difference in the world. Stewardship promotes a way of life that is both privileged and challenging. A stewardship way of life is one that identifies us as disciples of Christ, and being a disciple of Christ leads naturally to a life of stewardship. Stewardship challenges us to make it clear that God wants us to take the gifts that we have been given and develop them — not just for our own sake, but also for the common good and the building of the kingdom. A Christian steward is called to be productive and to make a profound difference in the world.

Stewardship is a conversion process to which all baptized Christians are called to experience. It is a lifestyle based on prayer and the recognition of how we are blessed by God throughout our lives. Stewardship calls each of us to commit ourselves to God and to live that commitment by becoming personally involved in the mission of God, through his church, to the world. Stewardship challenges us to make conscientious decisions about our lives. Stewardship calls each of us to account for what God has given us, not only for the sake of knowing how much we have...
shape our spending. What stewardship emphasizes is the first percentage is given to the Lord, whatever that is. It’s just important that it is the first. Even financial planners emphasize giving, saving and then spending on necessities and other wants. What stewardship does its actually shape a more balanced mature attitude to the spending of money so it is less impulsive, more deliberate, Less selfish and more generous.

The same thing applies to time, said Father Scheidt who says it isn’t as hard as we think. “I always emphasize the first tithing of our time is the third we have least control over — the time we are asleep. If we are nourished by the word of God in Scripture, even a tiny little paragraph from the Gospels before we go asleep, it’s a way of setting aside that portion of the day exclusively to God. It’s much easier to give the night over to Christ,” said Father Scheidt who noted that “tithing of that third of our life, the other two thirds can be shaped accordingly, it can be lighter and happier.”

During the day, it is also easy to give time to the Lord he noted. “I emphasize carrying in a pocket or purse a little passage of Scripture or crucifix so that in the countless moments when waiting in line, in traffic or a doctors office, that little verse of Scripture or crucifix is a time that is consecrated to the Lord.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10
Dear Supreme Knight:  

When my husband became a Knight, we were introduced to our insurance agent, Mike Walter. We could sense right away that he thought of his career as more of a ‘ministry’ than a sales position. Little did I know then how much his sense of ministry would mean to me. 

During our meetings, we weren’t easy to persuade. Never willing to give up, Mike worked to show us that we had a need, and he was able to help us understand the value of being protected with life insurance. 

My husband died suddenly last fall. His death was a shock to everyone. Although from a medical standpoint it shouldn’t have happened, I guess God felt his work on Earth was done. Mike was there for me immediately. He was at the wake and the funeral, and then stayed by my side and helped with whatever I needed. He credited for my husband just like I did.

I think that in this world where everyone is focused on the bottom line, I saw what the Knights are truly about. They were there for me when I needed them the most.

— Beverly Buchanan* 

*Band in an actual letter. Names have been altered to preserve anonymity.

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A strong shoulder in a difficult time.
the outlook of a Christian stew-
dard.
A stewardship way of life is a set of values, a spirit that affects our entire life, not based on what we have, or do not have, rather, based on gratitude to God for what we have, and awareness that God expects something of us. A good steward knows that life is beyond living with this constant urge of desire whenever we see what we don’t have. We must be careful about what we desire.

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

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Indian marriage amendment is for the good of family, society

Indiana Catholic Conference Executive Director Glenn Tobbe, who testified before a Senate panel in support SJR 7, said, “Even though the Indiana Court of Appeals has affirmed current law, the debate and effort to redefine marriage continues in our nation and state. SJR 7 will strengthen Indiana’s law to defend and protect the definition of marriage and the church supports that.”

Such an amendment would be supported by a 2003 document publishes by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which was published in the Feb. 25 issue of Today’s Catholic. The document concludes: “The church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behavior or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. The church holds good reasons that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only to be clear with regard to married love – union between a man and a woman – but also would obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity. The church cannot fail to defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself.”

The marriage amendment goes to the House for a vote, but it must pass the House in exactly the same form as passed by the Senate for the amendment to be eligible for a vote by Hoosiers in the 2008 election.

There are active forces desiring the defeat of the marriage amendment. We urge readers to voice their concerns with their House representatives that marriage be protected and family values encouraged. To contact the representatives, visit the Web site www.in.gov/cga-bin/legislative/contact/contact.pl?House.

Prayer in tragedy’s wake

If Lent is a time to reflect on suffering in the world, then two events in the last week have given us plenty. Both were tragic occurrences — one an accident, the other of nature — that feel particularly horrible because the victims were young people. Four students from Bluffton University in Ohio were among six killed when the charter bus taking them to Sarasota, Fla. plunged 30 feet off an overpass in Atlanta, Ga., to the highway below, and eight students from Enterprise High School in the town of Enterprise, Ala. died when a tornado tore through their school, completely demolishing it. Assistant Superintendent Bob Phares told the media shortly after the tornado, “We need your prayers.”

Suffering and tragedies go on every day, both in our country and around the world, from the ravages of disease, poverty or war, and most of the time, it goes unnoticed. But when a tragedy is so visible and involves young people, it would be a good idea to honor Phares’ request and remember to pray, for them and all who suffer tragedies in the world today.

Using our resources as good stewards

This week’s issue focuses on stewardship. Lent is a good time to examine how we view our time, talent and treasure and how they influence our relationship with God — the giver of all gifts.

How do we use our time? Do we focus on those entrusted to our care — our spouses, children, family members, coworkers, friends, parish members? Do we have gifts and talents that we bury? Do we discourage others from using their gifts? Even young people’s gifts? Do we give God our leftover treasure or is he first?

Stewardship is about selfless giving and generosity. It’s putting God first and using wisely the resources that he has set before us. Time is one thing we can never get back, so let’s make the best if it and use it in selfless generosity.

A Promise to Keep mentor writes about program

A Promise to Keep (APK) is, in short, a gift. It is a gift for all involved. A Promise to Keep is a program at Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne, that is aimed at teenagers to promote, in general, good decision making. However, it is pinpointed toward the gift of our charity and how it can be stained when we become involved in sinful activities such as drinking, drugs and sex.

The APK program teaches decision making skills, ways to boost self-esteem, and how to say no to drugs, alcohol and sex, while being confident about it. The program helps teens to realize how important their charity is to us and to God, since we all are a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As an APK mentor, I go around to many of the Catholic schools in the Fort Wayne area, along with many other students from Bishop Dwenger, and speak to the seventh and eighth graders about linking drugs to sex.

That was the topic I was assigned last year, my sophomore year, along with two other students. As a mentor, I let my life experiences and my drive to help others lead me in talking to the students. I definitely believe it helps them see, close to their age in speaking with them about these issues. I see students using teachers to teach as a more down-to-earth approach, because we can relate to them, and they can relate to us. The mentors use stories and facts to truly help the students learn that taking in bad activities can ruin their lives.

The APK program has affected me in several ways. I have learned many things. Things quite possibly I may have never known if I was not involved in APK. It has also strengthened my feelings and beliefs regarding self purity. It has, of course, improved my public speaking skills, and helped me feel secure about myself when speaking to others about issues that are not usually talked about. I am proud to say that I have never drunk alcohol, used drugs or had sex. It has led me close to God. A Promise to Keep is a fantastic program, and I am glad that I am able to be one of its mentors.

By Theresa Notare

S t. Augustine often gets bad press for his teachings on marriage and sex. Some say he “had issues,” that he “feared” or had contempt for marriage and sex. Others say he was generally pessimistic and didn’t have a happy thing to say about human nature.

These criticisms are challenged in a paper presented in October 2006 to the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Marriage and Family by Dr. John Cavadias of Notre Dame. Dr. Cavadias says some Augustine’s insights can serve to enrich the lives of Christian married couples. They can even help to transform their lives.

Augustine taught that the Christian life is “a journey of healing or purification of the heart,” and that this is so because our baptism incorporates us into the body of Christ. These points seem so simple that we can easily miss their power, especially as they apply to building a loving, lifelong marriage.

Although people often have admirable desires and aspirations, human nature can be quite slippery. People can act from less admirable motives, justifying even poor choices to themselves. This is only too clear with regard to married life and human sexuality. Dr. Cavadias points out that Augustine was especially mindful of how the effects of original sin harm relationships. For example, he observed that a husband and wife’s controlling jealousies should be put in perspective in “wondering joy in the presence of the other as a creature of God. It is this veryOne thing all of us are to “type of praise of God.” But due to the effects of original sin, sexual pleasure can degrade into “domination, manipulation,” or even “use of the body of Christ in them, to help them lay aside selfish desires and petty differences, away from the mutual growth. Their one-flesh union partakes in the reality of grace. As St. Augustine says, they are taking part in a journey with Christ. If Christian couples persevere, they will be transformed to love as Christ loves.

Theresa Notare is the assistant director for the Natural Family Planning program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.
Women chip Vatican’s glass ceiling with increased numbers, influence

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If he looked around the chapel during his Lenten retreat this year, Pope Benedict XVI would have seen an all-male assembly.

The absence of women was not deliberate. The invitation to attend the pope’s spiritual exercises goes out to the top two or three officials of Vatican agencies, and almost all of them are men.

The retreat chapel offered a snapshot of a Vatican reality: The number of women working in the Roman Curia has steadily increased but, with rare exceptions, they have not broken through to the upper levels.

Six months ago Pope Benedict said that, leaving aside the ordained priesthood, women need to “make their own space” in the church and that the hierarchy shouldn’t stand in their way.

The pope expressed satisfaction that women today are “very present in the departments of the Holy See.” But he noted one problem: “The power to make legally binding decisions in the Roman Curia is linked to holy orders.

That means the top two positions in each Vatican agency are filled by cardinals and bishops.

In a breakthrough in 2004, Salesian Sister Enrica Rosanna was named an undersecretary of the Vatican congregation that deals with religious orders. That’s No. 3 in the chain of command, and it made her the highest-ranking woman at the Vatican. But it didn’t settle the question of whether she could exercise the power of governance in her role.

In general, the presence of women at the Vatican has increased dramatically over the last 30 years or so. Since the beginning of Pope John Paul II’s pontificate in 1978, the percentage of women employees in the main Roman Curia offices — Secretariat of State, congregations and councils — has approximately doubled, from 11 percent to 21 percent.

“I’ve definitely seen a change,” said Filomena D’Antoni, who has worked at the Congregation for Eastern Churches for 25 years. “When I came here, there were not only fewer women but they were also more closely monitored, in terms of behavior, dress and mentality. Today it’s much more open and women are more accepted,” she said.

Others who work in these offices, however, pointed out that most women are in support staff positions and have little decision-making input.

And there are whole sectors of the Vatican that still have no women: the tribunal system, for example.

The Vatican’s diplomatic corps also remains all-male and all- clerical. The thinking is that these men are not only diplomats, but personal representatives of the pope to the local church. Therefore should be ordained.

Among the top curial depart-

LETTER, PAGE 16

THE VATICAN LETTER

JOHN THAVIS

Jesus warns to reform or face doom

3rd Sunday of Lent
Gospel: Lk 13:1-9

T he Book of Exodus is the source of the first reading. It speaks of the strong bond, almost a kind of blood tie, between God and Moses at the burning bush. Moses is reported as tending his father-in-law’s flock. Suddenly an angel appeared and led Moses to a bush. The bush, although on fire, did not burn.

Then God spoke, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There was no mistake about identity. God, always with the people, knew of their plight. He was neither unfeeling nor removed. He was intervening in the situation to give the people relief.

Moses was to be the instrument of this relief by leading the people out of Egypt.

God, although present, is sublime. He is almighty and above all. Moses cannot stand to look upon God’s face. Moses, by removing his footware, shows respect even for the ground upon which he may not put his foot.

Finally, God speaks the divine name to Moses. It was a supreme revelation of the Hebrew tradition, names carried the very being of the person. To know a person’s name was to be given access to the person.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading. Corinth’s Christian community challenged Paul since the city was a reservoir of excesses and moral outrages, and Christians were vulnerable.

Nevertheless, Christians had to follow the Gospels despite the pressures to do otherwise. Paul warned them, encouraged them, taught them and sought to inspire them. This reading is typical of his effort in these regards.

He gives the history of God’s people. When God’s guidance, without the nourishment provided by God, the people will die. What they had from earthly resources will not protect them. St. Paul tells his readers, the Corinthian Christians, that God alone is the source of true life.

St. Luke’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. This reading gives one of the rare glimpses of Pontius Pilate in the Gospels outside the Passion narratives. It is not complimentary to him. The Roman governor who sentenced Jesus to death was ruthless and unmerciful.

He also had no regard for the God of Israel, or for the religion of the people who worshipped the God of Israel. (An ancient tradition is that he was recalled to Rome because of his brutality, a brutality too vicious even by accepted standards of Roman imperial governance.)

Jesus said that the victims of Pilate’s impetuous cruelty did not deserve what they received. Jesus referred them to an accidental disas-

ter, when 18 people killed by a falling tower in Siloam. He noted that they too were innocent.

However, all those to whom Jesus referred in the end died, innocent or not. They could not control evil decisions or others or mishaps of nature or invented evils. He warns the audience to reform, or else they too will face doom.

Then Jesus tells the parable of the barren fig tree. The owner wants to destroy the tree, but the vinedresser pleads for another year, for enough time to nourish the tree in the hope that it will bear fruit.

Reflection

We move through Lent. The church in these readings is very frank. It tells us that abandoning God reaps a whirlwind of calamity, sweeping into its wake the even innocent. Thus were killed the victims of Pilate’s outrage, as well as those who accidentally died when the tower fell.

Humans inevitably propel themselves into disaster when they rely upon themselves alone. As the first reading said, God is the source of truth and genuine wisdom.

So, in the clear words of Christ in the Gospel, the church calls us to repent in Lent. We are like the fig tree. God is patient, but one day will be our last on earth. It is up to us.

READINGS


ANSWERS:

1.b, 2.c, 3.a, 4.c, 5.b, 6.a, 7.c, 8.b, 9.a, 10.a, 11.a, 12.b, 13.c, 14.c, 15.c, 16.a

CATEQUIZ’EM

By Dominic Campbell

The month of March is named after Mars, the god of war. This quiz looks at an unusual group of monks involved in war — specifically the Crusades. These monks are the Knights Templar.

1. What was the full title of this order?
   a. The Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem
   b. The Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon
   c. The Knights Templar of Jerusalem and the Holy Land

2. Their headquarters moved a few times as the fortunes of war shifted. Where was the first?
   a. Cyprus
   b. Acre
   c. Jerusalem

3. What was the last?
   a. Cyprus
   b. Acre
   c. Jerusalem

4. What set these monks apart from other monks?
   a. They did not take vows.
   b. They were able to marry.
   c. They were fighters.

5. The order was founded with just nine men; who was the principal leader at that time?
   a. Simon de Montfort
   b. Hugh de Payens
   c. Richard the Lion Heart

6. What was the original goal?
   a. to safeguard pilgrims on the roads to Jerusalem
   b. to capture Jerusalem from the Turks
   c. to establish a Catholic kingdom in the Holy Land

7. Their headquarters were linked to their name. How?
   a. They were at first quartered in the night (watch) Tower.
   b. They were given temporary or “temperal” status in the shrine at Bethlehem.
   c. They were quartered in the Temple in Jerusalem.

8. At first they were supported mainly by:
   a. slaves
   b. the Muslims
   c. alms

9. They obtained one of these, thought to have been drawn up by St. Bernard:
   a. a dog license
   b. a rule
   c. a map of the Middle East, the first accurate cartography of the modern era

10. There were four ranks in the order. Which of these was not one of them?
   a. Warrant Officers
   b. Serjeants (sergeants)
   c. Chaplains

11. Because they developed into a disciplined international order, the Templars accidentally gained this role:
   a. international bankers
   b. sheep shearers
   c. artillerymen

12. The Templars were sometimes allies, but also rivals, of this other military order:
   a. The Knights of Columbus
   b. The Orange Order
   c. The Hospitallers

13. Despite, or perhaps more accurately, because of their success, the order was destroyed in this century:
   a. The 13th
   b. The 14th
   c. The 15th

14. The prime mover against them, most likely motivated by greed, was the King of:
   a. Kings
   b. England
   c. France

15. One of the most peculiar charges leveled at them was that some of them wore:
   a. the Trinity
   b. a goat
   c. a human head, possibly that of John the Baptist

16. This man, executed for various heretical acts, was the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar.
   a. Jean de Molay
   b. John of God
   c. John or Arc

ANSWERS:
Heaven is ultimate end, fulfillment of deepest human longings

The Gospel of Mark says heaven and earth will pass away. Isn’t this in conflict with heaven as a place of eternal joy? M.W., Fort Wayne

St. Mark speaks of the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world. He prophesies Jesus will ascend, and the heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words will not pass. “We need to ask,” what do we mean by heaven? To the New American Bible says the Hebrews in the ancient world held a prescience that God resided way above the earth and its superior waters. Below those waters, there is the undercurrent or sky resembling an overturned bowl or dome that was supported by columns. Through openings or floodgates in its vault the superior waters fell down upon the earth in the form of rain or snow. The earth itself was a platform resting on columns and surrounded by waters or seas. Underneath the columns lay the inferior waters. In the depth of the earth was Sheol, namely the home of the dead or the nether world.

Father James McKenzie says the phrase “the heavens and the earth” usually means the visible universe. Thus the Book of Genesis reads: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland and darkness covered the abyss (or ocean), while a mighty wind swept over the waters.” Similarly, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says “until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter of the law shall be done away with until all things come true.” Webster’s dictionary also says “the heavens” are a natural phenomenon. In Jewish literature the Hebrew word used for “the heavens” is “samay-iron,” a plural form distinguishing a number of heavens or stages, even as many as 10. Thus St. Paul says “a man was snatched up to the third heaven,” or paradise.

The word “heaven” is also used to mean the dwelling place of God and the joyful abode of the saints, the first place.

Heaven is basically union with God, whereas hell is basically the absence of or the loss of God. The new Catechism of the Catholic Church says those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They enjoy God forever, for they see him as he is, face to face.

The catechism continues that this communion of life and love with the Blessed Trinity, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and all the saints, is called heaven. Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. To live in heaven is to be with Christ. The elect live in Christ, but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name. St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan in Italy, says: “For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom.”

Father Richard Hare, pastor of Queen’s, said, “Pilgrim Parish, Mishawaka, answered this week’s question.”

Today’s Catholic welcomes questions from readers. E-mail your questions to daily-catholic@fswd.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. Anonymity will be preserved upon request.

Angrier, dumber, better selling

About nine months ago, a reporter from the Italian Catholic newspaper “la Repubblica” asked and accused whether the rash of “atheist books” being published in the U.S. suggested a new trend in American culture. I replied that I didn’t think so. Publishing was a bit like hemlines and tie widths, I suggested, and the fashions are often defined (and slavishly followed) by bears of little brain, of which the publishing industry is full. (An observation, I note, that was made long before the latest O.J. fiasco.

In any event, I wish I’d given a more thoughtful answer. For, on further reflection, Richard Dawkins’s “The God Delusion,” Daniel Dennett’s “Breaking the Spell,” and Sam Harris’s “Letter to a Christian Nation” do embody an interesting trend: not about American culture as a whole, but about its atheist stripe, and its fashions.

Reading these books, one gets the distinct impression that contemporary atheism is getting angrier and dumber but becomes more profitable for publishers and authors alike.

One of the new atheist campaign is, of course, political: “Bush Derangement Syndrome” has persuaded at least some atheists that their political apocalypse is just around the corner. The usual snobberies are also involved; and a phenomenon reflects the disdain of the academic guides and chattering classes for those they imagine to be their social inferiors. The idea that there is a conflict with heaven isn’t not even a Gentleman; today, the atheist is argued to be a slave to the intellect.

The usual snobberies are also involved: the new atheism reflects the downward mobility of the intellectual class. The usual snobberies are also involved: the new atheism reflects the downward mobility of the intellectual class.

By Patricia Kasten

Gospel for March 11, 2007


Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Lent, Cycle C: a different approach to sin, divine patience and justice. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

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Sports

BISHOP LUERS KNIGHTS WINS SECTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AT BELLMONT Two diocesan high school sports rivals hit the basketball court for a title at Decatur’s Bellmont Sectional on March 3, but Bishop Luers came out the winner edging Bishop Dwenger, 72-70. DeShaun Thomas scored 26 points for Bishop Luers. Lawrence Barnett and Tory Amos each scored 19 points. Bishop Dwenger’s Kevin Fogler scored 17 points. In South Bend Class 3-A sectional action, the Saint Joseph’s Indians and Marian Knights were also eliminated by the same team, Plymouth High School.

Corpus Christi takes post season tournament

BY ELMER J. DANCH

SOUTH BEND — Corpus Christi’s basketball Cougars staged a determined-point-getting attack to win the post season tournament of the Inter-City Catholic League (ICCL), one of the most successful seasons in its history.

The Cougars, who had lost only one game in the John Bosco Division, jumped off to an early five-point lead and managed to hold it to the finish being led at the end of all quarters. The Cougars had the benefit of a spectacular 24 point performance of Tate Bellagante, who was nearly unstoppable despite tough defense (7-for-7 from the field) against the Cougars on part of the Mishawaks.

His counterpart, Tim Wilson of St. Joseph, was almost as effective on offense as he drained the nets for 18 points. To reach the final round, Corpus Christi had a close call from Holy Family by taking a 40-31 decision. St. Joseph staged a terrific comeback to defeat Christ the King, 56-54, in the other semifinal.

In this overtime struggle, both Tim Wilson and Coley Schuthies each blazed the nets for 21 points with Schuthies collecting the winning basket in the overtime. Corpus Christi, St. Joseph, Mishawaka and Christ the King all qualified to ICCL in the CYO-ICCL diocesan playoffs in Fort Wayne on Saturday, March 10.

In the Colors Division, St. Jude Green defeated Holy Family Columbia Blue, 41-30. The champions were paced by Michael Henry who poured in 20 points and Thomas Deranek who caged 12 points.

In the semifinals, St. Jude Green defeated Christ the King Gold, 45-30, Thomas Deranek tossed in 12 points of the winners and Michael Henry 10.


Fifth and sixth grade tourney names winners

BY JOE KOZINSKI

SOUTH BEND — The 2007 ICCL boys fifth and sixth grade basketball tournament was held at St. Monica on Feb. 17. In all, 38 teams battled for the two titles. In the A League, regular season champions St. Joseph, Mishawaka, and St. Michael, Plymouth, both who finished with perfect 10-0 regular season records played for the tournament crown. In the B League, Our Lady of Hungary put their 10-0 regular season record on the line against St. Michael. B2 who finished tied with their Christ the King B1 counterpart in the regular season.

St. Joe Mishawaka defeated St. Michael, Plymouth 40-32 in the championship game of the A League. As with most of the season, Michael Whittled led the way with 19 points and Joe Walter powered inside for 10 points. Ian Kastner scored 14 points and Joe Knap served 10 points for St. Michael. St. Joe Mishawaka completed their regular season undefeated season with a 16-0 record. Their record over the two-year period is 32-0 and they won back to back titles after winning the B league title last year. In the consolation game Holy Family defeated Queen of Peace 39-35 as Patrick Catanzarite dropped in four key three through the final 20 seconds and finished with 13 points while Dylan Hensley was a force with 19 points for Holy Family.

Nick Johnson had 15 points and Adam Janowiak 12 points to lead Queen of Peace.

In the B League championship game Our Lady of Hungary from South Bend capped a remarkable turn around going from a 0-10 record the previous year to a 10-0 regular season. In a fantastic finish Christ the King B2 came from 17 points down in the second half to tie the game late in the fourth quarter. However, Our Lady had enough left to pull out the win. Julien Holland was strong inside all day for Our Lady and finished with 21 points while Terrance Malone scored 15 points for the Bull Dogs. Mathew Monseruez scored 17 points, Patrick O’Connor 15 points and Ryan Jamison 10 points to lead the big comeback for the Kings. In the consolation game St. Michael from Plymouth defeated Christ the King B1 28-22 as Nate Koller, Jacob Franz, Zack Stone and Tom Felke combined for 25 of the 18 points. The game came down to the wire for Our Lady and finished with Ryan Nobbe led the Kings with 10 points.

Cardinals’ teams finish runner up in CYO Gold League

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — Both the St. Charles Borromeo boys and girls Cardinal teams finished in the runner-up spot for the Catholic Youth League Organization (CYO) Gold League this season. After ending with a 9-10 record, Coach Jeff Polhamus was pleased to make it the championship game power house for the last two years.

The boys included two each to St. Vincent and Memorial Park, both very talented teams. St. Charles, the No. 3 seed in the gold bracket, did not have an easy road in the tournament. It took an overtime to beat St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth the first round. Then the Cardinals upset the No. 2 seed, St. Jude, in the semifinals. Finally, they lost to St. Vincent, 36-52, on Saturday, Feb. 24, in the title game.

We were definitely outsized by St. Vincent, but were able to make a nice run in the third quarter,” said a satisfied Polhamus. St. Charles also played every player in the championship game. “We had contributions from everyone throughout the year,” concluded Polhamus.

Adam Book chalked up 44 points to lead the Cardinals in scoring during the tournament. This year’s roster included eighth graders Nick Bushnell-Taylor, Michael Ettor, Connor Hale, Chris Hamilton, olan Jaspers, Andrew Polhamus, David Sksrak, Andrew Magsam, Anthony Offerle, George Schenkel and Adam Willis. The assistant coaches for the Cardinals were Joe Gabet and Dave Sksrak.

The 20-5 Cardinal girls had beaten their only league game opponent (St. Joseph, Decatur) just weeks before during regular season play. Their only Gold League loss during the season came at the hands of St. Jude, which created the co-championship for the season with St. Joseph, Decatur.

However, the Cardinals’ hopes of a repeat performance of 2006 were dashed by the St. Joseph, Decatur. Lady Commodores. The Cardinals lost 32-46 in the final game of the tournament. St. Joseph led 12-10 after the first quarter and opened it up to 21-12 at the half. St. Charles outscored the Lady Commodores 9-8 in the third before St. Joseph sealed the deal with a 17-17 margin the final stanza.

Ashley Burkhart led the Cardinal scoring with 12 while Madison Schultz had a career high 20 points and Alex Fuelling added 15 to reach the Commodores. The Cardinals had victories over St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, and St. Jude in earlier tournament play. They also won the Christmas holiday eight-day-team tournament at the University of Saint Francis this season.

Sally Allgeier, Rebecca Beier, Ashley Burkhart, Sarah Killoon, Natalie Kecks, Caitlyn Meyers, Rachel Murphy, Emily O’Connor, Emma Satterthwaite and Kennedy Wissel were the play makers for the Lady Cardinals this season. Kurt Patterson was the head coach while Dan Sordelet and Bernie Ray served as assistant coaches.

Principal Catholic School

Pre K - 8

Precious Blood Parish School - Dayton, Ohio is encouraging faith-filled dynamic persons to apply for the position of Principal, beginning in academic year 2007-08. The school, Pre K Grade 8, located in northwest Dayton, with a current enrollment of 660, is committed to living Gospel values, fostering academic excellence and celebrating diversity. Candidates should be practicing Catholics, have or be eligible for Ohio Elementary Principal certification, and have successful experiences in motivating and affirming others through effective leadership and management. Interested candidates please send cover letter and resume by March 31 to:

Helen Weber, C.P.P.S. Chair, Search Committee c/o Precious Blood Parish 4981 Salem Avenue, Dayton, OH 45416 email: PrincipalSearchCommittee@preciousbloodchurch.org

TODAY’S CATHOLIC

March 11, 2007

17
How is your ability to receive love?

SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

THE CUTTING EDGE

Most of us know the great commandment Jesus gave us by heart: Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself. Some refer to it as the “golden rule.” We’ve heard the sick of hearing about it. Love! Love! Love! Now it is Lent, and we will certainly hear about it again. It is Lent, as we talk more about love than really do it.

“Love God and your neighbor as yourself?” I, too, have written much about these words, but now I want to take a slightly different slant of what it means to fully obey this commandment.

We all know, thank God, people who are genuinely loving and caring. They are kind, compassionate, generous and non-judgmental, etc. They are role models for us of how Christians should live; however, most of them weren’t just born that way. For most of us, to become a truly loving person takes hard work. We try to find ways to love God, others and ourselves better. We slip and we fall but we get up and continue to work at it.

Well, this article is not about how to be a more loving person. On the contrary, I want to focus on another, maybe more difficult, but as important, part of living: packed with madness, short and magic.

Then we watch the tournament tightly-wound hope and strategy.

We read online radio reviews, ESPN’s experts, and we brazenly cast predictions. We fill out that bracket in our neatest handwriting, the signature of our $10 and our bragging per, our $10 and our bragging.

If we accept another’s love, we fail to experience the fullness of love. Even with God, we can structure our faith and prayer life so much that we often leave little time to just be still and allow God to love us. God always loves us, no matter what, but like all the important relationships in our lives, we must also accept God’s love. It can be like being given a beautifully wrapped present. It does us very little good unless we open and accept it.

The Christian life calls for interdependence. True Christian community not only includes love but to be loved. How good are you at accepting the love of God and others? Do you always have to be the one giving and doing things for people or can you graciously receive what others have to offer you? Do you allow others to help you or do you pride yourself on being independent? Do you have the attitude that you don’t need anybody? Can you allow others the pleasure of giving to and loving you? Harder still, are you willing to become vulnerable and share yourself with others? Are you willing to ask others for what you need? Graciously accepting the gratitude of others and by God.

Rich landed his dream job when he sat next to a company president during a train ride. He usually took the 8:10 a.m., but he had been running late that morning.

There’s no predicting the Master’s plan

SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVES

Becoming whole or holy persons one day, we will certainly hear about it. Love! Love! Love! Now it is Lent, and we will certainly hear about it again. It is Lent, as we talk more about love than really do it.

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If we accept another’s love, we fail to experience the fullness of love. Even with God, we can structure our faith and prayer life so much that we often leave little time to just be still and allow God to love us. God always loves us, no matter what, but like all the important relationships in our lives, we must also accept God’s love. It can be like being given a beautifully wrapped present. It does us very little good unless we open and accept it.

The Christian life calls for interdependence. True Christian community not only includes love but to be loved. How good are you at accepting the love of God and others? Do you always have to be the one giving and doing things for people or can you graciously receive what others have to offer you? Do you allow others to help you or do you pride yourself on being independent? Do you have the attitude that you don’t need anybody? Can you allow others the pleasure of giving to and loving you? Harder still, are you willing to become vulnerable and share yourself with others? Are you willing to ask others for what you need? Graciously accepting the gratitude of others and by God.

Rich landed his dream job when he sat next to a company president during a train ride. He usually took the 8:10 a.m., but he had been running late that morning.

There’s no predicting the Master’s plan

SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVES

Becoming whole or holy persons one day, we will certainly hear about it. Love! Love! Love! Now it is Lent, and we will certainly hear about it again. It is Lent, as we talk more about love than really do it.

“Love God and your neighbor as yourself?” I, too, have written much about these words, but now I want to take a slightly different slant of what it means to fully obey this commandment.

We all know, thank God, people who are genuinely loving and caring. They are kind, compassionate, generous and non-judgmental, etc. They are role models for us of how Christians should live; however, most of them weren’t just born that way. For most of us, to become a truly loving person takes hard work. We try to find ways to love God, others and ourselves better. We slip and we fall but we get up and continue to work at it.

Well, this article is not about how to be a more loving person. On the contrary, I want to focus on another, maybe more difficult, but as important, part of living: packed with madness, short and magic.

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WHAT’S HAPPENING

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send in your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. Mail to: Today’s Catholic, PO. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46856; or e-mail: fhogan@fs.diocesefwsb.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.

FISH FRIES
Knights plan fish fry
South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a fish fry on Friday, March 16, from 5 to 7 p.m. Adults $7, children (5-12) $3. Chicken strips for $7 and shrimp for $8 will be available.

Fish fry at St. Catharine
Columbia City — St. Catharine Parish will have a fish fry on Saturday, March 17, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the church located 10 miles south of Columbia City on State Road 9. Tickets are $7.50 for adults, $4.50 for children 6-8 and children 5 and under are free. Carry-out available.

Fish fry — Most Precious Blood Parish will have a fish fry on Friday, March 16, from 4:30-7:30 p.m. Adults $7, children 6-12 $4 and children 5 and under are free. Carry-out available.

Lenten fish fry
Lakeville — Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish will have a fish fry on Friday March 16, from 4 to 7 p.m. Adults and carry-out $7.50, children $3 and children under 5 free.

Fish fry
New Haven — The St. John the Baptist Holy Name Society will have a fish fry on Friday, March 9, from 4 to 7 p.m. Adults $6.50 children 5 to 12 $3.50 and children under 5 free.

Jonah fish fry
South Bend — Corpus Christi Parish will have a Jonah fish fry and salad bar on Friday, March 16, from 4-7 p.m. Adults and carry-out $8, children 6-12 $3, children 5 and under free.

St. Joseph Hessen Cassel plans fish fry
Fort Wayne — St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Parish will have a fish fry on Friday, March 23, from 4-7:30 p.m. in the hall. Adults $6.50, children 11-$4 and children under 5 free.

Fish fry at St. Matthew Cathedral
South Bend — St. Matthew Cathedral, 1701 Miami St., will host a fish fry on Friday, March 23, from 4 to 7 p.m. in the school gym. Carry-out and drive-through available. Adults $7, seniors $6, children (7-12) $4, children 6 and under eat free.

MISC. HAPPENINGS
Freshman registration
Fort Wayne — Bishop Luers High School will have make-up registration on Saturday, March 24, from 10 to 11 a.m. in the school library for eighth grade students interested in registering for the 2007-2008 school year. Call the school office at (260) 456-1261 for information.

Corpus Christi School takes registrations
South Bend — Registration will take place Thursday, March 15, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and from 5 to 8 p.m. at the school. Call (574) 272-9868 for information.

Kindergarten registration announced
New Haven — St. Louis Academy at St. Louis Besancon Church will offer three full-day kindergarten programs. Registration for all grades will be held Monday, March 19, from 5-7 p.m. and Saturday, March 24, from 1-2:30 p.m. Call (260) 749-5815 for more information.

The Little Mermaid to be performed
Fort Wayne — St. Vincent School HASA will have the Missoula Children’s Theatre and more than 60 students present “The Little Mermaid” Saturday, March 10, in the St. Vincent Parish Hall at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets are $5 and children grade school age and under are free.

TRIVIA NIGHT FUND RAISER PLANNED
South Bend — Our Lady of Hungary School, 735 W. Calvert St., will have a trivia night on Saturday, March 24. Beginnings at 5 p.m., trivia begins at 6 p.m. Tickets are $10 per person.

Tables are required to have 6-8 people and participants can bring their own snacks and non-alcoholic beverages. Beer and wine will be available for purchase in the social room. Prizes will be awarded to the top three winning tables. A 50/50 raffle is also planned.

ELKHART DINNER PLAN MEETING
Kendallville — The National Council of Catholic Women will meet Thursday, March 15, at Immaculate Conception Church. Rosary will begin at 10:40 a.m. followed by Mass. Lunch will follow in the church hall with a short meeting to conclude. RSVP to (260) 347-4014.

Day of reflection offered by Daughters of Isabella
Mishawaka — The Daughters of Isabella, Notre Dame Circle #572 will have a Lenten day of reflection on Tuesday, March 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. Francis Convent, on Dragon Trail (across from Marian High School). The cost is $15 and includes lunch. Members and guests are asked to bring their Bibles. Call (574) 272-2044 for reservations by March 14.

National Catholic Singles Conference
Chicago — A National Catholic Singles Conference will be held April 27-29, in Chicago, Ill. with over 500 singles attending social events and dynamic international speakers on the single life. Register atnationalcatholicsingles.com or call (815) 828-5094. Sponsored by the Theology of the Body International Alliance (TOBIA), CatholicMatch.com, Ave Maria Singles, CatholicSingles.com, and TheologyoftheBody.net.

GAP to meet in Fort Wayne
Fort Wayne — Singles: The GAP, a social group for single Catholics in the 40-60ish age range, will meet Friday, March 16, at 7 p.m. at the Aboite Fire Station Community Room for cards. Please bring a snack to share. For information call (260) 432-7346 or e-mail gap4565@msn.com.

Day of Reflection
Mishawaka — A Day of Reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent (across from Marian High School) on Wednesday, March 28, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The theme is “Our Lenten Journey.” Please bring your bible. The cost of the day is $15 and includes lunch. Register by Friday, March 23, to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at (574) 259-5427.

St. Patrick’s Day celebration
South Bend — A St. Patrick’s Day celebration will be held Saturday, March 17, beginning with a 9 a.m. Mass at St. Patrick Church with Bishop John M. D’Arcy. A parade down Jefferson Blvd. will be at 11 a.m. East Race greening, Celtic music and dance and a corned beef dinner will be held at the St. Patrick Social Center from noon to 4 p.m.
Concrete pouring at SJRMC's new hospital site

SOUTH BEND — The first loads roared in before 9 a.m., and the last rolled out around 2 p.m. After the 95th concrete truck of the day began to make its way back home, the mat foundation for Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center’s new facility was in place, making Feb. 28 a very significant day in SJRMC’s new hospital project.

“This truly is an exciting day,” said Nancy Hellyer, SJRMC’s president and chief executive officer, donning the hardhat, safety glasses and high visibility vest safely requiring at the jobsite.

“Obviously, we began this whole process many, many months ago but for the community this is probably the real beginning. From here on out until the doors open in just over two years, the community will get to enjoy step-by-step progress, simply by just driving by. And when those doors open, the community will enjoy what they see and what they will experience.”

What they will see and experience is a world-class, state-of-the-art facility combined with the tradition of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in their dedication to healing the body, mind and spirit of those who need SJRMC’s unique healthcare services. And with the pouring of the mat foundation, the opening of SJRMC’s new hospital doesn’t seem too far away — and construction is right on schedule.

The mat foundation consists of 37 tons of 7/8-inch-diameter rebar, 1-inch diameter rebar and 1 1/8-inch-diameter rebar. After the concrete was placed, the weight of the mat foundation is approximately 4.1 million pounds; however, it is only about 4 percent of the total concrete being placed for the entire new hospital project.

Eventually, the mat foundation will serve as the base of the new hospital’s center core, housing the main elevator shafts between the two patient towers.

Foundation work will continue through the spring in preparation for the beginning of the placement of steel in June. The new hospital’s steel structure is scheduled for completion in mid-October 2007. SJRMC’s new hospital will open in the fall 2009.