Easter Message

BY BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

In a beautiful reflection on Easter written many years ago, the priest, Joseph Ratzinger, who is now Pope Benedict XVI, recalls that in the Baroque period of the church the liturgy included something called the “risus paschalis,” the Easter laughter. “The Easter homily had to contain a story which made people laugh, so that the church resounded with a joyful laughter. That may be a somewhat superficial form of Christian joy, but is there not something very beautiful and appropriate about laughter becoming a liturgical symbol and is it not a tonic when we still hear, in the play of choral and ornament in baroque churches, that laughter which testified to the freedom of the redeemed?”

In his writings as a theologian and as a spiritual guide and in his encyclicals, Pope Benedict looks into the heart of a troubled and depressed world, including, painfully, some of the followers of Christ, and seeks the source of joy. He finds it in the freedom, which comes to those who contemplate the pierced side of Christ and accept the love which prompted the wounds — the love which makes us free.

Indeed the pope finds the very path we should follow in the freedom, which comes from contemplating the pierced side of Christ.

When Jesus speaks in his parables of the shepherd who goes after the lost sheep, of the woman who looks for the lost coin, of the father who goes to meet and embrace his prodigal son, these are no mere words: they constitute an explanation of his very being and activity. His death on the cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form. By contemplating the pierced side of Christ (cf. 19:37), we can understand the starting-point of this encyclical letter: “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move.

— Deus Caritas Est, 12

We cannot see into heaven. Faith tells us, however, that Jesus Christ, who is a man like us as well as the Son of God, is there and the wounds of love are present in him. They are a promise to us. In contemplating them and in contemplating the love, which made them possible, we are given the path of our life. It is a path of trust and love. Our sins have been forgiven, although we retain our freedom and must continually turn from them. Heaven has been won, but by one like us and at great cost. A promise has been given, “This day you will be with me in paradise.” All that remains for us to experience the laughter that comes from being close to God is to accept it with our whole heart and root out, to the extent possible, in this life the fear and anxiety, the stubbornness and unbelief, which comes from sin and which yields to love. With the realization that this cleansing will only be perfect in heaven, let us embrace it more and more every day by accepting his love shown by the wounds, and believing in it and sharing it with others in return. We accept the invitation to walk with him through life — to do his will and to make him known.

A blessed Easter to you all.

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The sainthood cause of the founder of the Knights of Columbus has taken a major step forward.

On March 15 Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree of “heroic virtues” for Father Michael McGivney, a U.S. priest who, after establishing the Knights of Columbus, worked as a pastor until his death at age 38.

Father McGivney can be beatified if a miracle is attributed to his intercession. Canonization — a declaration of sainthood — requires an additional miracle.

Supporters of Father McGivney’s cause are hoping he will be the first U.S.-born priest to be canonized.

Father McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary’s Church in New Haven, Conn., in 1882. The fraternal order for Catholic men has become the largest lay Catholic organization in the world with more than 1.7 million members, sponsoring a wide range of educational, charitable and religious activities.

In the United States, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said, “The strength of the Knights of Columbus today is a testament to his timeless vision, his holiness and his ideals.”

Last August, the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, spoke warmly of Father McGivney when he celebrated Mass at the opening of the Knights of Columbus’ 125th annual national convention in Nashville.

The cardinal said at that time that he would take a personal interest in the sainthood cause.

The Archdiocese of Hartford formally opened Father McGivney’s cause in December 1997. The archdiocesan phase of the cause will now close.

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Sainthood cause for Knights founder takes step forward

BY JOHN THAVIS

The risen Christ is portrayed in a window at St. Mary Cathedral in Killarney, Ireland. Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, is March 23 in the Latin rite this year.
Christ’s wounds, which are with him in heaven, are his wounds of love for us

BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

The Easter season

Now it opens out before us, the most joyful season of the year. At daily Mass, we hear the resurrection accounts taken from the Gospels and also the Acts of the Apostles, which are sometimes referred to as the Acts of the Holy Spirit. Pope Benedict XVI, in his messages and in his writings as Joseph Ratzinger, a theologian, makes much of what he calls Christological Spirituality. He also tells us that we should look upon the pierced Christ, and this is where our spirituality and life begins. For these wounds, which are with him in heaven, are the wounds of love for us.

The various resurrection accounts show how Christ strengthened the apostles and through them the whole church, forever. The word of God, which Professor Cavodini recently told us priests, is only fully itself when it is proclaimed, brings Christ into our hearts. Remember, it was proclaimed before it was written. This is why attendance at the Eucharist is so critical. We are hearing the account of Jesus Christ, wounded and crucified and risen. Also in the sacrament of the Eucharist, we meet him and are transformed.

The newly baptized

What a blessing it is now that most people who become Catholics are received at Easter time. I think of all those receiving the sacrament of baptism throughout the diocese, and I will have the privilege of baptizing several at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. This is a great sign of the vitality of a parish when new people join at Easter. In addition, we have the candidates, those who are already baptized and who have received the sacrament of penance for the first time, and made their profession of faith. It is a blessed time.

As I write this, I am planning my 23rd Holy Week among you as your bishop — Christ Mass on Monday in South Bend and Tuesday in Fort Wayne. The Holy Eucharist at St. Matthew Cathedral on Holy Thursday night followed by assisting with confessions. Back late Thursday night to celebrate the Good Friday service at the cathedral in Fort Wayne, followed by helping with confessions. The vigil on Holy Saturday night at the cathedral in Fort Wayne. Sunday morning the television Mass and then Mass at the cathedral.

I give thanks to God that I have the health to do this. It is all a gift of which I am most unworthy.

A splendid day

I was off early on the first morning to take the hint of springtime, bound for Huntington, which is a historic town in this diocese. It was there that Archbishop Noll, while a parish priest at St. Mary, began publication of Our Sunday Visitor. My mission was to visit the Victory Noll Sisters and celebrate their Founder’s Day Mass. This is an extraordinary community and a great chapter in the history of our diocese. A Chicago priest, Father John Sigstein, who came to the priesthood a little later than usual in those times, was aware of the need for catechetical instruction, especially in the Southwest and among the Spanish speaking. So he founded the group, which is presently known as the Victory Noll Sisters. They were quite properly called missionary catechists. Many of them worked in the Southwest: New Mexico, Texas and Arizona. They have also worked in Bolivia and Peru and other Latin American countries. They worked and still work in this diocese and also in the great Archdiocese of Chicago.

Many of them, as I have written before, had never met a sister. They learned about the congregation from Archbishop Noll explaining it in Our Sunday Visitor. They came from all over the country. At their peak, there were over 500 and their training took place at Victory Noll in Huntington.

My visit was shortly after their chapter and a new election. They are a vigorous community with extraordinary and devoted women. Like so many religious congregations, new members are all too rare. It was my privilege to visit the retired sisters and ask their prayers for our diocese and especially that more young men would come of good quality and would offer themselves for the priesthood among us and also to pray for their own congregation.

St. Patrick’s Day at Notre Dame

Father Peter Rocca, CSC, had obtained proper permission to celebrate the memorial of St. Patrick on Thursday, March 13. So I drove from Huntington west through the rolling hillside of Route 5 and then Route 30 to the basilica. What a joy, an emotional moment for me, to celebrate this Mass. The Notre Dame Folk Choir sang under the direction of Steve Warner with the Irish drum and magnificent hymns. I could not celebrate such a Mass without thinking of my dear parents. I shared some quotes from the “Confessions of St. Patrick” concerning his life and his intense prayer while herding sheep as a slave boy on the mountains of Ireland. The church was well filled with many students, and I tried to share with them that God called Patrick even though he had been taken as a slave to Ireland. He called him while in prayer on the lovely hillside tending sheep. Indeed that is almost always how he calls us to follow him when we really give our souls over to personal prayer. And here we were 1,600 years later talking about this saint, reading from his confessions and trying to learn from him. People who live in communion with Christ, leave something after them that will never be forgotten.

Also, a joy to see so many Notre Dame students lined up before Mass, praying and going to confession, in this case to Father Paul Doyle, CSC, assistant rector of the basilica.

A nice Italian supper

After Mass, a supper followed at the Papa Vino’s Restaurant with our Liturgical Commission. It was strictly a social time.

The next day a Mass at St. Patrick Parish, South Bend, with Father Leonard Chrobot and Father John Klimeczk. In addition to the regular liturgy, it was my privilege, along with the two priests, to give the sacrament of the sick to a large group of parishioners.

Off then for a meeting at our beautiful new church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Warsaw, Indiana. Warsaw is always halfway home.

A coming event

On the Saturday after Easter, it will be my great joy to ordain to the sacred priesthood two members of the Congregation of Holy Cross: Steven A. Lacroix and Andrew M. Gawrych. An ordination is an extraordinary privilege for a bishop. I always try to prepare myself by prayer. I have a deep sense of unworthiness. These men most likely will be celebrating Mass, preaching and hearing confessions long after I am gone to God.

It also makes one think of Holy Cross. They have been here over 160 years, staffing our parishes, preaching and caring for souls. Yet they are an international missionary community, and this is a special year for them because of the beatification of their founder.

Why are the Red Sox going to Japan to start the baseball season?

Strange indeed. I have not been asked to accompany them. Just as well. See you all next week.
Pope calls death of Iraqi archbishop ‘act of inhuman violence’

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI called the kidnapping and death of an Iraqi archbishop “an act of inhuman violence that offends the dignity of the human being.”

Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Paulus Faraj Rahho of Mosul, Iraq, was kidnapped Feb. 29 in an attack that left his driver and two bodyguards dead. The pope had made several public appeals for his release.

Chaldean leaders in Iraq said March 13 that they had recovered the archbishop’s body after the kidnappers told them where they had buried it.

Police were unclear if Archbishop Rahho had been killed. He had no bullet wounds, his body showed signs of decom- position and he appeared to have been dead a week, reported the British news agency Reuters.

Archbishop Rahho’s funeral and burial were March 14 outside Mosul, a northern Iraqi city considered to be a stronghold of al-Qaida, according to The Associated Press. Iraq Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki blamed al-Qaida for the archbishop’s death.

The Vatican announced March 14 that Pope Benedict would celebrate a memorial Mass for the archbishop March 17 in the Redemptoris Mater Chapel of the Apostolic Palace.

In a March 13 telegram to Cardinal Emmanuel-Karim Delly of Baghdad, patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Pope Benedict said that after being informed of “the tragic death” of the archbishop, whom he called a “zealous pastor,” he wanted to let Chaldean Catholics and all Christians in Iraq know that he is close to them.

The pope also said he was praying that the Lord would show “his mercy so that this tragic event would serve to construct a future of peace in the martyred land of Iraq.”

Jesus Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said Pope Benedict was informed immediately of the recovery of Archbishop Rahho’s body. “We all had continued to hope and pray for his liberation,” Father Lombardi said.

Unfortunately, the most absurd and unjustified violence continues to weigh on the Iraqi people and particularly on the small Christian community, to whom the pope and all of us are particularly close in prayer and in solidarity at this moment of great pain,” Father Lombardi said.

The Vatican hoped “this tragic event” would lead to a greater commitment by all, particularly the international community, to work for peace in Iraq.

Chaldean Auxiliary Bishop Shemon Warduni of Baghdad told the Italian Catholic agency SIR that the kidnappers had informed church leaders March 12 “that Archbishop Rahho was very ill,” then a few hours later they phoned again to say he had died.

“This morning (March 13) they telephoned to tell us they had buried him,” Bishop Warduni said.

The church sent several young men to an area just outside Mosul where the kidnappers said the grave was located, and the body was recovered.

“We do not yet know if he died of causes tied to his precarious health or if he was killed,” Bishop Warduni said, referring to the archbishop’s heart condition, for which he needed medication daily. “The kidnappers told us only that he was dead.”

Chaldean Bishop Rabban al-Qas of Arbil told the agency AsiaNews, “It is a heavy cross for our church ahead of Easter.”

Archbishop Rahho was kid- napped after leading the Way of the Cross service at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mosul. He was in his car with his driver and two bodyguards when the kid- nappers attacked. The three peo- ple who were traveling with him were killed.

The kidnappers’ demands reportedly included a $1 million ransom.

While mediators were in contact with the kidnappers early on, police and military intelligence officers were unable to find them.

On March 4 al-Maliki ordered Iraqi forces to maximize their attempts at releasing the arch- bishop, but the commander of U.S. forces in northern Iraq said at the time that he was not confi- dent the archbishop would be found alive.

Maj. Gen. Mark P. Hertling said March 5 that Archbishop Rahho “could easily be killed and that would be really unfortunate,” reported Reuters.

As soon as the news of the archbishop’s kidnapping reached the Vatican, Pope Benedict began appealing for prayers for his release and pleading for an end of the violence in Iraq.

So many Iraqis “continue to suffer from blind and absurd vio- lence, which is certainly against God’s will,” the pope said in his March 9 appeal.

The Brothers of Holy Cross are blessed by those attending the Mass for the feast of St. Joseph held on Friday, March 14, at Sacred Heart Basilica, Notre Dame. Because the feast day falls in Holy Week this year, it was transferred. St. Joseph is the patron of the Brothers of Holy Cross, Notre Dame.

He fell ill during an influenza epidemic and died Aug. 14, 1890.

The investigation into the priest’s life and holiness concluded in 2000, since then the Vatican Congregation for Saints’ Causes has continued the investigation.

The congregation has examined an alleged miracle connected to Father McGivney, but no details have been released.

Father McGivney was born Aug. 12, 1852, the eldest of 13 children born to Patrick and Mary Lynch McGivney in Waterbury, Conn.

Emigrating from separate towns in Ireland’s County Cavan, the couple met and married in the United States. Only seven of their children lived past childhood.

Young Michael attended school in Waterbury’s working-class neighborhood, but left school at 13 to work in the spoon-making department of a brass factory.

At 16 he left the factory to begin seminary studies, traveling with his pastor to Quebec, where he registered at the French-run College of St. Hyacinthe. He also studied at Our Lady of Angels Seminary, attached to Niagara University in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and at the Jesuit-run St. Mary’s College in Montreal.

He went home to Waterbury when his father died in 1873 and stayed there for a time out of concern for his family and because he lacked funds. At the request of Hartford’s bishop, he enrolled in St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, where he completed his priestly studies.

In 1877 he was ordained in Baltimore by Archbishop James Gibbons for the then-Diocease of Hartford. A few days after his ordination, he said his first Mass in the presence of his widowed mother at Immaculate Conception Church in Waterbury.

Father McGivney served as an assistant pastor at St. Mary’s Parish in New Haven, 1877-1884. He founded the Knights of Columbus with a small group of Catholic lay- men, in order to strengthen religious faith and to help families overwhelmed by the illness or death of their breadwinner.

In 1884 he was named pastor of St. Thomas Church in Thomaston, a factory town about 10 miles from Waterbury. He fell ill during an influenza epidemic and died Aug. 14, 1890, probably from complications of pneumonia and tuberculosis.

He was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery in Waterbury.

For the Knights of Columbus, is depicted in an image from the Knights. Father McGivney’s cause for sainthood took a step forward March 15. With a decree approved by Pope Benedict XVI, Father McGivney was given the title “venerable.”

Father McGivney founded the fraternal order for Catholic men in 1882 in New Haven, Conn. It has since become the largest lay Catholic organization in the world with more than 1.7 million members.
Vatican’s official program for papal trip to U.S. shares more details

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Published just a month before Pope Benedict XVI’s scheduled arrival in the United States, the Vatican’s official program for the April 15-20 papal trip to Washington and New York was all that had been promised and a tiny bit more.

In addition to the previously announced meetings, Pope Benedict will meet April 16 with representatives of Catholic charitable foundations.

The papal itinerary, published March 17, begins when the pope arrives in New York on April 15 and concludes in Rome on April 20.

Here is the program as published March 17.

Thursday, April 17

• 9 a.m. Transfer by car from the nunciature to Nationals Park.
• 10 a.m. Mass in Nationals Park. Homily by pope.
• 12:30 p.m. Transfer by car to the nunciature.
• 4:40 p.m. Transfer by car to The Catholic University of America.
• 5 p.m. Meeting with representatives of Catholic universities at The Catholic University of America. Speech by pope.
• 6:15 p.m. Transfer by pope-mobile to the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center.
• 6:30 p.m. Meeting with representatives of other religions in the residence of Pope John Paul II Cultural Center.
• 7:30 p.m. Transfer by car to the nunciature.

Friday, April 18 (Washington, New York)

• Morning Mass in private in the chapel of the nunciature.
• 7:30 a.m. Farewell to those at the nunciature.
• 8 a.m. Transfer by car to Andrews Air Force Base.
• 8:45 a.m. Departure by air to New York.
• 9:45 a.m. Arrival at New York JFK International Airport.
• 10 a.m. Transfer by helicopter to Manhattan.
• 10:30 a.m. Arrival at the Wall Street helicoptor and transfer by car to the United Nations headquarters.
• 10:45 a.m. Visit to the United Nations. Speech by the pope to the U.N. General Assembly followed by greetings to the staff and personnel.
• 1:45 p.m. Transfer by car to the residence of the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations.
• 5:45 p.m. Transfer by car to St. Joseph’s Church in New York.
• 6 p.m. Ecumenical meeting in St. Joseph’s Church. Speech by pope.
• 7:15 p.m. Transfer by car to permanent observer’s residence.
• 7:30 p.m. Dinner with the U.S. cardinals, the officers of the U.S. bishops’ conference and members of the papal entourage.

Saturday, April 19

• 8 a.m. Transfer by car to St. John Paul II Cultural Center.
• 9:15 a.m. Mass with priests, men and women religious in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Homily by pope.
• 11:30 a.m. Transfer on foot to the residence of the archbishop of New York.
• Noon. Lunch with Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York, the auxiliary bishops at Cardinal Egan’s residence to the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.
• 1:45 p.m. Transfer by popemobile to the nunciature.

Sunday, April 20 (New York, Rome)

• 9 a.m. Transfer by car to ground zero.
• 10 a.m. Visit to ground zero. Prayer by pope.
• 10 a.m. Transfer by car to the permanent observer’s residence.
• 1:50 p.m. Transfer by car to Yankee Stadium.
• 2:30 p.m. Mass in Yankee Stadium. Homily by pope.
• 4:45 p.m. Transfer by car to the permanent observer’s residence.
• 5 p.m. Transfer by car to the Wall Street helicoptor.
• 7:20 p.m. Arrival at the Wall Street helicoptor.
• 7:30 p.m. Transfer by helicoptor to John F. Kennedy International Airport.
• 8 p.m. Arrival at airport for farewell ceremony. Speech by pope.
• 8:30 p.m. Depart for Rome.

By Ann Carey

NOTRE DAME — Are health care professionals merely technicians who read test results and prescribe appropriate medications? Some physicians may conduct themselves this way, and certainly isn’t the ideal Franciscaf Brother and Doctor Daniel P. Sulmasy of Notre Dame says.

“If we are to be true healers, then I think we have to rediscover what it means for healthcare to be a spiritual practice,” he told an audience of health care professionals and students preparing for those careers.

Dr. Sulmasy is a medical doctor and has a doctorate in philosophy. He has written four books on bioethics and holds the Sisters of Charity Chair in Ethics at St. Vincent’s hospital in Manhattan.

He also is a professor of medicine and director of the Bioethics Institute of New York Medical College.

His March 14 lecture was the centerpiece of a weekend-long conference on medical ethics that has been convened annually at the University of Notre Dame since 1985. The conference was established by Notre Dame alumnus Dr. Philip Clarke to enable health care professionals to discuss and analyze cases and to probe the ethical dilemmas in various areas of clinical practice and is hosted by Notre Dame’s Department of Ethics and Culture and the Notre Dame Alumni Association.

Dr. Sulmasy explained that spirituality is defined as the characteristics and qualities of one’s relationship with transcendence. Most people call that transcendence “God,” he said, and some have no name for it, and some people even reject the concept.

But in the end, he continued, even an atheist has a spirituality because the atheist must search for meaning in his rejection of a transcendent source.

“If we are committed to healing our patients as ‘whole persons’ he said, “then I think we have to understand not only what disease and injury do to their bodies, but what disease and injury do to them as embodied spiritual persons grappling with transcendental questions.”

Not many people talk about the spiritual lives of healers, and too few people in the healthcare professions talk about this, Dr. Sulmasy noted. But, “If we are to heal our patients as whole persons, then we, ourselves must be

the kinds of individuals who seriously engage the transcendent questions,” he said.

“The transcendent healing presence of the divine is not only to be found in those occasional, explicit religious conversations some of us might have on rare occasions with one of our patients,” he said, “but it is also there in the countless moments in the office or in the hospital in which we communicate with our patients and truly relate to them as whole persons,” he said.

A member of the audience, which included Notre Dame students, faculty, staff and guests, asked how sensitivity to this aspect of patient care can be taught to medical students. Dr. Sulmasy replied that part of the answer lies in family upbringing, but medical professionals also can learn in various ways, such as engaging in discussion groups like the one at his hospital that frames the topic in the light of Catholic tradition.

“A physician participating in the conference then asked how to go about getting in touch with and treating patients. Dr. Sulmasy said it can be done in a number of ways.

One doctor he knows knew 10 seconds before he sees each patient to remind himself that he is serving someone who is created by God and made in the image of God, he prayed at the end of the day to remember the experience of where God was present and how God intervened. Other doctors do journaling, he said, and for others the practice is spontaneous and becomes part of the rhythm of one’s life.

Dr. Sulmasy also encouraged the professionals to be alert to the patient and his surroundings. The doctor might note a rosary or prayer book on the patient’s table, he said, and know the lead of the patient in any discussion.

Another physician asked how doctors can avoid "drowning in a sea of human need." Dr. Sulmasy said doctors often fall into the trap of thinking that medicine is all about people and that they are capable of doing it all.

"Recognize that in the end, I’m not a healer," he said. In what he called "AA spirituality,” Dr. Sulmasy said one has to "Recognize that there is a higher power, and you’re not it."

At Notre Dame conference, brother-doctor advocates spirituality of healthcare
Jesus’ power was the power of love, pope says on Palm Sunday

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The power Jesus demonstrated was the power of love, which heals and reconciles, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“He did not come as one who destroys; he did not come with the revolutionary’s sword. He came with the gift of healing,” the pope said March 16 as he celebrated Mass on Palm Sunday in St. Peter’s Square.

Along with the pope, more than 350 young people and more than 200 cardinals, bishops and priests processed through the square carrying palm and olive branches as they marked Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem before his arrest, passion and death.

The young people chosen for the procession to represent their peers around the world were a special part of the liturgy, which also marked the diocesan celebration of World Youth Day.

Pope Benedict noted how the Gospel tells of the young people of Jerusalem waving palm branches and exclaiming “Hosanna” as Jesus entered the city.

“Reciting the Angelus at the end of Mass, Pope Benedict told the young people he hoped to see thousands of them in Sydney, Australia, for the July 15-20 international World Youth Day celebration, and he prayed that it would be “a time of deep and lasting spiritual renewal.”

The pope’s homily at the Palm Sunday Mass focused on the Gospel story of Jesus throwing the animal sellers and the money-changers out of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The animals were sold for Temple sacrifices and people needed to change money to make donations to the Temple, he said, but “all of this could have taken place elsewhere,” outside the Temple, which should have been a place of prayer.

The space occupied by the sellers and money-changers, the pope said, was supposed to be the atrium where the pagans, who could not enter the Temple, could still go “to associate themselves with the prayer to the one God.”

“The God of Israel, the God of all people, was waiting for their prayers as well,” he said.

Pope Benedict said the story should lead Catholics today to ask: “Is our faith pure and open enough” so that people who are searching for God will ask to join Catholics?

“The story also calls on Christians to ask themselves if they are aware that ‘greed is idolatry’ and if it is seen in their lives, the pope said.”

“Do we perhaps let idols enter into our faith in various ways?”

Are we always open to letting the Lord purify us, allowing him to throw out of us and of the church all that is contrary to him?” he asked.

The pope said it is important to know that in the Gospel of St. Matthew the story of Jesus purifying the Temple is followed by stories of Jesus healing the sick.

In healing the sick, Jesus reaches out to those whose lives have been reduced by illness or infertility and who often are pushed to the margins of society, the pope said.

“Jesus shows God as the one who loves and demonstrates his power as the power of love,” he said.
Cardinal says pope to interact with as many New Yorkers as possible

NEW YORK (CNS) — Although security will be tight and tickets limited by the nature of the venues that will host Pope Benedict XVI, careful arrangements have been made to allow him to interact with as many New Yorkers as possible during the visit, said Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York.

The cardinal made the comments in a recent hourlong interview with Catholic New York, the archdiocesan newspaper, at his residence. The pope will be in Washington April 15-17 and in New York April 18-20. One of those “close-up” opportunities with him will be at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, where people will be on the steps awaiting his arrival April 19.

Cardinal Egan, New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and cathedral rector Msgr. Robert T. Ritchie will greet the pontiff’s car and walk with him up the steps to the main doors, where he likely will turn to wave and offer a blessing to the crowds gathered on nearby streets before entering the cathedral.

Upcoming book links parishioners’ politics with their priests’ views

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A small study to be reported in an upcoming book on the political influence of parish priests found huge variations from one parish to another, with the political messages being emphasized from one parish to another, which may be as surprising to anyone. But whichever subjects their priests address, said author Gregory Smith, a fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, people clearly are being influenced in their political thinking by what they hear from the pulpit and read in their parish bulletins.

Smith spoke March 14 to a group of editors of U.S. and Canadian Catholic publications and staff members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at Washington headquarters in Washington. For his upcoming book, “Politics in the Parish: The Political Influence of Parish Priests,” Smith conducted detailed case studies at nine parishes in the U.S.

“We found that even parishes that are relatively small, like a few hundred members, where the priests seem to have a lot of influence, can have a resolution of peace,” said Smith, author of “Politics in the Parish: The Influence of Parish Priests.”

Rabbi says Vatican official to issue statement on Good Friday prayer

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Jewish leaders have been assured that the Vatican secretary of state will issue a statement in March saying that the pope’s revised prayer for Good Friday for the Tridentine rite is not a call for Catholics to try to convert Jews.

Rabbi David Rosen, chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, said March 13 the statement would “allow the vast majority of Jews involved in dialogues with Catholics to reengage as before.”

Representatives of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel had been scheduled to be in Rome March 9-12 for their regularly scheduled dialogue with the Vatican. However, the Rabbis asked for a clarification from the Vatican about the prayer and postponed their trip. Pope Benedict XVI’s revision of the Good Friday prayer applies only to the liturgy celebrated according to the 1962 Roman Missal, or Tridentine rite.

The new prayer removed 1962 language referring to the “blindness” of the Jews, it prays that Jews will recognize Jesus, the savior, and that “all Israel may be saved.”

First Catholic church building in Qatar is sign of hope, says pastor

ROME (CNS) — The March 14 inauguration of the first Catholic church building in Qatar “is a sign of great hope for the church” in the region, said the new church’s pastor.

Capuchin Father Tomasito Veneracion, the new pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Church, told Aid to the Church in Need that the construction and opening of the new church was a “historic event.”

Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic organization funding religious projects worldwide, including the construction of the church in Qatar, published the Filipinop priest’s remarks in a March 12 press release.

Funding for the construction of the church in Qatar, published the Filipinop priest’s remarks in a March 12 press release. For decades, Christians in Qatar had to practice their faith in cramped garages, private homes and, most recently, in foreign schools and prefabricated halls. In April 2003 the government of this tiny Persian Gulf nation overruled the 1962 language referring to the “blindness” of the Jews, it prays that Jews will recognize Jesus, the savior, and that “all Israel may be saved.”

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Edith Stein Project to be hosted March 28-29

SOUTH BEND — Radical femi-
nist jargon has dominated much of the dialogue surrounding societal treatment of women in the 21st century. Feminist movements often accuse men of purposely sabotaging women from achieving their full potential. A reexamination of cultural attitudes and per-
ceptions regarding the female per-
son is necessary to concurrently promote the dignity of every human being and emphasize the unique and differential natures of men and women.

The Third Annual Edith Stein Project, to be hosted at the University of Notre Dame on March 28-29 is a conference for students, women and men to par-
ticipate in the task of building a coherent philosophical foundation for a “new feminism.”

Edith Stein, the patron saint of the conference, was a German philosopher who died a martyr within the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Her philosophical writings address the distinction the role women play in society, the un-
ediable, nurturing female character and the vocation to motherhood.

The conference utilizes the riches of the Catholic tradition to obtain a deeper understanding of the male and female person, while living in a world scarred and tinted by many attitudes of violence, rejection of the concept of love and the defacement of the human person.

Guest speakers include author Dawn Eden discussing sexual objectification in society and the importance of chastity, Dr. Phil Mango uncovering the link between psychology and gender, and Dr. Grove’s explanation of the science behind the Vatican’s con-
ception of sexuality in a presenta-
tion entitled “Sex in the Vatican City.”

For information, visit the Web site www.nd.edu/~ediedithstein.

St. Jude School, South Bend, takes new approach to spring fundraiser

SOUTH BEND — St. Jude Catholic School has decided to take a new approach to its annual spring fundraiser to be held on the evening of Saturday, March 29, from 6-11:30 p.m. The St. Jude Home and School Association (HASA) will hold its first-ever Spring Celebration, an event that encompasses dinner, an auction, dinner, a silent auction, and a silent auction.

The headline performance will include the comedy of Craig Tornquist, a local comedian who has appeared on the “Tonight Show.” Music will be provided by the school’s own talent, St. Jude Stein Project. The local principal Steve Donndelinger. “Most people agree that he is one of the most talented pianists in this area. His improvisations and accompaniments are both inventive and expressive.”

Donndelinger’s jazz combo is scheduled to perform later that evening. The group, led by local trumpet artist Pat Heiden, will include piano, drums, horns, sax and possibly a vocalist. Donndelinger will play trombone with the group.

High ticket items are scheduled to be auctioned, luffled and given away. Top auction pieces will include high ticket items such as a flat screen TV, an embroidered machine and a microwave oven. A raffle will be conducted for the win-
er to receive tuition credit in the amount of $400, courtesy of the school at (574) 291-3820.

“We have a little bit of every-
ting,” says April Adamson, auc-
tion coordinator. “Almost all the south side restaurants have con-
tributed gift certificates or meal vouchers. We have retail stores, pet stores, grocery stores, book stores, auto services, athletic apparel, athletic camps for chil-
dren, fitness memberships, golf packages, beauty services, and so many other wonderful products and services for people to bid on. Some people will walk away very pleased with what they have paid for some very nice prizes.” The auction will even include a family meal prepared and served by St. Jude pastor Father John Delaney. “I don’t know a person who hasn’t enjoyed one of Father John’s meals,” adds Donndelinger. “For him cooking is not just a hobby, it’s an art.”

Any member of the community is invited to participate in this event, but they should move quickly. Only 250 tickets will be sold. These may be purchased for the price of $20 a piece. Ticket purchases can be arranged by calling the school at (574) 291-3820.

Intercessory prayer talk scheduled at Holy Cross College

SOUTH BEND — For those who would like to deepen their interior life, a talk on the charism of interces-
sion will be given March 28 at Holy Cross College in the student center by Sister Mary Christina and Sister Therese Marie of the Intercessors of the Lamb Community located in Omaha, Neb.

The Intercessors of the Lamb are a mixed community of laity, consecrated brothers, sisters and priests who have been called to the discipleship by the Holy Spirit and formed in the Heart of Mary.

Their purpose is to continue the redemptive mission of the Lamb of God through his powerful “bur-
der-bearing” ministry of interces-
sion. Companion Prayer Groups have formed in over 46 states in the U.S., including some in the South Bend area, and have spread throughout the globe.

The talk, from 7:30-9:30 p.m., will be given at the Driscoll Hall Auditorium at Holy Cross College.

For parking, please use the entrance of Holy Cross College (on Indiana SR 933) and park in the commuter lot before the gate-
house. Follow the main entrance to the Driscoll Hall Auditorium.

For information, contact Dave Torma at (574) 291-3381 or djfisherofmen@msn.com.

University of Saint Francis to perform musical ‘Pump Boys and Dinettes’ March 28 to 30

FORT WAYNE — The University of Saint Francis will perform the musical revue “Pump Boys and Dinettes” on March 28-29 at 8 p.m. and March 30 at 2 p.m. in the North Campus auditorium (2702 Spring Street). Tickets can be pur-
chased at the door for $8. Doors will open 30 minutes before show time for general seating.

Originally performed and writ-
ten by John Foley, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, Cass Morgan, John Schimmel and Jim Wann, Pump Boys takes place at a diner and gas station somewhere along Highway 57 between Frog Level and Smyrna. The show fea-
tures music that is fast paced, rock and roll, and country and plays with just a touch of Jimmy Buffet.

After each performance, one audience member will receive a grand prize of a photograph with the entire cast. According to direc-
tor Brad Beauchamp, “The cast will take their time for fast paced, rip roarin’ good time.”

For more information, please call (260) 399-7700 ext. 8001.

The School of Creative Arts (SOCA) is an accredited school by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

Queen of Peace begins third phase of development plan

MISHAWAKA — Physical and spiritual development is enhanced for our students at the Queen of Peace School in phase three of their five phase development plan. Awaiting the students is a new computer lab and new classrooms designed specifically for the needs of the students and school ages 3-12 that features slides, swings and rockblock walls.

The Queen of Peace Gardens or “Our Lady’s Garden” is a col-
laboration of both school and par-
ty. The design is a naturalistic display of flowers and vegetables in a walk-through set-
ing. The Rosary Walk, the outside perimeter of the Queen of Peace School, will soon use a new computer lab and seating areas throughout. A wildflower meadow, children’s garden and a grotto featuring a statue of the Blessed Mary will also be featured.

The Queen of Peace students will use the new computer lab that has been coming to comple-
tion since the reconfiguration began over the summer of 2007. New wiring, counters and new equipment with the purchase of 25 530S Dell Inspiron comput-
ers was also added. The lab also features 1:1 student to computer ratio for all.

ST. JOSEPH-ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON SCHOOL TRAVELS BACK IN TIME FOR PIONEER DAYS

The fourth graders of St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School traveled back in time to Indiana’s Pioneer Days on March 12. Stephanie Boss’s and Brittany Jones’s fourth graders were dressed in period dress, and tried out activities that children would have experi-
enced in Pioneer times. Pioneer Day started with a visit to a one-room school house that dates back to the late 1800s. The students visited pioneer craft stations from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. They tried their hands at making talking sticks, wampum necklaces, and tin punch lanterns. They also stenciled, cross-stitched, dipped candles and played indoor pioneer games. The students, teachers and parent volunteers ended the day with some old-fashioned square dancing in the St. Elizabeth Seton gym, from about 12:30 to 2 p.m.

PRAVISED BY ST. JOSEPH-ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON SCHOOL
Major property tax relief plan offers mixed blessing

INDIANAPOLIS — Hoosier lawmakers reached a property tax relief agreement March 14, which delivers a mixed blessing of property tax relief to homeowners, help for seniors, and tax credits for lower income families, but opponents question the plan’s impact on local governments and schools.

While property tax and immigration reform were among the top priorities of the Indiana Catholic Conference, the ICC followed these issues with an eye on how the proposals might hurt lower income or immigrant families and children, and how these reforms would affect the common good of all Hoosier families.

The property tax relief plan contained in the conference committee report on HB 1001 received bipartisan support and passed the House 82-7, and the Senate 41-6. Rep. Jeff Espich (R-Uniondale) one of the chief negotiators of the proposal called the bill “a solution to one of the toughest issues we’ve ever dealt with in the General Assembly.” Espich said the plan “tax payer friendly” and “community friendly.” House Minority Leader Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) called the plan, “The strongest property tax relief measure in two generations.”

Rep. Russell Stillwell (D-Boonville) summed-up the proposal this way, “There is pain and there is gain for Hoosiers across the state; then asked, “Is there more pain or more gain?” Rep. David Orentlicher (D-Indianapolis) raised concerns about the impact to his local school district which would be losing money due to lower enrollments. Rep Vernon Smith (D-Gary) praised many aspects of the proposal but said, “It lacks equity.” And said he has a “great concern” for the $10 million cut to the Gary schools. Rep. Dennis Avery (D-Evansville) said the plan was “not fair” and he would be voting “no.”

Rep. William Crawford (D-Indianapolis), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and chief negotiator of the plan outlined the many pluses of the bill, and said, “We don’t have perfection, but we do have property tax reform…

The property tax relief plan contained in the conference committee report on HB 1001 has been sent to the governor, who is expected to sign the bill into law.

The three provisions the ICC supported to help low income families included: increasing the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); increasing the renter’s deduction, and helping the elderly on fixed incomes, were added to the final property tax relief plan. Rep. John Day (D-Indianapolis), a long time advocate for raising the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), said, “The beauty of the EITC is it rewards working people.”

Day said, “President Reagan called the Earned Income Tax Credit the best, anti-poverty, pro-family program he’d ever seen, and I agree.”

The state EITC will increase from the current 6 percent to 9 percent.

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BRIGID CURTIS AYER

The bill would have punished businesses that knowingly hire undocumented workers by suspending their business license or revoking it after three violations. The immigration reform proposal died when two of the conference committee report of nations to control its borders.” However Tebbe explained to lawmakers that the church is concerned about the effects the proposal would have on employers, immigrant families and children. “Putting hundreds of people out of work will only add to the social concerns in the community,” said Tebbe. “Presently those working are caring for their family needs and contributing to the common good.”

The bill gives homeowners an average cut in property taxes of close to 30 percent this year. It includes caps on property taxes at 1.5 percent of a home’s assessed valuation in 2009, and in 2010 and beyond, it caps property tax at 1 percent of a home’s assessed valuation. It eliminates many of the state’s township assessors, calls for public conferences on capital spending projects, and places controls on local government spending. It adds $120 million to help schools offset the property tax caps. The plan increases the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from 6 to 9 percent for lower to moderate income families, and makes the EITC permanent. It increases the renter’s deduction from the current $2,500 to $3,000, and places additional caps for senior citizen homeowners on fixed incomes.

To provide property tax relief, the bill increases the state sales tax from 6 to 7 percent effective on April 1. Local Option Income Taxes (LOT) are expected to be increased to make up for the shortfall caused by the property tax cap.

Seniors on fixed, lower incomes also benefit. Homeowners age 65 or older with an income of $30,000 for an individual or $40,000 for a couple with a home at an assessed value of $160,000 or less will have a more stringent property tax cap. In addition to the 1 percent cap on their home’s assessed value their property taxes would not increase more than 2 percent per year.

Glenn Tebbe, Indiana Catholic Conference executive director, who serves as official spokesman on public policy matters for the Indiana bishops, said, “In the areas of property taxes relief and immigration reform, we tried to accomplish a ‘do no harm’ policy. We wanted to make sure lower income families were not forgotten in the equation of providing property tax relief to homeowners and that some of their needs would be addressed,” said Tebbe. “On immigration reform, we did not want the state to enact an immigration policy which would harm those of the immigrant community, legal or illegal.”

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Local relationship story offers food for the soul

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — “We spent the entire evening absorbed in each others’ company, oblivious to those around us. We held hands and talked...." Then Joe got on his knees and...” If you want to know the rest of this heartwarming story you’ll have to pick up the latest edition of “Chicken Soup for the Soul,” and read the final narrative.

The issue titled “Love Stories — Stories of First Dates, Soul Mates, and Everlasting Love” offers 270 pages of charming romance stories, but none as sweet as the account written by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Fort Wayne, parishioner Sandy Bishop. Bishop was born in Anderson, third of seven children. She recalls her close-knit family spending time together doing “simple things” like picnics and playing games. Though her career path led her to nursing, she has always had an interest in drawing and writing, including the creation of a cartoon booklet with magazine cut-outs for each month of the year. Her mother says she has a “wild imagination.”

Fast forward to the late ’70s when Bishop was a shy nursing student at Purdue University and her roommate convinced her to join a square dancing class. As God’s providence would have it, her future husband Joe, an engineering student there, was a beginning square dancer in the class as well. When he asked her to dance she recalls, “I felt comfortable dancing with him.” As Joe walked her home, Bishop realized he was an “old fashioned” man and accepted his offer to attend a Valentine’s Day dance. “We didn’t dance much,” she recalls. “We spent the night talking and got to know each other.”

Though she enjoyed his company as they began to spend time together having picnics, attending plays and square dancing with the group, she had reservations about dating a non-Catholic. Joe came from a deeply faithful Baptist family.

After a year of dating, Joe proposed marriage. Bishop needed more time to discern the religious differences between them. Joe began to attend Mass regularly with Bishop and told her how appealing the family values held by the Catholic Church were to him.

By June of 1978 the young couple was married in the church and began their new life after graduation, in Fort Wayne. Eventually, Joe opened an engineering business, and Bishop worked as a nurse.

St. Therese became their church home where they both became involved in the choir there. “Joe loves to sing,” says Bishop with a smile. “It was like family there.” The Bishop family grew to include two daughters and two sons, who were raised in the Catholic Church. After 10 years there, the growing family moved to the southwest area of the city and joined St. Elizabeth Parish and has been involved there for 23 years. Nursing kept Bishop busy until her first son was born, when she chose to become a stay-at-home mom. During that time she and her husband weathered joys and trials together.

“THERE’S BEEN A LOT OF GROWTH. There’s been a lot of growth. Our prayer life grew stronger as we went through different trials,” she says. “It’s neat to pray together as a couple, to reach out in a moment of crisis.”

And Bishop continued to write. She took a writing course last spring and joined a writer’s group at a local bookstore, where she says, “I had an insane desire to write. I sit and get totally lost in the story. It’s intriguing.” It was there that she was encouraged to send her love story in to “Chicken Soup for the Soul.”

Because of her deep and loving relationship with her husband of 30 years, Bishop says, “I didn’t send it in to have it published. I just wanted someone to read it and have hope for their relationship.”

She adds humbly, “I sent it with a prayer, so the idea would get out to enjoy spending time with your spouse.”

Following a rigorous editing and judging process, Bishop received confirmation that her story had been chosen for publication via e-mail.

“It felt strange,” she says. When a copy of the book arrived in the mail, Bishop says, “When I opened it, a flood hit me. I started crying. It was joyful and strange... to see it in print... I’ve never experienced this feeling before.”

To celebrate the publication of her story the couple enjoyed a romantic dinner at the same restaurant the love story took place many years ago.

Bishop’s advice to married couples, “Respect is big. Allow each other to be human and work as a team. Let each other be who you are and appreciate that.” Good advice from a newly published writer and faith-filled wife.

A spacious independent living residence set within a vibrant, intergenerational neighborhood. Activities and amenities designed to foster growth and lifelong learning. A full continuum of care located on site, in case you ever need it. A plan for your future that is affordable, and provides estate protection. This is how you can picture life at Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame.

Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame is a continuing care retirement community distinctively located amidst the campuses of University of Notre Dame, Saint Mary’s College and Holy Cross College. Here, you’ll find everything you need to complete your active, engaged lifestyle, including maintenance-free living, access to a variety of college programs and events, as well as brand-new assisted living apartments, skilled nursing and memory care suites for utmost comfort and peace of mind.

The complete picture of retirement.

Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame is a continuing care retirement community owned by the Brothers of Holy Cross and managed by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago Service Corporation.

More than 75% of our residences are reserved! Call today to schedule a tour of our new expansion. And get the full picture of how rewarding retirement can be.
An Amazing Year

Sant Joseph Regional Medical Center

Dear Neighbor,

In 2007, Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center strived to truly live through our mission - to heal body, mind and spirit, improve the health of our communities and steward the resources entrusted to us.

At Saint Joseph, we structure everything around our PEGS - People, Excellence, Growth and Stewardship. The following recap of 2007 uses this structure.

In addition, read four of what we like to call, “Mission Moments.” Everyday, we witness inspiring patients with unbelievable stories, and are continually reminded of how fortunate we are for the opportunity to serve our community. As important as all the events, initiatives and awards of the last year are, our greatest achievement will always be providing you with an excellent patient care experience and standing by our mission.

We hope that the New Year brings many joys and blessings to you and your loved ones. Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center will continue to be here. For 2008, For Life.

Nancy R. Hellyer, CEO & President
Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

Excellence

I shared the elevator with a man who has been with us for 3 weeks on the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit. I asked him how he was doing, and he said “Wonderful,” because of the great people who cared for him on Rehab. He singled out one of our Associates who had inspired him. He talked about the rest of the staff and said they must really love what they do, because it shows. We walked all the way to the front lobby together with him pushing his wheelchair. He said his entire experience in our hospital was life altering for him. He wants to stay in touch and come back to visit - and he might even dance a two-step with the staff when he returns.

People

The husband of one of our long-term patients died unexpectedly while she was hospitalized with us. The patient told us that she wanted nothing more than to go to her husband’s funeral. We collaborated with her physician for permission and an ambulance company to provide round-trip transportation. Then our Associates started to pitch in. One went shopping to bring the patient clothes to wear, and another did her hair. Still another Associate volunteered to use her day off to accompany our patient to the funeral. In the end, our patient was able to be at the funeral and the lunch following the service for a total of four hours. She returned to the hospital glowing in the support she received from family and friends at the funeral and forever grateful to the staff who made it possible.

SRMC hosted and thanks the EMS community during National Emergency Medical Services Week.
SRMC receives 751 hats from the local media outlets, including newspaper, television and radio stories.

Business group from Japan visits and tours SRMC for healthcare study.
First EMS Conference sponsored by SRMC's success and scheduled to be an annual event.
New Doxas Code successfully implemented, enabling patients, visitors and staff to more easily distinguish the different roles of our Associates.

River Park Family Medicine physicians Dr. John Russell and Dr. Brian Meloney celebrate 25 years of practicing together with an open house.
SRMC Plymouth Campus receives the President's Award for their role in the Marshall County Blue Ribbon's Falls Prevention Program.

Rummage Halloween Party held for graduates of SRMC's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and their families.

More than 125 physicians and nurses attend the 2007 Medical Staff Recognition and Holiday Celebration, during which SRMC honored physicians for years of medical service.

SRMC's oldest physician, Dr. Juan Garcia receives SRMC's 2007 Bench Mark Morano Award for his service to the community and commitment to healing.

Organization continues to prepare and train for Onyx, the information technology initiative that will go live on April 23, 2008 and transform the way SRMC delivers care.

SRMC receives national recognition and is awarded the Department of Health and Human Services Medal of Honor for Organ Donation.

Deployment of the Michigan Safety Coalition, SRMC's inpatient safety program, exceeds patient safety goals.

SRMC won one of the national top performance improvement awards for hospitals in Thomson Healthcare's Improving Quality 2007 Awards program.

New Nursing Practice Council established to make documents related to evidence-based nursing practice, standards and procedures.

HealthGrades recognizes SRMC in the Top 5% in the nation for Knee Replacement and Orthopedic Surgery in 2008.

Using the code STEMI, SRMC maintains door-to-balloon angioplasty time for heart attack patients that are significantly better than the national average.

HealthGrades designates SRMC as the only hospital in the South Bend region placed in the Top 5% in the nation for Joint Replacement and Orthopedic Surgery for the fifth year in a row (2004-2008).

SRMC Plymouth Campus works with neighboring hospital to implement a new patient monitoring system to increase patient safety and physician efficiency.

Saint Joseph VNA Home Care honored by the Indiana Quality Improvement Organization with the Home Health Quality Improvement Award of Merit and Quality Achievement Award.

River Park Family Medicine nominated Favorite Physician Office by Mishiana residents.
SRMC receives a Neonatal Nursing conference with outstanding healthcare professionals at the University of Notre Dame.
SRMC reduces safety procedures in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) by completely eliminating the elements of human error from designing the drug labels to values in the NICU.

The Keystone ICU Project and the hard work of our nursing staff lead to increased excellence in patient care.
Growth: One of our patients was in the hospital with widespread cancer—his side was his girlfriend. He never told his family, always devoted to his case and comfort. Our patient mentioned to an Associate that one regret was that he would never be able to marry his girlfriend before he died. After hearing this, our Associates immediately went into action. The City Clerk's office was contacted and they graciously agreed to waive the 3-day waiting period that typically occurs after applying for a marriage license, due to the condition of the groom. Associates found flowers and made a bouquet, one Associate volunteered to sing The Lord's Prayer, a cake was ordered and a Chaplain was found to perform the service. Although tired and weak, the groom and his bride had the most amazing smiles on their faces as they officially married. Four days later, our patient passed away, with his family and his wife by his side.

Saint Joseph's Long-Cancer Center dedicates to offering a more integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to fighting cancer.

Stewardship: In February of 2007, the Mission in Motion Committee unveiled the Power of One program, which has touched thousands of lives. Through the generosity of our Associates, more than 17,000 items of basic necessity—from soap and shampoo to gloves and socks—were collected and distributed to those in need in our community. The reaction was overwhelming.

One woman burst into tears when an Associate handed out a free toothbrush and toothpaste. She told us she ran out four days ago and couldn't afford to buy more right now. A 12-year-old girl was entitled to receive hair ribbons. A mother cried and thanked God when she was given shampoo for her children. This program was so successful that it will continue on in 2008, and indefinitely, at SJRMC.

Annual Susan Raffone raises $224,000 for the Healthy Family Center and Women's Care Center.

For more information and to watch the progress of your new facility via a live web cam, go to www.mynewhospital.org.

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Supporting Our Community:

At Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center, we work everyday to have a direct and positive impact on our community.

As a nonprofit, mission-driven healthcare system, SJRMC budgets millions of dollars each year to address specific community health needs. Our Community Benefit Ministry includes health services, medical education, operation of our clinics, subsidized care, health fairs, community building activities, and research.

In 2007, we supported the following organizations and initiatives in the Michigan area. We are proud to be a trusted partner for life and to provide more than just quality healthcare to those we serve.

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Clare, whose name has been changed to ensure privacy, returned to the church during Lent last year after being away for many years, thanks to the efforts of her neighboring church, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, who participated in the Wells of Hope program.

This program was offered to all parishes in the diocese to facilitate during the Lenten season of the 150th anniversary jubilee year as a way of reaching out to fallen-away Catholics. It is an original program created by the diocesan Office of Spiritual Development and Evangelization and trims couples from family to make calls to persons identified by loved ones as fallen-away, with an invitation to investigate and renew their faith.

Ginny Kohrmann, director of the Office of Spiritual Development and an author of the program, reports that 42 parishes attended the training in the fall of 2006 and have reported many Catholics seeking communion with the church. The process, she says, is ongoing and focuses on relationship.

Considering the myriad of reasons for leaving the church, Clare’s story is not uncommon. Born the oldest of six children to parents who were faithful to their Catholic faith, Clare, like her siblings, attended Catholic elementary and high school, and recalls enjoying regular Mass attendance at the family church.

She feels she had exceptional religious education training during her school years but says after entering a Catholic college, she found her Mass attendance faltering as she pursued the demanding curriculum. Those attending are encouraged to carpool or park a short distance away at Parkside Elementary parking lot, just to the west of the church.

Passion re-enactment set for Good Friday

LaGRANGE — Over 50 members of the Hispanic Catholic community from LaGrange and Steuben counties will present a re-enactment of the Passion of Christ, a custom also referred to as “The Living Way of the Cross.” The re-enactment will be held on Good Friday, March 21, starting at 11 a.m., rain or shine, on the grounds of St. Joseph Catholic Church in LaGrange, located at the corner of U.S. 20 and CR 100 E.

The event is free to all. People of all faiths are invited and encouraged to attend this amazing dramatization of the Passion.

This is the third year in a row for the Living Way of the Cross to be presented at St. Joseph Church, featuring a large cast portraying the events of the Passion, beginning with Jesus’ arrest and following through to the crucifixion. Dramatizations of the Passion of Christ have been a longstanding tradition in Latin America and the Philippines.

Parking is very limited at the church itself, as some areas of the parking lot will be occupied by the dramatization. Those attending are encouraged to carpool or park a short distance away at Parkside Elementary parking lot, just to the west of the church.

Finding faith again in the holy season

BY KAY COZAD

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The Wells of Hope couple, trained with a team of four others and armed with a workbook and informational pamphlets, made cold calls to the 10 of 40 names given to the parish for outreach. Clare was one of a few who responded positively. The program, the couple says, is proactive as it reaches out to the community. “We planted seeds in a year or two maybe faith will blossom. For Clare, she took the first step, and she had someone who lived out her hand to help her across the bridge,” they said.

The couple attended the four scheduled meetings with one during Lent, when they learned more about the faith, Tom said. It was supportive of Clare’s decision to return to the church.

Agreeing that Tom would need background on the Mass, attending priest, Father Dave Ruppert, now pastor at St. Therese Parish, Fort Wayne, designed a booklet with Mass prayers. He also offered the couple an instructional Mass to assist Tom with his understanding of the service.

“The interesting thing that’s happened in the course of this,” says Tom “is I can say that I’ve come to see the personal value in this. I am returning to a sense of spirit in my life, separate from supporting Clare.”

The couple has found that returning to the church and living a Christian lifestyle, in both intention and action, hasected their lives “in a big way.”

Attending Mass on a regular basis was difficult at first, but now has become a well-learned weekly routine.

“I truly enjoy it now,” says Clare, with Tom adding, “Going to church is not separate from life — it has to mesh with life.”

Wells of Hope program contact Ginny Kohrmann in Fort Wayne at (260) 422-4611 and Sister Mary Kay, CNC, in South Bend at (574) 234-0687 or contact your local parish.

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Divine Mercy inspiration brings healing, strong faith

BY DIANE FREEBY

SOUTH BEND — When Connie Besario, a wife and mother of two young children, was diagnosed with stage-two breast cancer in May of 2008, she didn’t have to search for a special way to pray. Her lifelong devotion to the Divine Mercy was more than enough.

“It is that radiance that attracts me,” says Connie, referring to the streams of light that pour forth from the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the now well-known Divine Mercy painting. “I feel like it’s penetrating my heart. I feel the radiance coming from his heart, penetrating my heart. I always have peace when I come to Him.”

Connie grew up in the Philippines, where people traditionally stop whatever they are doing at 3 p.m. in the afternoon, the hour of Divine Mercy, to pray the chaplet.

After Connie received the devastating cancer diagnosis, she wept.

“I cried, then I stopped,” she remembers. “I knew the Lord would take care of me.”

Connie underwent surgery, and continued her work as a physical therapist in between rounds of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. She frequently felt sick, but was sustained by her faith and her family. She was determined to stay strong for her girls, Jennie and Maria. Connie’s husband, Jerry, was her rock.

“He was very good. I feel like he was my rock, the Lord would take care of me,” says Connie, who works full-time while Jerry takes care of the home front.

“He fixed me healthy food and cared for the children,” says Connie during that time, she was thankful to God for every day she was given. Dealing with cancer was tough, but she says she always knew just where to turn.

“Sometimes I feel down,” explains Connie, “but every time I just come to him and I’m revived. It’s the same with the Blessed Sacrament. I am just called to go there.”

That’s just what Connie did, and often. Throughout her recovery from the surgery, and during the following weeks and months of treatment, Connie frequently went before the Lord. She took advantage of the nearly-perpetual adoration at the Corpus Christi Parish chapel, and could often be seen kneeling before the image of the Divine Mercy after receiving holy Communion at Mass.

“For every time I look at the cross, I feel his love endures forever. He is so merciful.”

Connie faced more difficulty when she lost her job almost a year after being diagnosed with cancer. She struggled with the emotional and practical realities.

“I cried. Lord, my health and my job. What is happening to me?”

While Connie’s dismissal came without warning, just before her patients were to present her with an “Employee of the Month” award, she resisted the urge to fight back legally and instead chose to move forward. Connie considered the sacrifice and accepted that cross.

“I did not run away from the Lord,” says Connie. “I look at what he suffered on the cross, and my problems are much less.”

Meantime, Connie was praying about how she would tell her girls their mother had breast cancer. Jenny, then a third-grader at Corpus Christi School, and Maria, a preschooler, knew about the surgery and following treatments. They just didn’t know it was for cancer.

The girls eventually did find out when they overheard a conversation between Connie and another woman involved in raising money for cancer research. As Connie wondered how her girls would react, the youngest quickly put it into perspective.

“Jesus already healed mommy,” Maria proudly told the woman, “and mommy is going to have beautiful hair just like me!”

Connie’s prayers were answered in her young daughter’s faith. Her prayers for employment were also answered, as she found a new job a month later.

Her older daughter, Jennie, is currently working on a book for the Young Authors Conference. It is entitled, “A Mother That Survived Breast Cancer,” and dedicated “to my dear mother, and to God, who healed my mother.”

Connie is quick to count her many blessings. She appears strong and healthy as she prepares for head off to work, giving all credit to a God who is merciful.

“If you come to him, he will take care of you,” she insists. “Only he can give you the peace and strength I encourage people to always ask for his mercy and grace.”

Easter to Pentecost:
Resources for enrichment

BY DR. DAN McNAAMA

With Easter Sunday the church year moves on into a new season. If you have not been able to devote the time and attention you wanted to the season of Lent, perhaps you will welcome this new opportunity for you to start. The “one-page-per-day” format is inviting even for the busiest of us. 54 pages, $7. www.twentysthirdpublications.com

You Have Experienced His Passion and Resurrection.
Now Come and Celebrate His Divine Mercy!

 Feast Day Mass
MERCY SUNDAY
March 30, 2008
Chapellet 2:30 PM
Holy Mass 3:00 PM
Confessions 1:30 to 3 PM
Eucharistic Adoration
2:00 to 2:30 PM
Holy Family Church
56405 Mayflower Road
South Bend
Everyone Welcome!

For the Sake of Your Sorrowful Passion, Have Mercy on Us

BY DR. DAN McNAAMA

W ith Easter Sunday the church year moves on into a new season. If you have not been able to devote the time and attention you wanted to the season of Lent, perhaps you will welcome this new opportunity to do so during the 50 days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost. Things are a bit different here. We are asked to change our perspective now but to continue to move forward. Change yet continuity; a mirror of both life in general and of individual lives as well. This book that follows may be of help to you as we move into this new liturgical season.

Hans Christophersen, “These Fifty Days of Easter” Litugon Publications. This small booklet may help you better understand how the church itself shares in Christ’s messianic mission and “paschal mystery.” Maybe think about all this in this way: In Lent the focus was on the role of Christ himself. In the Easter-Pentecost season, however, the focus is shifted (maybe better, expanded) to the role of his church. If you’re looking for a starting point for understanding why Christ’s church becomes the new focus, this book-let will help. 24 pages. $1 (www.litugon.org)

Raymond E. Brown, “A Risen Christ in Eastertime: Essays On The Gospel Narratives Of The Resurrection,” and “A Once And Coming Spirit At Pentecost: Essays On The Liturgical Readings Between Easter And Pentecost.” The Liturgical Press. A lot of readers are looking for resources that will help them to better understand the biblical readings they will be hearing at Mass during this season. The first of these two books seeks to shed some light on the question of how each Gospel’s treatment of Christ’s Resurrection fits into the total plan of that individual Gospel. Basically, these will be the Gospel readings we will hear in the first two weeks of the Easter-Pentecost season. Father Brown’s second book focuses on the Book of Acts and John’s Gospel, which will be proclaimed on weekdays and Sundays throughout the rest of this new season. Brown emphasizes that each day’s first reading (from Acts) recounts the external life of the Christian community after the Spirit has come whereas that same day’s Gospel reading (John) speaks about the internal life of the individual Christian and the promise of a Spirit yet-to-come. 95 pages. $7. www.litpress.com

Gwen Costello, ‘Mystagogia Is For Everyone: Daily Gospel Reflections And Prayers For The 50 Days Of Easter.” TwentyThird Publications. Mystagogia is a Greek term used to refer to the period of instruction for new Christians which extends from Easter to Pentecost. This book focuses on a part of each day’s Gospel reading in a way that moves us towards a single point for reflection for that day. If you have found this approach rewarding during Lent, Costello’s book will help you continue your journey. If this approach will be new for you, this will be a good place for you to start. The “one-page-per-day” format is inviting even for the busiest of us. $4 pages. $5. www.twentysthirdpublications.com
A traditional Easter blessing

Easter is the solemnity of solemnities, the greatest feast on the liturgical calendar. The paschal celebration peaked during the Easter Vigil, and now we bask in the glory of the resurrected Lord for the 40 days of Easter, which culminates in the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

The Easter celebration is permeated by a sense of newness of the new life begun by Christ in the Resurrection: nature has been renewed with the season of spring beginning on March 20 in the northern hemisphere; fire and water have been renewed at the Easter Vigil; Christian hearts have been renewed through the sacrament of reconciliation and, for those entering the church, through the sacraments of initiation. Even the traditional coloring and hiding of Easter eggs serve as a symbol of finding new life.

Here’s an interesting bit of trivia concerning the early arrival of Easter: This year is the earliest Easter any of us ever will see. Only those age 95 or above have seen Easter this early. And none of us ever will see it a day earlier. The next time Easter will fall on March 23 will be the year 2228 — 220 years from now. The last time it was this early was 1913. The next time it will be a day earlier will be 2285 — 277 years from now. The last time it was on March 22 was 1818. So, no one alive today ever will see Easter any earlier than this year.

Blessing of the home

In some Christian communities, it is customary for families to hold a traditional blessing of eggs along with a blessing of the family table and Easter foods, and the Easter celebration concludes on Easter Sunday. According to “Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers,” the blessing of the home that follows can take place during the Easter season.

All who live in the house should be present, perhaps along with relatives, friends and neighbors. The leader may be a parish minister, the head of the household or other family member who blesses the festive meal with Easter water brought from the Easter Vigil or holy water.

After all make the sign of the cross, the leader begins: “God fills our hearts and homes with peace. Blessed be the name of the Lord!” All respond: “Now and for ever.”

The leader then uses words to introduce the blessing: “Christ, risen from the dead, is our hope, joy and comfort. May all who enter this house find Christ’s light and love.”

A Scripture passage from the family’s Bible is read, such as Luke 24:28-32 of John 20:19-21. The leader concludes: “The Gospel of the Lord.” All respond: “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”

Intercessions may be recited while going from room to room or around the outside of the house sprinkling with holy water. A separate prayer may be said at the front door, such as:

“O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need help and friendship. Make it narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife. Make its threshold strong enough to turn back the tempter’s power. God, make the door of this house the gateway to your eternal kingdom. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

The procession and intercessions can conclude with the Lord’s Prayer. Then the leader speaks the prayer of blessing: “Lord, we rejoice in the victory of your Son over death: by rising from the tomb to new life he gives us new hope and promise. Bless all the members of this household and surround them with your protection, that they may find comfort in Jesus Christ, the paschal Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says: “May Christ Jesus dwell with us, keep us from all harm, and make us one in mind and heart, now and for ever, Amen.”

The blessing can conclude with a song, such as “Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today,” or another “Alleluia” hymn. Absent from the liturgy throughout the Lenten season, the “Alleluia” returns as the Easter season begins. If you wish to see any “strings” attached. The “activities” of its uncle supposedly go “way over the head” of this innocent young man.

A new reality show “Moment of Truth,” 8 p.m., asks adult questions like “What is your most embarrassing secret?” and other items of such a personal nature thereby exposing the person’s innermost thoughts. The person earns money if he or she tells the truth no matter what the consequences may be to the marriage or family relations.

Children are probably watching these programs during these hours. Is it any wonder why our children are exploring their sexuality at such a young age? There are surely less controversial topics to explore on these programs. Children are being bombarded with images and thoughts way too mature for them to handle. Parents please watch what your children are watching. It may cause you a PG-13 rating on some of these programs assumes that parents are checking content. Are you?

M. A. Byanski  Fort Wayne

We have a choice

A friend of mine in Chad, Africa recently wrote, “A column of rebels, coming from the Darfur area 500 miles away, reached N’Djamena Saturday morning, Feb. 2. First we heard them coming, then we saw them in the streets of the capital city.” These words refer, of course, to rebels who attacked Chad’s capital, accusing President Idriss Deby of corruption and embezzlement.

The letter also contained news of Youssouf, a young man I’d met in Chad when I was mis导向 there. Youssouf had thought at one time about becoming a Comboni Missionary. He even entered the formation house to begin philosophical studies but discovered that God was calling him somewhere else, and he eventually moved from Mossala to N’Djamena. My friend met him Jan. 31 as he was bicycling home for lunch. They greeted each other, exchanged a couple of jokes, and after a good laugh, went their ways.

Later the same day the soldiers marched into the city, my friend answered a knock at his door to find Youssouf’s two brothers. They announced that Youssouf had been killed earlier in the day. A burst of gunfire from a fleeing car broke off his young life. Just like that, he was gone.

The rebels killed and wounded at will and were the cause of thousands being displaced. Can there be any reason to justify this? I don’t think so. War is never a solution to any kind of problem. A young life broken off is never a solution to a problem. Never will a burst of gunfire build peace, trust and welfare. Never, never, never.

I believe that talking to each other is the way to smooth our differences, to understand each other and to build a world where there is no war, no violence, no fear, just life, life for everybody and life in abundance.

Look at our own daily experiences. How many conflicts we face everyday within our own families. The way we use these words. These are fights, wars with coworkers. Conflict is natural, that’s true. It’s part of our daily lives as individuals, as communities, as countries. What makes the difference between war and peaceful resolution is not the absence of conflict, but the way we handle it.

Case in point: I remember a friend of mine who was the director of the Christian community in Koyo, a village of Mossalla parish in Chad. He was having difficulty deciding how to handle a betrayal by his best friend. The Christian community called me and asked me to mediate because it was painful for him to watch his friend struggle and try to sort out whether he should take revenge on his betrayer or not.

My words to him were of understanding. I shared my feelings with him, but at the same time, I called him to freedom, the freedom that only forgiveness can give. While we spoke, other voices came from the group urging my friend to take revenge on his enemy.

We meet several times, my encouraging him to go the way of peace and freedom for himself through forgiveness, others encouraging revenge through violence. It’s the same thing that happens to all of us, almost on a daily basis — in our families, at school, in the workplace, even in church communities. We all go through this internal struggle, and it’s not easy.

Resolving a problem without revenge, without retaliation, brings peace both to us and to those who cause our struggle. We help to preserve life rather than snuff it out as in the case of young Youssouf. I speak, not just of physical life, but also of mental, emotional, social and developmental life. We can kill a whole person or a part of a person when we attack.

Let’s try to keep a clear vision of my friend in Chad who, though he knew he could fight, called one who betrayed him, chose not to. And as a result, he was free to look at his best friend and to tell him, “I forgive you for the evil you did to me.”

If only all those who decide to settle conflict with war could go pay a visit to my friend in Koyo...

Happy Easter!

Father Peter Giuculli, MCCJ, is mission director of the North American Province of the Comboni Missionaries, a worldwide religious institute founded by St. Daniel Comboni to carry the Gospel to “the world’s poorest and most abandoned people.”

Today’s Catholic editorial board consists of Bishop John M. D’Arcy, Ann Carey, Don Cledmer, Father Mark Gurtner, Father Michael Heinzt, Tim Johnson and Vince LaBarbera.

Today’s Catholic welcomes letters from readers. All letters must be signed and include a phone number and address for verification.

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COMBONI MISSIONS
U.S. ambassador expects pope’s April visit to be thought-provoking

ROME (CNS) — The new U.S. ambassador to the Vatican said she expects Pope Benedict XVI’s upcoming visit to the United States to be a thought-provoking event for Catholics, non-Catholics and international representatives.

“Americans who listen carefully will discover in the pope a ‘world-class intellectual who can speak in terms that are simple and clear and readily accessible’,” Mary Ann Glendon said in an interview with Catholic News Service March 14.

The pope can be expected to touch on some particular social issues, but his deeper message will be about conscience-forming and the values that underpin life in the church and in society, she said.

Glendon spoke in her office at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, which overlooks the imperial ruins of the Palatine Hill and an ancient church today.

The ambassador took up her post in late February and hit the ground running. In addition to helping prepare for the papal visit, she is already preparing a series of four major human rights conferences and considering an embassy-sponsored program to help fund train Catholic health care workers.

Right now, the pope’s April 15-20 visit to Washington and New York looms as the biggest event on the embassy’s radar.

Glendon said the pope is going to the United States primarily as a pastor who “wants to speak to the deepest concerns of his flock.” She noted that the United States has one of the world’s largest Catholic populations — a fact that’s often overlooked.

She said the wide variety of events along the papal itinerary, from a meeting with Catholic educators in Washington to stop at ground zero in Manhattan, will allow him to “share in the joys and sorrows, grief and anxieties” of the faithful.

But the pope has always reached out to people of other faiths and people of no faith, so his visit will not have a resonance that goes beyond the Catholic Church, she said.

Glendon, a Harvard University professor for many years, said she’s been amazed at the pope’s smooth transition from scholar to universal pastor. On a wide range of faith and values issues, he is able to tailor his remarks to different audiences and make a connection, she said.

“Let me be quite clear. I think the kinds of things he says require close attention,” she said.

“He does not dumb down, and I think that’s his particular gift, that he is able to communicate very profound and complex ideas in accessible language,” she said.

Those who make the effort and listen carefully while he’s in the United States will be rewarded, she added.

The pope will be at the White House April 16 when President George W. Bush meets the pope.

LETTER, PAGE 16

John Thavis

THE VATICAN LETTER

Jesus triumphs over death

EASTER SUNDAY

JN 20:1-9

R ejoicing and exalting its great faith and hope for humanity, the church today celebrates Easter, the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord.

The church’s first celebration of the Lord’s victory over earthly death occurred on Holy Saturday, the Easter Vigil, when most parishes receive new members into the church. In this vigil liturgy, the symbols of fire, light and water magnificently reveal the mystery and the promise of the Resurrection of the Lord.

The readings cited here are read in the Mass on Easter Sunday. The first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. (Indeed readings from Acts will occur again and again during the Easter season.)

The readings are interesting; they give us insight into the life of the first Christians. Gathered in Jerusalem, around the apostles, and among them, they lived in charity, prayer and faith. Their lives are examples to us. Their reverence for the apostles, and obvious submission to the apostles, teach us even as we live in the structure of the church today.

Readings from Acts also tell us that we are not separated from the miracle of Jesus in the world. The apostles link us with the Lord. Led by Peter, they preached in the name of Christ. They cured the sick in the Lord’s name. They guided the people toward God, just as Jesus had guided people toward God.

Today’s reading recalls Peter’s preaching. (Notice that Peter speaks for all the apostles.) Scholars call this sermon “kerygmatic,” from the Greek word for message, kerygma. This reading, and the others, are found in giving the fundamental points of the Gospel. Jesus, God’s messenger, also was the Savior, crucified on Calvary. He is the source of eternal life.

Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians provides the second reading. This reading emphasizes that Christians, by baptism and by their faith, possess new life. They live because they are bonded with the living Christ. As Christ is in heaven, so the thoughts of Christians must be on heaven.

For its last reading, for its exciting and filled with parables about the Jerusalem church presents us to a passage from John’s Gospel. It is an account of the first Easter morning. Mary of Magdala went to the tomb, but she found it empty. So she rushed to inform Peter. (Again, in this book of the New Testament, quite separate from Acts, the importance of Peter is revealed.) Reaching Peter, she anxiously said that the Lord’s body had been taken away.

“The disciples whom Jesus loved,” traditionally thought to have been the Apostle John, even though the Gospel never identifies him as such, and Peter hurried to the tomb. The disciple arrived first, but he waited for Peter, another indication of Peter’s status. Peter entered the tomb, saw that it was empty, but evidently did not realize that Jesus had risen. The disciple, however, realized what had occurred. Implied is this disciple’s absolute love. It gives him perception.

Reflection

These readings have critical lessons for all people. The first is that Jesus is Lord. He triumphed over death, the most universal of human experiences aside from birth itself, and for all living things the end of earthly life.

Our earthly life has not ended, however. It endures. He lives. He lives in and through the church. Easter wonderfully reassures to us. Because of the church, the Lord touches us. We hear Jesus. We meet Jesus. We share in the Lord’s everlasting life.

All this is because the apostles formed the church, first given the strength and life of the Holy Spirit by Jesus. They guided it in their times and on earth, they provided for successors to guide it and nourish it after they died.

READINGS

SUNDAY:


Monday Acts 2:4, 23-23 Ps 16:1-2a, 5-7 11 Mt 28:18-15

Tuesday Acts 2:36-41 Ps 33:4-5, 18-20, 22 Jn 20:11-18


Thursday Acts 3:11-26 Ps 82ab, 5-9 Lk 24:35-48

Friday Acts 4:1-12 Ps 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a Jn 21:11-14

Saturday Acts 4:13-21 Ps 118:1, 14-15, 16-21 Mk 16:15-19

CATEQUIZ’EM

By Dominic Campbell

One might think that the message of Easter would serve to nullify disagreements among Christians, but from early times the actual timing of Easter caused controversy. This quiz looks at this time-consuming topic.

1. The first Easter coincided with this Jewish festival:
   a. Purim  b. Chanukah  c. Passover (Pesach)

2. How do we know?
   a. It is clear in all the Gospels and unvarying in tradition.
   b. Monks figured it out by working backwards and computing the dates.
   c. It is not provable, but logical and theologically convenient.

3. The two alternatives for when to observe the Pascha (later called Easter) are on:
   a. Option 1: The day proclaimed by the high priest, or option 2: The second Tuesday of the year
   b. Option 1: On a fixed day, the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, or option 2: the following Sunday
   c. Option 1: on the same day every year, or option 2: the emperor’s birthday.

4. The custom of following the Jewish practice is known as:
   a. Judapachismo  b. Chronomatism  c. Quartodecimanism

5. This question (4) practice was most common in Asia Minor. It claimed to have been approved by this evangelist:

6. And it was supported by: great church leaders, notably this martyr who tried to persuade the pope to follow suit:

7. Later, Pope Victor adopted a harder line and took this drastic action against Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, for following the Jewish custom:
   a. He communicated him.
   b. He had him burned as a heretic.
   c. He had him sent into exile.

8. Not surprisingly, this went over like a lead balloon and in fact some in Asia Minor formed their own church as a result. They subsequently:
   a. Vanished from history by the 5th century
   b. Became the proto-ancestors of the Orthodox, this controversy fueling anti-Roman sentiment
   c. Retained a separate existence, then chose mass conversion to Islam over reconciliation with Rome

9. For those groups that observed Easter on Sunday, two rather complex formulas were followed, each favored by a different patriarch. These were:
   a. Jerusalemite and Antiochene
   b. Roman and Jerusalemite
   c. Antiochene and Alexandrian

10. The Pope’s practice was selected at this great council which also promulgated the creed:

11. Predictably this, as with most church decisions, did not please everyone. Some became schismatic, with the appropriate name of:
   a. Anti-Niceneists  b. Protopapaschites  c. Antechentromatopians

12. Even for those in nominal agreement, variations and errors in calendars made the Easter date wander a bit. These missionaries brought a different way of calculating the date of Easter to northern pagan Britain, than the Roman missionaries arriving from the south:
   a. Irish monks  b. The Varangians of Constantinople  c. The Saxons, Angles, Jutes and other Germanic tribes

13. While these differences gradually vanished, the adoption of the Gregorian calendar of 1582 lead to:
   a. A new division, with Christians using varying dates for Easter
   b. A standardization which thenceforth held throughout the Christian world
   c. The recognition of the pope’s authority (even for Protestants) to set the date of Easter

14. The current status is that Easter in the Eastern Orthodox Church:
   a. Is always earlier than the Western (Catholic)
   b. Is always later than the Western (Catholic)
   c. Is sometimes on the same day, but often later than the Western (Catholic)

ANSWER:

1. c, 2, a, 3, b, 4, c, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9c, 10a, 11b, 12a, 13a, 14c.
The church exercises moral principle regarding positive duties

I have a related question to the one in this week’s (Feb. 24, 2008) Today’s Catholic about Sunday Mass times. How much are they allowed to vary; exactly how much is “told tail for school”; but my mother says that, in one of the local nursing homes or retirement communities here in South Bend, they actually have the Sunday morning Mass on Wednesday. Is that okay? Anonymous

Even if the priest uses the prayers in the Sacramentary and the readings in the Lectionary for a particular Sunday, when the Mass is offered on Sunday Mass is it celebrated on Sunday (or in anticipation on Saturday)? As I understand it, the Mass takes place after 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoon. It is not within any priest’s power (or bishop, for that matter), to effect such a change. However, the church exercises an ancient moral principle regarding positive duties: they admit of excuse due to impossibility. That is, if one is in a nursing home or hospitalized or is home-bound, he or she is not obligated to attend Mass on Sunday unless it was possible for them to do so. Put another way, the obligation is binding only to those physically able to fulfill it. Fortunately, in our diocese, we offer a televised Mass (celebrated live) each Sunday morning from both South Bend and South Wayne and South Bend, to accommodate those who cannot get to church.

Celebrating the paschal mystery

Easter is much more than new clothes, bunnies and baskets of candy. On Easter we celebrate the most important feast day of the church. At Easter we renew our faith and witness our commitment to the church. It is the climax of the triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil) and is so important that we celebrate it for seven weeks of the church year. Easter is the fulfillment of the paschal mystery, a mystery of death and rising of Jesus. This mystery is not a one-time historical event—this is the mystery of Christ, where we live this mystery throughout our lives.

We enter the paschal mystery at baptism. The one who baptizes reminds the recipient or his or her parents that he or she is baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus. This means that all baptized Christians share in his death and rising, not only when we physically die, but throughout our lives.

The paschal mystery assures us that the “pain and dyings” we experience in our everyday lives will someday culminate in resurrection. It is our Christian belief that God can and does give us our personal redemption. It is the paschal mystery that motivates us to practice daily good deeds and offers us the promise that one day we shall be reunited with our deceased loved ones. It is the paschal mystery that gives us the hope that some day our loved ones will be united with us in eternity.

Dr. Bronner’s Soap was created by a man who knew that we all do good things as well as evil things. In the Dr. Bronner’s Soap tag line it states, “There is no such thing as a bad deed, just not original to the source. Everything is a masterpiece, and the first deed can be settled by what we do next.” Dr. Bronner’s Soap was founded by a former Jehovah’s Witness who, after experiencing the paschal mystery, decided to sell soap rather than proselytize. It is a loving reminder to all of us that the God who created us chose to bring about our redemption in a different way than we expected. It is the paschal mystery that reminds us that God loves us.

I have also known people who gave their heart and soul to a company for many years. Someone who gave his heart and soul to a company in the Middle East, advancing interreligious dialogue and promoting human rights, especially religious freedom. All three goals fall under what the church has called the “Liturgy of the Poor.”

Does the church believe that people are possessed by Satan? Or has science taken over and the “possession” now considered a psychological disorder? Are there still exorcisms? Anonymous

The church still maintains that demonic possession is a real possibility, and there are documented accounts of genuine demonic possession. However, these are admitted rarely. In fact, all other natural explanations (including medical, psychiatric, and psychological causes) must be exhausted before the church will even entertain the possibility of opening an investigation into the genuineness of a claim of possession. Those who are overly fastidious may in fact be “obsessed” but not “possessed” by the demonic (the former is likely a psychological or psychiatric disorder and as such requires medical and therapeutic care). An exorcism may be performed only after an exhaustive investigation and only with the permission of the local bishop, who would appoint a venerable, holy and experienced priest as exorcist. To my knowledge, an exorcism and circumstances have never been performed in our diocese.

That’s a Good Question

Is giving the sign of peace optional in the liturgy? Some parishes don’t do it. What if I don’t necessarily want to shake someone’s hand, say if they have been sneezing through Mass? Anonymous

It is not optional in the Roman rite as currently celebrated (unless, of course, the Mass is said without a congregation). The rubric in the Missal reads simply: “Then all, according to local custom, offer a sign of peace and charity to one another.” Anonymous

Why isn’t the second part of the Our Father, “For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,” not included in the common Catholic recitation of the prayer, for example the rosary? Anonymous

The doxological phrase that customarily concludes the Lord’s Prayer in Protestant usage is found in some early Christian documents (e.g., the Didache, a catechetical work dating from around A.D. 110) and in a certain number of manuscripts, but not the earliest and most valuable witnesses to the text of Matthew 6:13 (the Gospel text from which our version of the prayer comes): it is likely that the doxology is a later addition (not a bad thing, just not original to the prayer as found in the Gospel according Matthew). It is found in Catholic worship, following what is called the “embodiment” of the Lord’s Prayer and the sign of peace: “Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day... For the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory are yours now and forever.” —Father Michael Heinzt, rector of St. Matthew Cathedral, answered this week’s questions.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

By Patrick Kasten

Gospel for March 23, 2008

John 20:1-9

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for Easter Sunday: John’s version of the first Easter morning and the disciples’ reactions. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

The First Day of Easter

Who said Jesus is the Lord? Mary Magdalene answered this early on Saturday morning, and at the first moment of the Sunday Mass the Lord’s words of answer were taken up by the Sangenians to create a First Easter Sunday: John’s version of the first Easter morning and the disciples’ reactions. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

The Cutting Edge

By Margie Layonis, CSC

Shrink driving. She started the non-profit Against Drunk Driving, which does a tremendous amount of good and hard work.

Our own founder, Father Basi Moreau, was misunderstood and suffered greatly at the hands of bishops and his own community members when he was trying to establish his religious congregation of Holy Cross. From this suffering came four religious congregations whose members serve around the world. Last year he was beatified in Le Mans, France, where Holy Cross began. Hundreds of members of the Holy Cross Family were there to rejoice. When we really reflect on life, all of us can think of situations where good came out of suffering. Even though we may not see God’s design when we are in the midst of suffering, our own or others, let us remember that God never leaves us in our pain. Like Jesus, God will raise us up.

Sister Margie Layonis, CSC, a former campus minister and vocation director, works for the Sisters of the Holy Cross communications department.

Continued from Page 15

Physicians have experienced the pain of being laid off or fired from jobs they really liked only to find one more fulfilling. I know someone who gave his heart and soul to a company for many years. He earned a lot of money for his wife and children, but never had much quality time with them. The owners sold the company and the new owners gave him his walking papers. He was crushed and went into a deep depression. Later he decided to go back to school, get his teaching license, and is now a very happy elementary school teacher. It was something he always wanted to do but did not go that route because of the poor pay.

We all have known people who have known the pain and dying of others. There are also people who, as a result of the death of loved ones, have taken upon themselves to care for others. They have taken up causes to create a better world. One example is the mother whose son died because of suffering.

There are many examples of this cycle of death and rising. I think back on a young student of mine at the University of Michigan who was hurt and nearly devastated over the untimely death of his fiancée. The world rose and set on him. She didn’t know how she would ever be able to live without him. Later on, when she got a “real” job, she met and fell in love with another young man who was everything that she would have wished she could ask for in a relationship. They are now happily married. As she reflects back on her life she always says that if her first relationship had not failed she would never have met Jim.

Other people have experienced the pain being laid off or fired from jobs they really liked only to find one more fulfilling. I know someone who gave his heart and soul to a company for many years. He earned a lot of money for his wife and children, but never had much quality time with them. The owners sold the company and the new owners gave him his walking papers. He was crushed and went into a deep depression. Later he decided to go back to school, get his teaching license, and is now a very happy elementary school teacher. It was something he always wanted to do but did not go that route because of the poor pay.

We all have known people who have known the pain and dying of others. There are also people who, as a result of the death of loved ones, have taken upon themselves to care for others. They have taken up causes to create a better world. One example is the mother whose son died because of suffering.

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The Church exercises moral principle regarding positive duties
Cheerleaders ‘go, fight, win’

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — Nearly 20 years ago, a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) cheerleading competition was started and the tradition continued yet another year at the 2008 Bishop Dwenger Grade School Competition held at Bishop Dwenger High School on March 12.

Showcasing squads’ abilities and hard work, the entire cheer season, the competition is open to any team in the diocese from grades 4 through 8. Several CYO teams participated in this year’s high-flying event. Head Bishop Dwenger cheer coach and English teacher Amy Gonzagowski coordinated the competition, lined up the judges, mats and trophies. She also handled the registration and helped to make each of the 16 teams feel comfortable.

Gonzagowski explains, “It is a great chance for the girls to exhibit their talent and skills. It lets them compete much like the teams they cheer for.”

Judges this year included University of Saint Francis Coach Nicole Henline, Coach Theresa Sistrunk from Norwell High School, Ossian, and Vicki Kuker, who retired as head coach at Bishop Dwenger after 35 years.

In this fast-growing sport, the young athletes are judged on creativity, perfection of skills, stunts, pyramids, tumbling, jumps, voices and facial expressions during the competition’s open format.

Cheerleading is very demanding at both the physical and emotional levels. Gonzagowski details, “The girls are expected to look like they are having the time of their lives even if they are sick or hurt.”

She said a young lady from St. John, New Haven, lived out the ideal example of this at the 2008 show by giving a perfect performance despite becoming ill moments before her team’s turn. “She told me, ‘I’m ready to go. I will compete.’ The tough, little cheerleader showed a lot of guts,” she said.

Three fourth-grade teams competed this year and received participation awards. They represented Precious Blood, St. Charles and St. Vincent. Former Bishop Dwenger and Purdue University cheerleader Jeremy Elder served as one of the coaches for the Queen of Angels squad. Both he and Coach Mary Harkenrider are Queen of Angels alumni. Their girls finished in first place in the medium varsity division.

“One cool thing about our team is that the girls are very well-rounded. Many of them are also active in their own sports, the school play, choir and Student Council. Their main focus at the competition was not winning, but representing Queen of Angels well,“ summarized Elder.

The grand champion selected by the judges as the overall best performance of the evening was the Cardinals squad from St. Charles varsity. The list of complete results is as follows:

• Fifth-grade division — No. 1 Queen of Angels; No. 2 St. Monica-St. Jude.
• Sixth-grade division — No. 1 St. Vincent; No. 2 St. Charles; No. 3 St. Jude.
• Large Varsity — No. 1 Precious Blood.
• Medium Varsity — No. 1 Queen of Angels; No. 2 St. John, New Haven.
• Large Varsity — No. 1, St. Charles; No. 2, St. Vincent; No. 3 St. Joseph/Elizabeth; No. 4 St. John, Fort Wayne.

Girls basketball crowns champions

SOUTH BEND — The girls basketball season in the Inter-City Catholic League (ICCL) wound up with the crowning of both division and post-season tournament champions, and at the same time, the girls enjoyed their best season to date in both competition and attendance.

In the A Division, Corpus Christi won the title with a 37-24 victory over the St. Monica-St. Jude combination, leading from start to finish.

The B Division tournament title went to St. John Paul II. The Cardinals defeated Mishawaka, who edged Christ the King, 29-26, in a nailbiting finish.

At the end of the regular season, Holy Family, Corpus Christi and St. Matthew finished in a three-way tie for first place in the St. Monica-St. Jude category. The game was won in a deadlock for first place.

St. Joseph Gold of South Bend won the Martin De Porres East, and St. Joseph of Mishawaka won the title.

LUERS BASKETBALL TAKES A SHOT FOR A STATE TITLE

The Bishop Luers High School boys basketball team will vie for a Class 2-A state title on Saturday, March 22, at 12:30 p.m. as they play Winchester at Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. The Knights beat Westview, 83-70, on March 13 to take the Class 2A Warsaw Semistate championship.

This is the school’s first time to vie for a state title in basketball. The game will air live on Redeemer Radio — Catholic Radio 1450 AM.

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NEW YORK (CNS) — “A person's a person, no matter how small!” So runs the motto of the title character in “Dr. Seuss’ Horton Hears a Who” (20th Century Fox), an enchanting computer-generated animated adaptation of Theodore Geisel’s classic 1954 children’s book.

The story is a familiar one: Enjoying his jungle bath one day, the warmhearted elephant (voice of Jim Carrey) hears faint noises coming from a speck of dust. What he’s discovered, thanks to his outsized ears, is the existence of Who-ville, a microscopic but fully developed community which he gladly undertakes to protect.

Working with the tiny town’s slightly eccentric mayor (Steve Carell), Horton comes up with a plan to transport Who-ville to the safety of a far-off mountain peak. Even as he sets out on what will prove a perilous journey, Horton faces the mounting opposition of his closed-minded fellow animals, led by the naysaying busybody Kangaroo (Carol Burnett).

The script, performances and animation all match the high quality of the movie’s source material. From the moment, early on, when Horton manipulates his rubbery ears to eavesdrop on a conversation between a microscopic Who and his grandmother and temporary guardian, Benita (Angelina Jolie), he gladly undertakes to protect.

What he’s discovered, thanks to his outsized ears, is the existence of Who-ville, a microscopic but fully developed community which he gladly undertakes to protect.

“Under the Same Moon” (Fox Searchlight/Weinstein), a film that movingly dramatizes the real-life ordeal of millions of children left behind by their migrant parents. The story is a familiar one: Young Carlos Reyes (Adrian Alonso), nicknamed Carlitos, lives in northern Mexico with his tough, go-it-alone farm laborer father has special resonance.

The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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

DEVOTIONS
First Saturday devotion
Saturday, April 5, devotions will be held at the following locations: St. Joseph, Fort Wayne, 7:15 a.m.; St. Rose, Monroeville, 8:10 a.m.; St. John, New Haven, 6:55 a.m.; St. Charles, Fort Wayne, 8 a.m.; Sacred Heart, Fort Wayne, 7:30 a.m.; St. Patrick, Arcola, 7:15 a.m. Call (260) 749-9396 to have your listing added.

MISC. HAPPENINGS
Day of reflection
Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be offered at St. Francis Convent on Wednesday, March 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “II Grain Could Talk.” Please bring your Bible. The cost is $15 and includes lunch. Please register by Friday, March 21, to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at (574) 259-5427.

Singles conference announced
Chicago — A National Catholic Singles Conference will be held April 25-27, in Chicago, Ill. National speakers on the single life will be featured. Register at www.NationalCatholicSingles.com or call (260) 623-3447 for information.

Garage sale offers great deals
Fort Wayne — The St. Vincent de Paul HASA will have a garage sale Friday, April 4, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday, April 5, a $3 bag sale from 8 a.m. to noon at the parish hall.

Rummage sale
New Haven — A rummage sale will be Friday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 19, from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Louis Besancon Parish hall, 15529 Lincoln Hwy East. Bag sale on Saturday for $2.

Wine tasting event planned
Fort Wayne — St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Parish will host a wine tasting event Saturday, April 19, from 7:30-10:30 p.m. in the Msgr. Contant Center, 11521 S. U.S. Hwy 27. Tickets are $25 per person or $45 per couple. Advance ticket sales only by calling (260) 639-3259.

Soup and salad luncheon
South Bend — The Knights of Columbus #553 ladies soup and salad luncheon will be Monday, March 31, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 553 E. Washington St. Tickets are $5 per person and includes beverage. Carry-outs available.

Card party and salad bar
New Carlisle — St. Stanislaus Kostka will have a card party and salad bar Sunday, March 30, at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are $5 each in advance by calling Louise at (574) 654-3364 or Nancy at (574) 289-2986. All proceeds will purchase church linens, candles, etc.

ROUND UP
Fort Wayne — St. Therese Catholic School’s preschool and kindergarten round-up will be Wednesday, April 16, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. All students of ages 3-5 by Sept. 1 are invited to attend. Call (260) 747-2343 for details.

Registration announced
Monroeville — St. Joseph School is now accepting registrations for the 2008-09 school year. Call (260) 623-3447 for information.

SCHOOL REGISTRATIONS
Round-up time
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A priest’s adventure in Mongolia

BY FATHER TOM SHOEMAKER

Father Tom Shoemaker, pastor of St. Jude Parish, Fort Wayne, traveled to Mongolia, Nov. 15-25, 2007, as part of a larger trip that also included Japan, China and Tibet. During his time in Mongolia, Father Shoemaker gained perspective into another religion, a vastly different culture and the art of falconry.

I love nothing better than a good adventure. After inheriting some money this year — and tithing on that inheritance, of course — I contacted an old seminary friend who is now a priest in Minnesota. We began plans for a travel adventure. We spent a lot of time with an atlas and tour books, proposing various ideas for our destination.

Before becoming a priest, my friend studied birds. It is an interest he still nurtures. Today, he watches and studies birds, and he raises many kinds of birds in his rectory and in the rectory yard. He also is licensed in falconry — he captures hawks, trains them and uses them for hunting.

In our reading, we found an area in the mountains of western Mongolia where nomadic people capture eagles, train them for falconry and then hunt on horseback. The bird spends most of her time in the mountains. During most of the year, the family members suspended him on a rope over a cliff. He trained the eagle for hunting and treats her with great respect, feeding her by hand and bringing her indoors when the weather is bad.

Father Shoemaker with the golden eagle owned by Teekay, head of the family. The eagle hunter would dismount, sit on a cliff and remove the hood from the eagle, allowing her to scan the terrain for anything moving. It was a majestic sight to see the eagle soar when it spotted a fox and chose the running animal.

Even more impressive was the sight of this large bird flying back to land on the arm of the eagle hunter. The bird’s reward was a bit of raw meat.

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Father Shoemaker

“Finally, it was a lesson in enjoying diversity.”

Father Tom Shoemaker

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Novena Divine Mercy Chaplet
Good Friday to Mercy Sunday
3 PM in St. Jude Church
FORT WAYNE
Starts Good Friday, March 21

Eighth Worldwide Mercy Sunday
March 30, 2008
Divine Mercy Sunday Devotion
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
(Reconciliation during these two hours or anytime during Lent)
3:00 PM: Divine Mercy Chaplet
• Procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
• Homily - Father Jason Freiburger
Presider: Father Thomas Shoemaker
St. Jude Church - Randallia Dr., at E. State Blvd., Fort Wayne
www.stjudefw.org/adoration

Father Tom with the golden eagle owned by Teekay, head of the family he lived with for a week in western Mongolia. The adventurous vacation included living in a one-room hut with the nomadic Muslim family and hunting with the eagle.

Divine Mercy devotions found across diocese

BY DIANE FREETY

Mercy Sunday is celebrated at many parishes throughout the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The novena, which consists of praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet, begins on Good Friday and concludes the Sunday after Easter (March 30).

At Corpus Christi Parish in South Bend, like at many parishes throughout the diocese (also see advertisements throughout this week’s newspaper), parishioners are invited to the chapel at 3 p.m., just after Good Friday services conclude in the main church. The novena will again be prayed in the chapel Saturday at 3 p.m., Easter Sunday at 7 p.m., the following Monday through Friday at 7 p.m., and again Saturday at 3 p.m. Readers are encouraged to check with their local parishes for times.

“With all love for everyone to come pray the chaplet with us,” said area organizer Debby Blum. “But don’t be discouraged if you can’t make it every day.

The novena can be prayed anywhere.”

For Blum, spreading devotion to the Divine Mercy really began 11 years ago as her father lay dying.

“I prayed the Divine Mercy chaplet over my dad,” recalled Blum. “I told him I was praying for Jesus and Mary to be with him. He looked at me and said, ‘It’s okay, they’re here!’ It was such a consolation for all of us to know Jesus was there when my dad passed away, and that the Blessed Mother ... whom my dad, a non-Catholic, never had a devotion ... was there for him.”

Holy Family Church on South Bend’s west side will be the site for Mercy Sunday Mass. Five priests will be on hand for confessions, which begin at 1:30 p.m. and continue up until the 3 p.m. Mass. From 2 to 2:30 p.m. there will be eucharistic adoration.

At Corpus Christi Parish, the Divine Mercy chaplet will begin, with a meditation led by Dr. Linda and Jim Ciesielski of St. Adalbert Parish.

“We’re really excited this year to have the Catholic youth participate in Mercy Sunday,” said Blum. “The group from Holy Family, St. John the Baptist and Corpus Christi will be involved as altar servers and by bringing up the image of mercy.”

Mass will be celebrated by Holy Cross Father Paul Doyle from Notre Dame. He will be joined by six other priests from area parishes, including Holy Family Pastor Father Bernard Galic. Father Galic has encouraged devotion to Divine Mercy in his parish since the feast was introduced.

“This is a feast that every Christian can identify with. Unlike some feasts that attract some folks to one devotion, others to another, Mercy Day calls us all. This is because all of us are sinners. All of us are in need of God’s mercy,” said Father Galic.

He explained the significance of Mercy Sunday coming the week after Easter, reminding us of the “inestimable value of each one of us has in God’s eyes, that he would save us from our sins at the price of his Son’s death on the cross. And it is a reminder to us at the same time of the glorious eternity awaiting all who accept mercy and forgiveness, because he is the firstborn from the dead. Where he has gone we are to follow, thanks to his merciful love.”

According to organizers, most parishes of the diocese are participating in the Divine Mercy novena, and there should be details available at the churches.