Pope brings message of hope

NEW YORK (CNS) — On his first trip to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI achieved three objectives that could be considered critical to the pastoral future of the American church.

First, the pope brought a certain closure to the priestly sex abuse scandal that has shaken the church for more than six years, expressing his personal shame at what happened and praying with the victims.

Second, he set forth a moral challenge to the wider U.S. culture on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion, but without coming across as doctrinaire or bullying.

Third, to a church that often seems divided into conservative and liberal camps, he issued a firm appeal to “set aside all anger” and unite in order to effectively evangelize society.

In the process of his April 15-20 visit, the 81-year-old pope established his own identity in a country that did not know him well and in a sense came out of the shadow of the late Pope John Paul II.

“I feel like I know him a lot better. I learned that he is trying all his best to reach out to the youth,” 18-year-old Gabriella Fiorentino of Yonkers, N.Y., said at a youth rally April 19.

Did she understand what the pope, a scholarly theologian, was trying to get across?

“Jesus’ message of hope — that is his message,” she said.

The pope addressed clerical sex abuse on five different occasions, beginning with his encounter with reporters aboard his plane from Rome. He spoke from the heart about the shame, the damage to the church.

NEW YORK (CNS) — Children who make their first holy Communion this spring have St. Pius X to thank for drastically reducing the age requirement for receiving the Eucharist.

This statue can be seen at the Cathedral Museum at 915 S. Clinton St. in Fort Wayne.
The ‘Professor Pope’ gives us much to consider in weeks ahead

A meeting with bishops

Today’s Catholic gives us much to consider in weeks ahead.

BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

The important thing

At the request of our editor, Tim Johnson, I will make two presentations today. The first, in my regular column, is to share with you as much as possible the atmosphere of the apostolic visit of Pope Benedict XVI to our nation’s capital. Elsewhere in these pages, I will try to single out, as best I can, some of the central themes of his presentations. That is the important thing. What did the successor of Peter say, and why did he say it? I have profited from the writings of Joseph Ratzinger for decades. As I said before, he was part of what was once called “kneeling theology,” that theology which brings us to adoration and praise. But more of that in another place nearby.

The White House

I was up at 5 a.m. on Tuesday and off to Washington on an early flight and found a city buzzing with anticipation. For us bishops, it all began the following day, Wednesday. We conceded Mass in our hotel at 7 a.m. and then were off by bus to the White House. I think that for any American, a trip to the White House is always a special event. We went in our cassocks and the various security agencies became quite pleased with this week on, insisting that we wear the cassocks at various events because it made identification easy. How many pass through the White House wearing a cassock with a cross and a red sash? I was up at 5 a.m. on Tuesday and off to Washington on an early flight and found a city buzzing with anticipation. For us bishops, it all began the following day, Wednesday. We conceded Mass in our hotel at 7 a.m. and then were off by bus to the White House. I think that for any American, a trip to the White House is always a special event. 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Pope calls sex abuse scandal ‘countersign’ to Gospel of life

WASHINGTON (CNS) — One of the “countersigns to the Gospel of life” in the United States is the sexual abuse of minors, a situation that “causes deep shame,” Pope Benedict XVI told 800 U.S. bishops gathered April 16 in the crypt church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

He called it an “evil” and said the U.S. bishops have “rightfully” spoken out against it. The programs they have put in place to discipline priests and other church personnel who are abusers, to create safe environments protecting young people, to foster healing and to “bind up the bruises” of “every breach of trust” are bearing fruit, he said.

But the pope also said the problem of sexual abuse must be placed in a wider context when pornography, violence and “the crude manipulation of sexuality” are so prevalent in society today.

The pope arrived at the shrine in his popemobile, smiling and waving to the enthusiastic crowd that lined the adjacent streets and the front of the basilica. He looked relaxed and in good form on the second day of his April 15-20 visit, which will also take him to New York.

Inside the indoor church, which was staffed by the pope’s own people, the Washington Archbishop and the bishops’ conference and their families, who sang “Happy Birthday” to him. He prayed silently in both the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and then at the Oratory of Our Lady of Atoiling, the patroness of Bavaria, in his German homeland.

Next came the vesper service with the U.S. bishops and the “pope address” to them in the crypt church. Bishops wearing their black cassocks and zucchetos filed into the church, where arches and vaulted ceilings provided dramatic catacombs in Rome where the first Christians worshipped.

After the evening prayer service, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a talk that the bishops greeted the pope not as a foreign visitor but as “a father and a friend in Christ.”

Cardinal George briefly traced the history of the church in the United States, including some times of trouble.

“In our own day, the consequences of the dreadful sin of sexual abuse of minors by some priests and of its somber aftermath being very badly handled by bishops make both the personal faith of some of our brothers and the public life of the church herself more problematic,” the cardinal said.

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WASHINGTON (CNS) — Celebrating Mass in a Washington baseball stadium, Pope Benedict XVI urged U.S. Catholics to renew their missionary energy at a time when American society is at a moral crossroads.

The pope warned of “signs of a disturbing breakdown in the very foundations of society” and said people need the church’s message of hope and fidelity to the demands of the Gospel.

He also confronted the question of clerical sexual abuse of minors, acknowledging the damage done to the church and asking all Catholics to help assist those who have been hurt.

The Mass April 17 at a packed Nationals Park was the pope’s first major encounter with the Catholic faithful on his six-day visit to Washington and New York.

The liturgy, celebrated on an altar placed in deep center field, was a Mass of the Holy Spirit and featured multiethnic choirs singing in four languages.

The prayer of the faithful was read in English, Tagalog, Korean, Vietnamese and Spanish. It included petitions to Pope Benedict and all bishops, for peace in the world, for the safety of those who seek to achieve peace, for children everywhere, for those who suffer, for those who are ill, and for all who have died.

The assembled responded to each Mass and for all who have died. The assembly represented to those who laugh at Pope Benedict and all bishops, for peace in the world, for the safety of those who seek to achieve peace, for children everywhere, for those who suffer, for those who are ill, and for all who have died.

During the offertory procession, four groups of gift-bearers approached the altar with bread and censers. One group, from Medley's Neck, Md., included four generations from one family. Students from college campus ministries and area high schools, men and women religious, and

The pope smiled, waved and looked delighted at the panorama of faces and fluttering yellow flags, as the choirs sang English and German versions of “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name.”

Anne Murphy, a member of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Alexandria, Va., remarked on the “spirit of togetherness” the pope’s presence had brought.

“When I think of the sorts of things that people throughout the country to witness the kind of spiritual power that (Pope) Benedict brings to the world,” she said.

“It’s the kind of thing that makes you proud to be a member of the Catholic community and to be here today,” she said.

After the pope processed to the altar, he was welcomed by Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, who told him U.S. Catholics looked to him for “renewed inspiration to continue the challenge to make all things new in Christ our hope.”

The pope, dressed in red vestments, opened his arms wide in appreciation.

In his homily, the pope said he had come to encourage the church in America to build on its accomplishments and respond to new challenges through an “unceasing missionary outreach.”

He invoked a new chapter of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, saying U.S. Catholics need to give their contemporaries “a convincing account of the hope which inspires them.”

“The world needs this witness. Who can deny that the present moment is a crossroads, not only for the church in America but also for society as a whole?” he said.

The pope said that it was “a positive thing that global connections were drawing people together today.

“Yet at the same time we see clear signs of a disturbing break- down in the very foundations of society: signs of alienation, anger and polarization on the part of many of our contemporaries; increased violence; a weakening of the moral sense; a coarsening of social relations; and a growing for- getfulness of God,” he said.

This crossroads is also reflected inside the church, he said. He cited the vitality of movements and parish life and increased interest in prayer and Catholic education.

Yet the church faces the “troubling realization that many of its members, ‘rather than acting as a spiritual leaven in the world, are inclined to be a corrupting force, adverse to the truth of the Gospel.’”

Today’s challenges require sound instruction in the faith, especially among the young, he said. But they also call for “cultivating a mindset, an intellectual culture, which is genuinely Catholic” and can broad.

As he was leaving the Mass, Pope Benedict stood on the steps of the first base for one last wave before proceeding into the tunnel under the stands.

WASHINGTON — Among the over 45,000 enthusiastic people who crowded at Nationals Park in Washington April 17 to celebrate a Mass of the Holy Spirit with Pope Benedict XVI on Thursday, April 17, were two priests from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Father Glenn Kohrman, pastor of St. Mary of the Lake in Culver, Holy Cross Father Neil Wack, pastor of Christ the King Parish in South Bend, and Father Jim Shafer, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne, were all impressed by the warmth and reverence shown by the crowd as they received the pope.

Father Kohrman reports on the outstanding reception for the pope saying, “President Bush went the extra mile. It shows respect for the pope.”

The Mass, he adds, “was very prayerful,” with the pope’s homily reflecting a deep appreciation and respect for human dignity and religious liberty. His hope after hearing the pope’s message is that the visit inspires many Catholics to read, reflect and study the rich documents written by the pope.

Father Wack found that the pontiff’s homily was spoken in easy to understand language. The message, he said, “reminded me to keep coming back to the basics: Jesus Christ. It reminded me of our roots ... and the multi-cultural nature of the people. It was a message of reconciliation and hope.”

And the event was an affirmation of faith for Father Wack as he celebrated the fourth anniversary of his own ordination to the priesthood that day.

Father Shafer was inspired by the pope’s challenge to be witnesses of hope to the world, which he believes will require Catholics to become more informed in the faith. A touching moment for the Fort Wayne priest during the homily was when, in a gentle and compassionate tone, the pope apologized for the clergy sex abuse scandal.

“There was absolute silence in the stadium. You could feel the presence of the spirit. It was a moment of great healing,” he said, adding that he had “a great sense of Peter was in our midst,” as he listened to the pope.

The three diocesan shepherds were captured by the sense of universality of the church, in the various languages and cultures represented at the Mass.

“We are all expected to be witnesses of Jesus Christ in one country,” said Father Shafer, before Father Wack added enthusiastically, “The sense of being universal is important to us, important for others to see. It’s about more than your personal address. It was a great moment of healing,” he said, adding that he had “a great sense of Peter was in our midst,” as he listened to the pope.

And the event gave one a deeper appreciation of how far reaching the Catholic Church really is,” concluded Father Kohrman.

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Pope, Bush discuss fighting terrorism while respecting human rights

BY JOHN THAVIS

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In a meeting at the White House, Pope Benedict XVI and President George W. Bush discussed the problem of terrorism and how to confront it while respecting human rights.

The two leaders also expressed their joint concern for the protection of human life, marriage and the family, according to a statement issued after a private meeting April 16.

“The two reaffirmed their total rejection of terrorism as well as the manipulation of religion to justify immoral and violent acts against innocents,” the statement said.

“They further touched on the need to confront terrorism with appropriate means that respect the human person and his or her rights,” it said.

The encounter was the pope’s first official event of his April 15-20 visit to the United States, and it began with a public welcoming ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, attended by thousands of well-wishers.

In his remarks, the pope said it was important to preserve the traditional role of religion in American political and social life.

Religious values helped forge “the soul of the nation” and should be maintained, he said.

“Preserving freedom calls for virtue, self-discipline, a sense of sacrifice for the common good and responsibility for the less fortunate,” he said.

“It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring to one’s deepest belief and values to reasoned public debate,” he said.

Freedom has a deep connection to truth, the pope said. Quoting Pope John Paul II, he said the late pope had “reminded us that history shows, time and again, that ‘in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation,’ and a democracy without values can lose its very foundation,’ and a democracy without values can lose its very foundation,” the statement said.

The pope then spoke about freedom in the U.S. tradition, saying “Americans have always understood freedom as not just a gift but as a summons to responsibility.”

Bush greeted the pope with the Latin phrase “Pax tecum” (“Peace be with you”), and he smiled and beamed as the crowd sang an impromptu “Happy Birthday.” The pope beamed as the crowd sang an impromptu “Happy Birthday.”

The pope then spoke about freedom in the U.S. tradition, saying “Americans have always understood freedom as not just a gift but as a summons to responsibility.”

Bush picked up several of the pope’s favorite themes, denouncing “a dictatorship of relativism” that threatens traditional values.

The pope did not mention terrorism, but the president referred to it, saying: “In a world where some evoke the name of God to justify acts of terror and murder and hate, we need your message that God is love.”

After the public ceremony, the two leaders walked into the Oval Office for private talks that lasted about 20 minutes.

A joint U.S.-Vatican statement issued after the meeting said the two leaders had discussed a long list of moral and religious considerations to which both parties are committed, including the respect and dignity of the human person; the defense and promotion of life, maternity and the family; the education of future generations; human rights and religious freedom; sustainable development and the struggle against poverty and pandemics, especially in Africa.

The pope welcomed the substantial U.S. financial contributions toward fighting poverty and disease, the statement said.

While the pope and president had devoted considerable time to the Middle East, in particular “restoring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with the vision of two states living side-by-side in peace and security,” they also discussed a growing Vatican concern for the “precarious state” of the Christian community in Iraq, where “Christians have been targeted in attacks.”

The two leaders expressed support for the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon and called for a “prompt and comprehensive solution to the crises which afflict the region.”

The statement said another issue on their private agenda was the need for a coordinated policy regarding immigration, especially the humane treatment of immigrants and the well being of their families.
BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In an address to U.S. Catholic educators April 17, Pope Benedict XVI thanked them for their work and urged them to continue to bring their students to a deeper understanding of faith “which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.”

“A particular responsibility ... for each of you, and your colleagues, is to evoke among the young the desire for the act of faith, encouraging them to commit themselves to the ecclesial life that follows from this belief,” he told more than 400 Catholic college presidents and diocesan education representatives at The Catholic University of America.

The pope was cheered by several hundred students who gathered on the lawn of the campus, and he was warmly applauded when he entered the Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center. Wearying of the address many had speculated that the pope might have harsh words of reprimand for college leaders, but instead he spoke warmly to the group, calling them “bearers of wisdom” and telling them of selfless contributions and dedication.

He made one specific reference to Catholic college presidents, near the end of his address, telling them he wished to “reaffirm the very high level of academic freedom.” He also noted that any appeal to academic freedom “to justify positions that contradict the faith and teaching of the church would obstruct or even betray the university’s identity and mission.”

The group of educators in the university’s hall came across as a big group of friends genuinely glad to see each other while socializing before and after the address. When the talk was over, they seemed to collectively feel as though the group had been given a pat on the back by the leader of the church whom many described as “a colleague.”

“It was everything I could have hoped for and more,” said Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity University in Washington. Similarly, Cynthia Zane, president of Hilbert College in Hamburg, N.Y., called the pope’s address “very affirming of the work we’re doing ... and of how we can make a difference.”

The educators not only appreciated the acknowledgment of their work but they were heartened to hear the pope’s challenge to religious sisters, priests and brothers, “not to abandon the school apostolate” and to “renew their commitment to schools, especially those in poorer areas,” which drew strong applause.

“I know from my own days as a professor, and I have heard from your bishops and officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education, that the reputation of Catholic institutes of learning in this country is largely due to yourselves and your predecessors,” he said.

That is not to say the pope didn’t challenge the group representing kindergarten through college graduate students. Several times during the half-hour address he urged them to live up to their responsibility of imparting truth to their students to

Local educators appreciate intimate setting with pope

BY ANN CAREY

SOUTH BEND — Three of the diocese’s five college presidents and the diocesan superintendent of schools attended Pope Benedict’s talk to educators, and all of them came away energized and encouraged by the experience.

Carol Mooney, president of Saint Mary’s College said that when the pope entered the room, “It was just electric.”

She noted that the room was not large — only nine rows of seats — so the educators were very close to the Holy Father, closer, she said, than to most lecturers on campus. This sense of intimacy no doubt added to the impression Mooney had that the pope, a former university professor himself, was speaking colleague-to-colleague.

Mooney described the pope’s talk as “very pastoral, very encouraging, very eloquent, very uplifting.”

Benedict is “a quiet speaker,” Mooney related, and at times it was difficult to understand what he was saying. However, when the pope called upon the sisters, brothers and priests in the audience not to abandon their educational ministry, especially in places that serve the poor, everyone understood that, and “The place just erupted with applause,” Mooney related.

Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, said the pope’s talk left the educators with “a very buoyant feeling.” It may not have been obvious to television watchers, he said, but those present felt “the warmth of the pope,” who smiled frequently and seemed to be enjoying himself.

“When he expressed gratitude,” Father Jenkins said, “there was a genuineness to it.”

Father Jenkins reported that Pope Benedict didn’t focus on specifics, but rather spoke at a “high level” about “the harmony of faith and reason.” However, the Holy Father seemed worried about challenges to society like secularization and moral relativism that denies any objective truth, he noted.

“It is the deep role of Catholic institutions to be a beacon to proclaim the truth and the objectivity to moral claims,” Father Jenkins said. “That was the thrust of his speech, and it’s our role to uphold those at Catholic institutions.”

Ancilla College President Ronald May said that it was “spiritually moving” to be with the pope. May said that he had been present for speeches by Presidents Reagan and Clinton, but “Pope Benedict brought a moral presence to the occasion that political leaders cannot offer.”

May said that the pope’s message was affirming, in that it was “strongly supportive” of the mission of Ancilla College. The message also was encouraging because the pope made clear that he understood the commitment that Catholic educators make to serve students in their spiritual journeys. And it was challenging “because Pope Benedict challenged us to redouble our efforts to instruct our students in the way of Jesus Christ and the church,” May said. “We must do this in order to continue to transform individual lives in order to transform our world.”

Holy Cross Brother Richard Gilman, president of Holy Cross College, and Franciscan Sister M. Elise Kras, president of the University of St. Francis, were unable to attend the pope’s address.
POPE PRAYS AT GROUND ZERO IN NEW YORK

Pope Benedict XVI prays at ground zero in New York April 20. The pope spoke with family members of some of the victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks and with those who were first responders to the disaster.

HOPE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and the suffering of the victims. He also spoke with familiarity about the church’s efforts to make sure perpetrators are out of min-
istry and to implement better screening of would-be priests. At one point, he mentioned that when he read the case histories of the victims, he found it hard to imagine how a priest could betray his mission to be an agent of God’s love.

These were far more detailed and direct comments on the issue than were ever made by Pope John Paul, and there was a reason: As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict headed the doctrinal con-
gregation, which took over the handling of sex abuse cases in 2001.

What Cardinal Ratzinger saw in those files led him to denounce, in early 2005, the “fifth” inside the church — even among its own priests.

The pope’s unscheduled meet-
ing with five sex abuse victims was a moving and tearful encounter. It seemed to mark an emotional turning point for several of those who participated and per-
haps indirectly to others among the thousands of victims in the United States.

Overall, the pope left the strong impression among Americans that, on the sex abuse issue, he “gets it.”

Attack on secularism

The pope’s broader issue in the United States was what he called the “attack of a new secularism” that threatens to undermine tradi-
tional moral values and the voice of religion in public affairs.

He articulated this challenge on several occasions, most notably telling 45,000 people at a Washington Mass that American society is at a moral crossroads. “We see clear signs of a disturbing breakdown in the very foundations of society: signs of alienation, anger and polarization on the part of many of our contemporaries; increased violence; a weakening of the moral sense; a coarsening of social relations; and a growing forgetfulness of God,” he said.

What was striking about the pope’s approach was that it was framed in a very positive context. Over and over, he praised the United States for blending a secu-
lar form of government with a moral order based on “the domin-
ion of God the Creator.”

He quoted George Washington, who called religion and morality the “indispensable supports” of political prosperity, and cited Franklin Roosevelt’s statement that “no greater thing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of faith.”

The pope warned, however, that today this secular moral balance risks tipping toward a godless, individualist form of freedom. He made his argument more relevant by linking it to a popular contem-
porary issue: environmental degra-
dation.

“The earth itself groans under the weight of consumerism greed and irresponsibility,” he told young people. In the pope’s view, ecology is part of an ethic of respect for creation and the creator.

New springtime for the church

When it came to the church and its sometimes divided membership, the pope had an equally encourag-
ing approach. Time and again, he praised the vitality of parish life and movements that noted U.S. Catholics’ continuing contribution to the life of the country.

He said he was convinced that God was preparing a “new spring-
time” for the church in the United States.

The pope looked honestly at shortcomings, too, lamenting that some Catholics are not in line with church teaching, even on the issue of abortion. But his solution, expressed to bishops, was a long-
term program of religious educa-
tion, not a set of short-term march-
ing orders or penalties.

In a comment aimed at people inside and outside the church, he said the faith is more than a set of rules and suggested that more attention should be given to exter-
nal challenges.

“Perhaps we have lost sight of this: In a society where the church seems legalistic and ‘institutional’ to many people, our most urgent challenge is to communicate the joy born of faith and the experi-
ence of God’s love,” he said.

One of his strongest themes was church unity. At a Mass in St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York, he expressed disappointment with the formation of divisions within the church between Catholic
groups, generations and individu-
als.

The church, he said, needs to “put aside all anger and con-
tention” and turn its gaze together toward Christ.

At a Mass in Yankee Stadium on his last day in New York, he told Catholics to remember that all church groups, associations and programs exist only to support and foster deeper union with Christ.

The papal Masses highlighted the diversity of the church in the United States which, as the pope said, comes together in a “common commitment to the spread of the Gospel.” These were colorful, musical liturgies and the pope seemed pleased with them.

Avoiding partisan politics

The papal visit did not register very high on topical issues. He avoided partisan political questions, did not mention Iraq and, although he visited ground zero, certainly did not dwell on terrorism.

His United Nations address was not a state-of-the-world survey but a call to conscience on the moral foundations of human rights.

The pope’s focus was religion and its place in all areas of life.

Before the papal visit, most Americans said they didn’t know a lot about Pope Benedict. When he left the country, they were more likely to view him as he described himself upon his arrival: as “a friend, a preacher of the Gospel and one with great respect for this vast pluralistic society.”
Pope at U.N.: no government or religion can limit human rights

BY CINDY WOODEN AND BENEDICTA CIPOLLA

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Neither government nor religion has a right to change or limit human rights, because those rights flow from the dignity of each person created in God’s image, Pope Benedict XVI said.

In his April 18 speech to the U.N. General Assembly, the pope insisted that human rights cannot be limited or rewritten on the basis of national interests or majority rule.

But he also said the role of religions is not to dictate government policy, but to help their members strive to find the truth, including the truth about the dignity of all people even if their religious views are different.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the pope and met privately with him before the pope addressed the General Assembly.

In his public welcoming remarks, the U.N. leader said, “The United Nations is a secular institution, composed of 192 states. We have six official languages but no official religion. We do not have a chapel — though we do have a meditation room.

‘But if you ask those of us who work for the United Nations what motivates us, many of us reply in a language of faith,’ he said. ‘We see what we do not only as a job, but as a mission. Indeed, mission is the word we use most often for our work around the world — from peace and security to development to human rights.

‘Your Holiness, in so many ways, our mission unites us with yours,’ he said.

In his address to the General Assembly, the German-born Pope Benedict said he came to the United Nations as a sign of his esteem for the organization, founded after the devastation of World War II when several governments ignored the fact that human beings were created by God and that the basic principles of right and wrong are written in the heart of each person.

“In consequence,” he said, “freedom and human dignity were grossly violated.”

“The pope, always a strong supporter of the United Nations and its efforts to avoid conflicts and end wars, insisted that when one country has a problem with another, it must not act unilaterally, but seek the assistance of the United Nations.

“This is all the more necessary at a time when we experience the obvious paradox of a multilateral consensus that continues to be in crisis because it is still subordinat-ed to the decisions of a few, whereas the world’s problems call for interventions in the form of collective action by the interna-tional community,” he said.

As expected, Pope Benedict paid tribute to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 60 years ago.

The pope said the document — proclaiming the equality of all people, the basic right to life and to freedom, liberty of conscience and the free practice of religion — was the result of “a convergence of dif-ferent religious and cultural tradi-tions.”

The traditions, he said, were determined to ensure that concern for and protection of the human person was the center of attention in the workings of societies, gov-ernments and institutions.

“The right of every person to life, liberty, equality and the protection of his honor and reputation is a measure of that country’s development,” he said.

In addition, he said, “the pro-motion of human rights remains the most effective strategy for eliminating inequalities between countries and social groups and for increasing security.”

After speaking to the General Assembly, the pope met privately with its president and the president of the Security Council. Then he returned to the General Assembly hall, where he addressed mem-bers of the U.N. staff.

The pope said it is essential that people and governments recognize they are not the creators of human rights and they cannot limit them.

Religious freedom is an essen-tial human right, he said, and when exercised as a search for truth, reli-gion can promote a broader recog-nition of human rights.

“A vision of life firmly anchored in the religious dimen-sion can help to achieve this since recognition of the transcendent value of every man and woman favors conversion of heart, which then leads to a commitment to resist violence, terrorism and war and to promote justice and peace,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict said interrelig-ioust dialogue contributes to global-peace and the defense of human rights when it brings believers together in their search for truth.

The task of religions, he said, “is to propose a vision of faith not in terms of intolerance, discrimina-tion and conflict, but in terms of complete respect for truth, coexis-tence, rights and reconciliation.”

While religions have an obliga-tion to promote recognition of human rights, they also must defend the rights of their members to bring the values of their faith to bear on the decisions they make as citizens.

“It is inconceivable, then, that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves — their faith — in order to be active citizens,” he said. “It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one’s rights.”

The pope asked the United Nations and the world’s govern-ments to make special efforts to defend religious freedom in soci-eties where extreme secularism tends to push believers out of the public sphere and where one reli-gion has been adopted as the national religion and other believers suffer discrimination or oppression.

“In addition, he said, ‘the pro-motion of human rights remains the most effective strategy for eliminating inequalities between countries and social groups and for increasing security.’”

The pope also told the United Nations that upholding all human rights for all residents of a country is a measure of that country’s progress in working for the com-mon good.

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Pope urges young people to banish evils of drugs, poverty, racism

BY BENEDICTA CIPOLLA

YONKERS, N.Y. (CNS) — Addressing a crowd of 25,000 young people and seminarians, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the “monster” that cast a shadow over his own childhood and urged the current generation to banish the darkness that exists today.

Speaking April 19 at a boisterous rally on the grounds of the Archdiocese of New York’s seminary in Yonkers, the pope said that while young people now enjoy democracy’s freedom “the power to destroy does, however, remain.”

The pope was forced to enroll in Hitler Youth as a boy but soon stopped going to meetings. Last year he said at a youth meeting in Germany that he decided to become a priest after witnessing the Nazis’ brutality.

At St. Joseph’s Seminary, the pope said the evils of substance abuse, homelessness and poverty, racism, violence and the degradation of girls and women result in people being treated as objects and the denial of God-given human dignity.

Pope Benedict called the manipulation of truth “particularly sinister.” When freedom disregards absolute truth, relegating it instead to the private sphere of the individual, relativism takes hold, he said. Truth is neither an imposition nor a simple set of rules.

“Ultimately truth is a person: Jesus Christ,” he said.

During the meeting, young people from schools in the region pre- sented a short video of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Frances Xavier Cabrini and John Neumann, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, and Pierre Toussaint and Father jean-Daniel Demange, who have been declared venerable in the sainthood process. All of them worked in New York. He also received books on the history of the Catholic Church in New York, and bread, rice and maize, which symbolized the varied cultural and social backgrounds of the youths present.

The saints’ diverse backgrounds and missions illustrate the breadth and possibilities of Christian discipleship, which should not be viewed through a negative prism of do’s and don’ts, he said. The pope quoted from the 2006 German synod report as saying that “the abandonment of every action that is life, destroys our world” and “the reality of the world as we see it is always in need of redemption.”

“Ultimately truth is a person: Jesus Christ,” he said.

The saints’ examples also propel people to renewed social action against today’s pressing issues, such as the environmental damage done to the earth, which “groans under the weight of consumerist greed and irresponsible exploitation,” the pope said.

The rally gathered young people and seminarians, and Pope Benedict offered encouragement for the priesthood to “reject any temptation to ostentation, careerism or conceit. Strive for a pattern of life truly marked by charity, chastity and humility, in imitation of Christ,” he said.

For all the pope’s remarks, the pope stood up, but an aide turned the page of his text. Later, after his English remarks, the pope stood up, but an aide turned the page of his text. Later, after his English remarks,

BY DON CLEMMER

NEW YORK — During Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to the United States, Catholics and non-Catholics alike are present- ed with a view in the media of the pope moving serenely from one well-executed event to another with adoring throngs of faithful lining the streets, bleachers and other open spaces around the pope.

A group of 16 teens from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend learned what it took to be a part of that adoring crowd when they traveled to New York with Cindy Black, diocesan director of youth ministry, to participate in two large papal events on April 19 and 20.

Joann Derbiszewski of St. Pius X Parish in Granger and a junior at Penn High School in Mishawaka, recalled that the reality of the experience became overwhelming for her once she got on the bus.

“I thought I would pass out,” she said.

After leaving Fort Wayne Friday morning and driving 12 hours by charter bus to a motel in New Jersey, the group con- nected with a family from St. Pius X Parish, Granger, Terry and Gwen O’Brien, and their daughters Paige and Grace.

The O’Briens, the teens and their chaperones celebrated Mass Saturday morning in the close confines of Father Jason Freiburger’s room, with some of the group resorting to sitting along the edges of the room’s empty hot tub in order to make room.

Traveling by bus again into New York, the group soon got a taste of the “hurry up and wait” hassle that goes into executing all those smoothly-choreo- graphed papal events, parking their bus at one location before being shuttled along with thou- sands of other people, to the campus of St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers for the youth rally.

Arriving at the seminary grounds not long after 9 a.m., the youth faced the level of security one usually associates

Pope Benedict XVI looks on as young people represent their various eth- nic backgrounds and cultures during a rally at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., April 19.
**YOUTH**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Service: “A lot of young people struggle with faith, and they get God out of their lives. There’s a lot of peer pressure in terms of what the media sells, and it’s hard to break away from that when everyone is doing it.

“Nobody should be afraid to let go and let God work in their lives,” she said.

After the service concluded, Gabriella Fiorentino, 18, said she was surprised when she presented the pope with the picture of Blessed Kateri and got to kiss him on both cheeks. “We knew we’d get to see him and stand right near him, but then he called us up. “I wish everyone could have the feeling I had when I was up (there) with him,” she said.

Before the rally, pop singer Kelly Clarkson and other musicians performed at an outdoor concert against a backdrop of the risen Christ. With a cloudless sky and temperatures in the 70s, the festive atmosphere felt like the first taste of summer. Displaying one of the biggest smiles of his trip to the United States, the pope revved up the crowd just after his late-afternoon arrival when he stepped to the edge of the stage to grab some of the outstretched hands.

The crowd also sang “Happy Birthday” in German to the pope, who gave them an “A-plus” for pronunciation. His next major encounter with young people will be in July at World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia.

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**TODAY’S CATHOLIC**

A young woman from the Archdiocese of New York greets Pope Benedict XVI during a rally with young people at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., April 19.

The platform of the papal altar, above, and the popemobile, left, are seen from the vantage point of the faithful from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend attending the April 20 Mass at Yankee Stadium.

Vice President Dick Cheney, his wife Lynne, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Cardinal Edward M. Egan and Bishop DiMarzio, wave as the plane carrying Pope Benedict XVI departs JFK International Airport April 20.

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Blessing of prayer labyrinth held May 4

DONALDSON — Parking lot D for the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ Ministry Center cut right through the original grassy labyrinth laid out on the grounds of the Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center in Donaldson. Completed in April of 1999, the labyrinth, modeled after the one found in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France, is an ancient prayer tool that has been part of Christian cultures for many centuries.

Walking the labyrinth is “body prayer.” The pamphlet describing the experience acknowledged that many of us are shy about body movement, but in the labyrinth there is support for allowing yourself to move as spontaneously as possible.

“This is your prayer, participate in it. Leave your ego behind and be free and open.”

Loretta Peters, director of the Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center, said that the labyrinth “is not a New Age thing. It has been a Christian practice for many, many years.”

Peters explained that in the Middle Ages, Christians fulfilled their vows to make a pilgrimage to the Holy City Jerusalem by visiting one of seven cathedrals designated to represent the Holy City. Walking the labyrinth was the culmination of their pilgrimage.

Not a maze, it is a winding path. One way in and one way out.

The original Lindenwood labyrinth was abandoned until the new one, begun on Aug. 6, 2007, was completed.

“We always intended to restore the labyrinth,” Peters said. “People who had visited the campus in the past missed it. We were able to raise the funds approximately $30,000 — with their help, in order to begin construction.”

A Committee comprised of Peters, Ruth Van Vactor and Mary Czinder got to work.

The 11-circuit outdoor labyrinth has grassy walking paths. Van Vactor, a staff member of Lindenwood, said that one reason they chose to use grass was that people could walk barefooted through the paths if they so desired.

Surrounded by brick and spring flowers, it is located east of the Garden Prayer, next to Lake Gilbrath, which provides a peaceful backdrop for the walk.

Using a combination of different kinds of grasses and paving stones, the geometric landscape of the new labyrinth was laid out by Country Landscaping in Nappannee and Jody Overmyer and Tom McGee of Price’s Nursery.

A celebration and blessing of the Lindenwood Labyrinth will be held on Sunday, May 4, at 1 p.m. in the Linden Room at the Villa Maria Conference Center.

A mold then was made and sent to one year when all diocesan athletic championships were won by Queen of Angels students. Shown with Msgr. Faber are David Bell, Cameron Wirick, Morgan Sheets, James Myers and Marshia Jordan.

Student council officers from Queen of Angels School and their Principal Marshia Jordan visited Msgr. William Faber on March 28 to deliver birthday cards and well wishes from the students of Queen of Angels School. Msgr. Faber, who is the founding pastor of Queen of Angels Parish, celebrated his 99th birthday on March 26.

He reminisced with the students about his 25 years as pastor and the many, many good times he remembers, including one year when all diocesan athletic championships were won by Queen of Angels students. Shown with Msgr. Faber are David Bell, Cameron Wirick, Morgan Sheets, James Myers and Marshia Jordan.

Hundreds to join Sisters of Providence for dedication of St. Mother Theodore Guérin statue at national basilica

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of pilgrims are expected to join the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for the dedication of a statue honoring Saint Mother Theodore Guérin May 10 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the papal representative to the United States, will celebrate Mass at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 10. It is open to the public.

After the liturgy, pilgrims will walk outside to Mary’s Garden for the blessing and dedication of the statue. A reception follows at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, near the garden. The Indiana Society of Washington, D.C., is hosting the reception.

The statue was sculpted in clay by Terre Haute artist Teresa Clark. A mold then was made and sent to Ohio where carver Nicholas Fairplay created the final version in Indiana limestone.

Forever Learning Institute to host May 2 festival

SOUTH BEND — The Forever Learning Institute is completing their second spring semester at Little Flower Parish Center in Fort Wayne, and they are ready to celebrate. The spring semester has had new classes and teachers.

The-end of the semester festival is slated Friday, May 2, from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. at the Forever Learning Institute, 54191 Ironwood Rd., South Bend.

Entertainment will include The New Horizon Band from Elkhart. This group of musicians are over 60 years old and very active in playing “gigs” in Elkhart and surrounding areas.

Also featured will be class projects, displays of line dancing and Hawaiian dancing, refreshments and snacks. The event is free.

For more information contact Joan Loranger at (574) 282-1901 or visit the web site at www.foreverlearninginstitute.org.

Saint Mary’s College hosts the National History Day in Indiana contest

NOTRE DAME — Sixth through 12th graders from throughout northern Indiana spent Saturday morning, April 19, at Saint Mary’s College competing in the National History Day in Indiana North District Contest. District winners advance to the state contest on May 10 in Indianapolis, and state finalists move on to the national competition, which takes place June 15-19 at the University of Maryland in College Park, Md.

Saint Mary’s history students, many of which are training to one day teach history in high schools, will help out as judges and volunteers.

“This competition showcases the results of student research. It encourages student interest in history at all stages of educational development and develops their understanding of research methods and critical thinking skills at an early age,” explained Professor Kelly Hamilton, chair of the history department at Saint Mary’s College, which is sponsoring the North District Contest. “We are very happy to be hosting the event at the college. There has not been a northern Indiana district competition for several years.”

Bishop Dwenger High School student receives $4,000 college award

INDIANAPOLIS — U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar presented Bishop Dwenger High student Christopher Garcia with a four-year $4,000 college scholarship on Sunday, April 13, at an Indianapolis banquet honoring outstanding minority high school seniors from across the state.

Garcia has demonstrated leadership as co-editor-in-chief of his high school’s newspaper. He has participated in many extra-curricular activities, including the track team, Academic Super Bowl and Students Against Destructive Decisions. Garcia, who has studied Latin since seventh grade, is also a recipient of an academic honors jacket and has been recognized as a Bishop Dwenger Scholar.

For more information contact Joan Loranger at (574) 282-1901 or visit the web site at www.foreverlearninginstitute.org.

Marian student selected for the 2008 Notre Dame Invention Convention

NOTRE DAME — The University of Notre Dame’s Gigot Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and Robinson Community Learning Center (RCLC) announced six finalists advancing to the sixth annual Invention Convention Youth Business Plan Competition being held on Monday (April 21) from 5:30 to 8 p.m. in Giovanni Commons of Notre Dame’s Law School.

Notre Dame undergraduate and MBA students serve as mentors and event judges.

Throughout the year, the Gigot Center and RCLC work with young people from South Bend high schools to enhance their business, academic and life skills through an entrepreneurship curriculum provided by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship. The Invention Convention is a culmination of what participants have learned throughout the year.

This year’s competition finalists are:

• Jonathan Brown, Clay High School, “Creative Concealer Services”
• Whitney Burt, Clay High School, “Nite and Day Getaway”
• Joseph Jones, Clay High School, “Good Times Restaurant & Arcade”
• Brandon Johnson, Clay High School, “4-Star High Fuel”
• Phyllis John, Clay Middle School, “Dancin’ Diamonds”
• Christopher Rodriguez, Marian High School, “Rodriguez Audio Specialists”
Prominent life issues explored at student Right to Life conference

B Y A N N C A R E Y

TODAY'S CATHOLIC APRIL 27, 2008

NOTRE DAME — Some of the most respected names in the pro-life movement were on the University of Notre Dame campus April 11-12 to speak at the Notre Dame Right to Life Third Annual Collegiate Conference. The theme of the student-organized conference was “Evangelium Vitae: Chapter III: Thou Shalt Not Kill.”

Veteran pro-lifers Alice von Hildebrand, Phyllis Schlafly and Dr. Eugene Diamond were joined by a number of generation pro-life leaders: Bobby Schindler, Dolores Meehan and Rebecca Kiessling.

The theologian-philosopher Alice von Hildebrand said that we live in a “rich society” that is collapsing because marriage and the family are collapsing. And the virtue of purity is being ignored. However, the procreation of a child is “an unbelievable privilege not given to angels,” she said. And the woman is most especially favored because God placed a new soul in her body, thus creating a relationship between God and woman and a closeness between the mother and the child that no one else can match — a child made in God’s image.

Von Hildebrand referred to abortion as the “untouchable horror.” To overcome this horror, she said, we must understand that the child in the womb is God’s gift and we must understand the desire of the giver.

Bobby Schindler works full time for the Terri Schiavo Foundation, which was established to help families fight to keep their loved ones alive. Her sister, Terri Schiavo, suffered from a non-terminal brain injury and in 2005 died of dehydration and starvation after her husband went to court order to have her feeding tube removed.

Terri Schiavo was not the first or last disabled person to be killed, Schindler said: she was just the most visible of these people. Our nation has become goddessless and desensitized to the sanctity of life, he said, and he warned that the dehumanizing of anyone eventually will be a danger to everyone.

Protecting the disabled is a human rights issue, Schindler argued, urging people to stand for truth and recognize the “sacred dignity of the sick, vulnerable and dying.” Loving and caring for so-called “imperfect people” helps us remember that life is created in the image of God and teaches the able-bodied what it is to be human, Schindler concluded.

Phyllis Schlafly is a lawyer and longtime leader of the pro-family movement. She talked on “Activist Judges vs. American Culture.”

Schlafly said it is a myth that the U.S. Constitution created three equal branches of government. In truth, she said, Congress was given the power to decide what kind of cases courts can or cannot hear, though of course Congress must abide by Supreme Court decisions.

Former Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren and William O. Douglas “decided the Constitution in ways it had never gone before” and made the court the “imminent tribunal” that can change the meaning and text of the Constitution, she said. This brand of “raw judicial power” then gave birth to the 1973 Supreme Court decisions allowing abortion for any reason.

Schlafly said there are signs the public is waking up and realizing that judges are out of control and ignoring traditional morality.

Supreme Court appointments will be the greatest issue in the next election, Schlafly predicted.

Dolores Meehan, cofounder of the Walk for Life West Coast, talked about how abortion impacts men. She said that men as well as women are harmed by abortion. Addiction strikes at the mobility of men, she said, for it is in the nature of men to father and protect children.

Men — even husbands — have no legal right to prevent the abortion of their child, and they “grieve the loss of the child,” she said. Even if a man supports or coerces an abortion, he later may be affected by grief, guilt and despair, but healing is always there: “The cross tells us there is victory.”

The birth mother of Rebecca Kiessling had been raped by a stranger when abortion was still illegal, and she gave the baby up for adoption.

Kiessling, a family law attorney, wife, and mother of five, told her story of how she grew up wondering who her birth mother was. When she finally found her, she said she felt worthless when she learned that she was the product of rap.

However, she came to realize that “God can make something good out of evil,” and “My value and identity are not as a product of rape, but as a child of God.” Thus, she became a pro-life, pro-adoption speaker to put a face and voice on the issue, to show that when someone says abortion should be allowed in the case of rape, they are condemning to death an innocent human person with value, dignity and unlimited potential.

Dr. Eugene Diamond, a Chicago pediatrician, talked on “Doctors Should Not Kill.” He said that for over 2,000 years, physicians vowed only to cure, never to harm. Now, Dr. Diamond said, some doctors aim to kill and may even become licensed and encouraged by the state to do so.

He alluded to the 50 million unborn children killed by legal abortion in this country and to the “assisted suicide” law in Oregon.

However he continued, “Medicine ... must have its own intrinsic ethic. The doctor true to his calling will not violate a taboo against killing patients: He will not do it for love, and he will not do it for money.”

Doctors do get tried of not being able to cure everyone, he commented. But he added that abortion is an “immanent evil” that is “an opportunity for the physician to come to the understanding that there remains a residua of human wholeness — however precarious — that can still be served in the face of the incurable.”

The Judeo-Christian tradition and our religious convictions should make us aware that we are dealing with persons who have God-given rights, and the state is not the owner or originator of these rights, Dr. Diamond said.

“So, let’s all pursue ... a different kind of world, a world in which the beginning of life is sacred under all circumstances, a world in which the end of life in all due time receives proper respect and dignity.”
U.S. Supreme Court upholds Kentucky’s lethal injections

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The U.S. Supreme Court in a 7-2 vote April 16 upheld Kentucky’s use of lethal injection as a method of execution.

In the Baze v. Rees ruling the court rejected a challenge by two Kentucky death-row inmates on the constitutionality of the three-drug lethal combination used in executions.

The inmates argued that the lethal injection method violated a constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment, saying it inflicted needless and suffering. The court ruled, however, that the state has measures in place to ensure inmates will not endure significant pain.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion, and was joined by Justices Samuel Alito and Anthony Kennedy.

Justices Antonin Scalia, John Paul Stevens and Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Stephen Breyer each wrote separate opinions in which they agreed with the majority opinion but not with each of his arguments.

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and David Souter dissented.

Executions around the country have been on hold since September when the court agreed to hear arguments in the Kentucky case.

A primary argument against that decision was that if the initial anesthetic did not take hold, the other two drugs would cause excruciating pain.

One of those drugs, a paralytic, could prevent the inmate from expressing discomfort.

The two Kentucky inmates said they wanted the court to order that a single drug be used for lethal injections that would not cause pain. They also argued that the state should be required to impose tighter controls on the use of the drugs to make sure they were administered properly.

During the main arguments in January, Stevens, who is generally seen as a conservative on issues of capital punishment, said that if the main legal question the court faced was whether Kentucky properly followed protocols intended to avoid unnecessary pain and preserve dignity, the state would probably win.

In his written opinion, he said his conclusion about the constitutionality of the death penalty itself, “has simply the case ‘particularly difficult.’”

He said the court has already “held that the death penalty is constitutional, and has established a framework for evaluating the constitutionality of particular methods of execution.”

In his written opinion, he said the court’s decision upholding Kentucky’s lethal injection method amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Justice Stephen Breyer, Justice John Paul Stevens and Justice Clarence Thomas also wrote separate opinions.

“Although the death penalty has serious risks,” including one that “the wrong person may be executed,” he said the “penalty’s lawfulness is not before the court,” and that the arguments did not show that “Kentucky’s execution method amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.”

Scalia wrote that he was not taking a position “on the desirability of the death penalty, except to say that its value is eminently debatable and the subject of deeply, indeed passionately, held views — which means, to me, that it is not a matter to be resolved here.”

Thomas called it “not a little ironic” that there would no longer be lethal injection, hailed just a few years ago as the humane alternative in light of which every other method of execution seemed an unconstitutional relic of the past, is the subject of today’s challenge. He noted the Constitution is “evolving” even faster than he suspected.

In this particular case, he said the court’s leave to contest “the authority or the expertise to micromanage the state’s administration of the death penalty in this manner.”

Lethal injection is used in 35 of the 36 states with the death penalty. Nebraska is the only state that does not use lethal injections and executions by electrocution were recently found unconstitutional there. There are 14 states that do not have the death penalty.

The court’s ruling and the possible resumption of executions comes after some 2004, the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, which is a loose affiliation of academics, clergy and laypeople in the church, not of the church’s response to the death penalty. He attributed the beginning of the change in attitude to Pope John Paul II’s message against the death penalty during his 1999 visit to St. Louis when he described capital punishment as “evil and unnecessary” and noted that “modern society has the means of preventing itself without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform.”

The court’s decision upholding Kentucky’s method of execution came during the second day of Pope Benedict XVI’s first visit as pope to the United States.

Peace-building network to finish book on theology, peace

BY GENE STONE

NOTRE DAME — The Catholic Peacebuilding Network closed its final planned conference at the University of Notre Dame April 15. The project is to complete a book on their work on a book about Catholic theology and peace.

The network’s future at Catholic Peace-building brought together people on the front lines in conflict zones with each other and with academics who want to build a systematic theology of peace-building in the Catholic tradition.

Coming 25 years after 1983 U.S. bishops’ pastoral letter, “The Challenge of the Church in a Changing World,” the project is the latest call to examine the place of the church in the world.

Peace-building is a key component of Catholic witness in the world, said Powers. Catholic leaders in Burundi and Mindanao can compare how they deal with healing people who have suffered trauma, said Gerard Powers, chairman of the network’s steering committee.

“In northern Uganda and Colombia, the church is playing a very similar role in the peace process,” Powers told Catholic News Service April 11.

“On one focus of the conferences is to connect these people,” he said, noting there are “different visions,” such as a preference for theological and ethical reflection on peace-building, as academics interact with those who are acting in a “substitute” political role.

“ ‘The conventional wisdom is that religion is mostly a problem and that the antidote to religious influence is to privatize religion,’ he said. ‘Religion is not just a cause of conflict but is also a cause of justice and peace. We’re trying to do a better analysis of the sociology of religion.’

A systematically developed theology of peace would be comparable to the just-war tradition.
Exploring the themes of pope’s message to America

BY BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

I t will take time and reflection and prayer to grasp and explain the central themes found in the talks of Pope Benedict XVI in his memorable six-day visit. Here is a beginning.

As I said last week, this man is not superficial; he confronts evil and he supports truth. If you read carefully, he said it was the task of the whole church to recover from the abuse crisis, and that we should now protect children both in the church and in society. Some will never be satisfied, however. The pope’s views is that this pope did in confronting this painful area was considerable. Remember also his meeting with Justice Anne Burke and other factors I mentioned last week. On this issue, he has credibility.

“Confirm the brothers,” that was what the Lord asked of Peter, and that is what Pope Benedict did for the bishops this week after a beautiful Evening Prayer service at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. As a good teacher, he turn the put the question: “This leads me to ask how in the 21st century, a bishop can best fulfill the call to ‘make all things new in Christ our hope?’ How can he lead his people to ‘an encounter with the living God’? He talked about consistency and the subtle influence of secularism. ‘Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs?’ Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death? Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted.”

He spoke about affluence and how the material things, which we possess, prevent us and our people from recognizing a deep thirst for God. You could say he came to remind us of this thirst and to help us to drink deeply of God’s love. The goal of all our pastoral and catechetical work, he reminded us, is to help our people establish and nurture a living relationship with Christ Jesus our hope.

He gave a catechesis on freedom, and he did this to the bishops and also to the young people. He said we must avoid a form of piety, which sometimes “emphasizes our private relationship with God at the expense of our calling to be members of a redeemed community.” He talked about the need to say “yes” to the great questions of the day and face them as teachers of the truth. He spoke about the family and reminded the bishops of the words of his predecessor: “The family is principally responsible in the church for the pastoral care of the family is the bishop.” He taught us that the family was the primary place for evangelization and noted that many young men and women choose to postpone marriage or forgo it all together.

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As a general rule, there should be a compelling therapeutic reason whenever we elect to undergo breast augmentation surgery and surgery and anesthesia always involves risk. Breast implant surgery is an “elective procedure” in the traditional sense, except for women who have undergone a mastectomy, or otherwise suffered significant breast damage, in which case the procedure may indeed represent a reconstructive or restorative therapy. Implants, of course, are seri- business — real surgery with real side effects and strange things that can go wrong. Such implants can rupture, have capsu lar contractions or develop leaks. Many implants are no more reliable than a car’s transmission, and permanent solution. They need to be replaced periodically. The decision to get implants, particu larly at an early age, is an almost certain guarantee of more surg eries later on.

Choosing to increase the size of otherwise healthy breasts raises a number of health related concerns as well. Implants may increase diagnostic difficulties associated with doing mammograms. Some women report that implants make self-examinations harder. In the past, implants were often filled with mercury, and if one of these would rupture, some women developed immune conditions and high blood pressure, which were attributed to the release of sili con into their bodies. Implants and implant surgery can also affect the purpose and proper functioning of the breast, by causing lactation insufficiency and other complications associated with breast-feeding.

Women who feel a strong need to augment their breasts may also be the kind of woman who focuses too much on beauty and vanity can arise in the woman who focuses too much on her figure or her profile. After doing an augmentation, there can be a “honeymoon peri-

Plastic perfection?
The ethics of breast implants

In the last 10 years, the number of women undergoing breast augmentations has increased dramatically to nearly half a million women opted for this form of elective surgery. Many seem convinced that breast implants are an easy way to shape up their self-image. As one woman put it, “I got implants so that I could gain back my con fidence and feel good about myself.” The growing popularity of breast augmentation, however, raises a constellation of health concerns, ethical questions, and personal/spiritual issues that the faithful need to confront whenever the temptation to pursue elective breast augmentation. As a general rule, there should be a compelling therapeutic reason whenever we elect to undergo breast augmentation surgery and surgery and anesthesia always involves risk. Breast implant surgery is an “elective procedure” in the traditional sense, except for women who have undergone a mastectomy, or otherwise suffered significant breast damage, in which case the procedure may indeed represent a reconstructive or restorative therapy. Implants, of course, are serious business — real surgery with real side effects and strange things that can go wrong. Such implants can rupture, have capsular contractions or develop leaks. Many implants are no more reliable than a car’s transmission, and permanent solution. They need to be replaced periodically. The decision to get implants, particularly at an early age, is an almost certain guarantee of more surgeries later on.

Choosing to increase the size of otherwise healthy breasts raises a number of health-related concerns as well. Implants may increase diagnostic difficulties associated with doing mammograms. Some women report that implants make self-examinations harder. In the past, implants were often filled with mercury, and if one of these would rupture, some women developed immune conditions and high blood pressure, which were attributed to the release of silicone into their bodies. Implants and implant surgery can also affect the purpose and proper functioning of the breast, by causing lactation insufficiency and other complications associated with breast-feeding.

Women who feel a strong need to augment their breasts may also be the kind of woman who focuses too much on beauty and vanity can arise in the woman who focuses too much on her figure or her profile. After doing an augmentation, there can be a “honeymoon peri-

od” where a woman may be pleased with the outcome, following which she can easily reset to a new baseline of unease and discontent. She may need to get yet another surgery, another shot, or another treatment only to find that none of it “fills the void.” It is always possible to fixate on something else that needs changing before we will allow ourselves to feel good about who we are and to accept what we have been given. There is often something embarrassing, perhaps even scandalous, in the realization that women really want to do these elective procedures. The psychological law here, one might argue, is even uglier than any perceived change. A negative self-image can be very tough to overcome, and implants too easily tempt with a kind of false answer.

Ultimately, faulty notions of beauty are likely to be played as well in battles about breast implants. I think it was Albert Einstein who remarked that beyond what we perceive with our eyes, “there is something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and subtlety reaches us only indirectly.” The temptation to reduce feminine beauty to a kind of plastic and external measure is surely a failure to realize how a woman’s physical beauty is meant to be but a gentle hint, a pointer towards an abiding beauty within. Her outside image will have some relationship to the woman she is and wants to be, but that exterior image is necessarily partial and incomplete, and should spur every woman to pursue and develop that deeper feminine beauty and virtue that is properly found within.
Retired Vatican envoy from tiny San Marino helped heal world

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Little did this pre-eminent surgeon from the tiny Republic of San Marino know that becoming an ambassador to the even smaller Vatican City State would give him a new platform from which to heal the world.

Giovanni Galassi, the recently retired dean of the diplomatic corps and San Marino’s former ambassador to the Holy See, said, “All my life I’ve been operating on sick people, and it’s always been a one-on-one relationship; me over here and the patient over there.”

The cancer and transplant specialist told Catholic News Service April 16 that becoming a diplomat made him realize “one person can also help 100, 1,000, even 10,000 people” by speaking out against and trying to rectify injustices facing the multitudes.

“The world of diplomacy allowed him “to multiply that help others” and expand his ministry of curing people to promoting a social and spiritual healing of society, he said.

Galassi met with Pope Benedict XVI April 7 to say farewell after serving the Vatican for three decades.

A longtime resident of Rome, Galassi began his service to the Vatican in 1980, acting as San Marino’s representative until being named ambassador when his country and the Vatican established full diplomatic relations in 1986.

In 1988, the Vatican elected him from among the corps’ most senior members to also represent the diplomatic corps as dean of the ambassadors accredited to the Vatican.

After 28 years of service with 20 of those years as the highest-ranking member of the corps, Galassi watched “many a monsignor grow” into an archbishop and cardinal.

His most distinguished accomplishment, Galassi said, was being able to rally the entire diplomatic corps into being “a real family of friends.”

On the world’s stage, it is not unheard of for one country’s conflicts with another country to spill over into the diplomatic

sphere, resulting in snubs or a lack of cooperation between envoys.

But Galassi said he went to great lengths to create a haven of peaceful, constructive and even friendly relations among the men and women representing 179 nations and organizations.

“I tried to make everyone understand, the new ambassadors too, that our task at the Vatican was to bring the principles of human dignity, ethics and morality to our nations, not the principles of economics, weaponry or power,” he said.

Galassi is convinced that “all peoples — even the most, let’s say”...

THE VATICAN LETTER

CAROL GLATZ

Church summons us to look at our lives

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

6th Sunday of Easter
Jn 14:35-21

The Acts of the Apostles once again this Easter season furnishes the first reading. In the readings of the weekends earlier in this season, the identity of the apostles has clearly been given.

The apostles, absent Judas of course, had no idea of the sheer power of Jesus in naming a new member of their group, Matthias, who succeeded the dead Judas.

Peter healed the sick. On behalf of the apostles, Peter spoke as Jesus had spoken. It was not just simply that the apostles had been with Jesus as specially selected students and followers, but they discharched the divine power that had belonged to Jesus, and they continued the mission of Jesus the Redeemer.

In this reading, announcement of this identity continues. While Acts already has clearly established that Peter was the head of the apostles, the character of apostle belonged not just to him. It was also with the others.

Thus, in this reading, the central figures are Philip and John. They performed miracles, as Jesus had performed miracles.

However, they were not on their own. They were part of the community in Jerusalem, that had Peter as its head, and around Peter were the other apostles.

This group of apostles in Jerusalem sent Philip and John to Samaria. So the apostles together had authority, and each within the group recognized this authority.

They looked to the salvation of all people, even of Samaritans, who were so despised by the Jews. Finally, they bore within themselves the Holy Spirit, and they could give the Holy Spirit to others.

The second reading is from the First Epistle of Peter. This reading is a strong and joyful and enthusiastic proclamation of Jesus as Lord. It calls believers to hear the Lord and to follow the Lord. The Lord should be in their hearts and minds.

St. John’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. Not a resurrection narrative, it nonetheless serves the church’s purpose as it teaches us this weekend. After celebrating the resurrection for these weeks since Easter, the church gently is sum-moning us to look at our lives.

This reading is our blueprint for life. Our task as disciples is to love others as Jesus loved all. It is clear. In God’s love, given to us in the Lord, is our salvation.

Indeed, the very act of giving us a blueprint for living is a vitally important gift given in love to us by God.

Reflection

The next major liturgical event for us will be the celebration of the feast of the Ascension of Jesus. Soon after this feast, we will celebrate the feast of Pentecost. Within sight now is the close of the Easter season.

For these weeks the church has informed us of the resurrection of Jesus, gloriously occurring after the dreadful events of Good Friday. It has shared with us its joy, copying the joy of the first Christians. It has told us again and again of the risen Lord’s appearances and admonitions.

Gently, gradually, but definitely the church has begun the process of leading us to ask what the Resurrection deeply and really means for each of us individually. It is being very strongly cated- chetical. First, it reassures us. Contact with Jesus was not lost with the Ascension, when Jesus returned to the Father, God and remains, and it remains very clearly visible in the visible, institutional church. The church stands on the apostles. It offers us the service of the modern successors of Peter and the other apostles.

Through them we still hear the words of Christ. In the sacraments they give us, we still access the power of Christ’s eternal life. Finally, in the splendid reading from John’s Gospel, the church tells us how to live. We must love others.

READINGS

Sunday: Acts 8:5-14, 17Ps 66:1-7, 16:10 Ps 31:5-18 14:15-21

Monday: Acts 16:11-15 Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b, Jn 15:25-16:4a

Tuesday: Acts 16:22-34 Ps 138:1-3, 7c-8 16:5-11


Friday: Acts 18:19-28 Ps 47:2-7 Jn 16:20-23

Saturday: 1 Cor 15:1-8 Ps 19:2-5 Jn 14:16-14

CATEQUIZ’EM

By Dominic Campbell

In April the church remembers St. George (sans dragon).

This quiz therefore looks at everything Georgian.

ANSWERS:

1. Where is Georgia (the country)?
   a. in the Caucasus
   b. in the Baltic
   c. in the Balkans

2. The nation of Georgia is sometimes confused with a state of the same name in
   a. Russia
   b. the USA
   c. Brazil

3. Confusingly too part of the country of Georgia was historically also known as (same name as another area in Europe)
   a. Liberia
   b. Galicia
   c. Iberia

4. Christianity reached Georgia it by this century, or maybe even earlier
   a. the 4th century
   b. the 6th century
   c. the 7th century

5. The conversion of the royal family is credited to
   a. Santa Monica of California
   b. St. Nino, a slave woman from Cappadocia
   c. St. Methodius (and his brother Cyril)

6. At first the Georgian Orthodox Church was answerable to this, one of the Eastern Patriarchies
   a. Alexandria
   b. Constantinople
   c. Antioch

7. In the 8th century it became autocephalous. What does that mean?
   a. The patriarch was the right to rule in a choralat (later a car)
   b. it became independent (literally itself headed)
   c. it was no longer associated with the Orthodox churches

8. This status was confirmed by one of these at Antioch in 1567
   a. Bishop of the Russian church
   b. Church council
   c. Papal visit

9. The Georgian church amassed a significant Christian literature in this language
   a. Latin
   b. Slavonic
   c. Georgian

10. The church fell on hard times when it was absorbed by this church in 1811
    a. The Armenian
    b. The Byzantine
    c. The Russian

11. It regained its identity in this revolutionary year
    a. 1876
    b. 1912
    c. 1918

12. However, it suffered, as did other churches from the advent of these rulers
    a. the Russian Bolsheviks
    b. the Turks
    c. the Crimean Tatars

13. This was despite the fact that this Georgian and one time seminarian was their leader:
    a. Lenin
    b. Trotsky
    c. Stalin

14. They regained their identity and status during this event, known locally as the
    a. Great Patriotic War
    b. World War II
    c. The Cold War

15. This former USSR foreign minister was baptized in the Georgian Church in 1992
    a. Vladimir Putin
    b. Mikhail Gorbachev
    c. Edward Shevardnadze

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Through them we still hear the words of Christ. In the sacraments they give us, we still access the power of Christ’s eternal life. Finally, in the splendid reading from John’s Gospel, the church tells us how to live. We must love others.
**A look into the papacy**

What is the symbolism of pope’s staff and mitre? Anonymous

The pope carries a staff and mitre because he is a bishop and these are marks of episcopal office in the church. The mitre is because he is the Bishop of Rome; that’s what the cardinals assemble in council near it in Latin, “under (lock and) key” — to elect. Originally, the “cardinals” were the priests in charge of the principal (or key) churches in the diocese of Rome and when a bishop died, they gathered to elect his successor. This mitre and staff are no more or less significant than any bishop’s.

Why does the pope, bishops, remove their caps at certain points of Mass? What is the significance of this? Anonymous

There are three types of “head-dress” worn by bishops: zucchetto (the small red cap), the miter (the tri-pointed purple hat). The zucchetto is worn under the biretta (the tri-pointed purple hat). The zucchetto and miter are worn at Mass. The miter is taken off when the bishop enters the sanctuary and is put back on when he sits down following the collect (opening prayer). When he stands for the proclamation of the Gospel, it is again removed and usually remains off until the final blessing — unless he is confirming, and he wears it for the rite of confirmation.

As a sign of respect for the Blessed Sacrament, the zucchetto is removed after the secret (the prayer over the gifts) and is replaced following Communion.

The biretta is worn when a bishop is presiding but not the principal celebrant of the Mass (for example at vespers and other non-eucharistic celebrations) in choir garb (the purple cassock and white surplice), and it is removed with the zucchetto during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Father Michael Heintz, rector of St. Matthew’s Cathedral, answered these questions.

Why does the pope wear red shoes? Is there a historical significance? Is it a fashion choice? Anonymous

The red shoes are a tradition that dates back to Roman times because red has an association with nobility and the pope is a “prince” of the church.

All popes are buried in the red shoes so they are most often referred to as the pope’s burial shoes.

This habit has come and gone during history. It was very big in the Middle Ages, not so big during the Enlightenment. Pius XII was the last pope to have coronation shoes and wear the crown. For the others, it was too ostentatious.

Pope Benedict has reinstated the practice. The shoes are not Prada.

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** nga of historic vision**

John Paul II arrived in Warsaw on June 2, 1979; there and then he signaled the revolution of conscience that would give birth to the Solidarity movement, the Revolution of 1989 — and the end of European communism. Distinguished secular historians of the Cold War now argue that John Paul’s first pilgrimage to Poland, from June 2 to June 10, 1979, was one of the pivots of 20th-century history.

What seems obvious now, however, wasn’t quite so clear at the time. On the fourth day of the June 1979 pilgrimage, for example, the New York Times concluded its editorial, “The Polish Pope in Poland,” in these striking — and, as things turned out, strikingly myopic — terms: “As much as the visit of John Paul II must reinvigorate and inspire the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, it does not threaten the political order of the Polish nation or of Eastern Europe.”

Oops.

On the occasion of Pope Benedict XVI’s address to the United Nations and his first pastoral visit to the United States, let’s consider the possibility that his “June 1979” has already happened and that, just as in the real June 1979, those issues remain in play.

And by Benedict XVI’s “June 1979 moment.” I mean the most controversial event of his pontificate, his Sept. 12, 2006, Regensburg Lecture on faith and reason. Widely criticized as a papal “gaffe” because Benedict cited a rebuff exchange between a Byzantine emperor and a Persian Islamic scholar, the Regensburg Lecture now looks a lot like June 1979: a moment in which a pope, cutting to the heart of a complex set of issues with global impact, rearranged the chessboard in a dramatic fashion, with historic consequences.

In June 1979, a pope challenged the orthodoxies of what the Times called “the political order” in Poland and throughout the old Warsaw Pact; in September 2006, a pope challenged the shopworn conventions of interreligious dialogue.

In June 1979, a pope set in motion a revolution of mutual conviction that eventually replaced “the political order” in east central Europe with something far more humane; in September 2006, a pope may have set in motion a process of intellectual and spiritual awakening that could help resolve the centuries-old question of whether Islam and pluralism can coexist, and in such a way as to safeguard the religious freedom of all.

Consider what has happened since Regensburg. The pope has been the addresser of two state statements from Islamic leaders throughout the world, respectfully requesting a new dialogue with the Holy See. Responding, Benedict XVI has politely but firmly insisted that any such dialogue must focus on the two issues at the heart of the chafing within Islam, and between radical Islam and the rest of the world. The pope’s position (understood as a basic human right that can be known by reason) and the separation of spiritual and political authority in the 21st-century state. Those issues are precisely what the new dialogue will address, in several venues. One is a new Catholic-Muslim forum that will meet biennially, once a year in Rome and once in Amman, Jordan. Another may be the new interfaith dialogue among the monotheistic religions that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia — who has considerable leverage in the world of Sunni Islam — has recently proposed.

Benedict XVI has also urged reciprocity in relations between faiths. Thus the Pope’s Easter Vigil baptism of the Italian journalist Magdi Allam, who was raised in Egypt as a Muslim, was not an act of aggression, as some Muslims quickly charged, but a public defense of religious freedom — as was John Paul II’s welcome to a newly-built mosque in Rome. Some, it seems, have begun to get the message: if reciprocity: it is no accident that negotiations between the Holy See and Saudi Arabia on building the first Catholic Church in the kingdom happened after Regensburg — and quite likely because of the dynamism of the pope in motion.

Benedict XVI thinks in centuries. His courageous exercise in truth-telling at Regensburg has already begun to reshape the debate within Islam and the dialogue between Islam and “the rest.” That is no mean accomplishment.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

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**Scripture search**

**Gospel for April 27, 2008**

**John 14:15-23**

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, Cycle A: the promise of the Spirit and shared life. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

*Love Me Like Another World Little While I Live Be Loved*

**Sending another**


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**Letter**

Continued from Page 15

say, aggressive — always have deep inside of them a tiny piece of humanity” and believe in the most basic principle of respect.

This outlook worked, he said, and his attitude “was grasped by many.”

Galassi never shied away from confronting ambassadors and airing disagreements between the Vatican’s position and that of individual nations.

Once, during a 2002 Vatican-sponsored conference on ethics and economic globalization, he hotly contested the position presented by Jim Nicholson, who was U.S. ambassador to the Vatican at the time. He said Nicholson “maintained the economic argument and I maintained what comes before that is the human.”

In March 2003, just a few days before U.S-led troops invaded Iraq, Galassi rounded up the diplomatic corps at the Vatican in a last-ditch effort “to convince the United States that it was better to stop plans” for a war.

He said Nicholson came to the gathering, but told the diplomats “that by now things were at a point of no return” and nothing would prevent the U.S-led invasion.

Even though the diplomats were unable to have an impact, he said, their participation showed their dedication to the power of dialogue.

Every time Galassi passed the hat and asked ambassadors to contribute toward the purchase of a goodbye gift for a departing diplomat, everyone pitched in.

“I have to say with pride that when the Cuban ambassador left, the U.S. gave the hat contribution and when Ambassador Nicholson left, Cuba gave its part; therefore, thisjust shows the kind of friendly atmosphere we had created,” he said.

Of the dozens of thank-you letters Galassi received from ambassadors upon his retirement, he said, “one of the most beautiful is a letter from Nicholson.”

The two former diplomats’ disagreements never affected their friendship and esteem for each other, Galassi said.

“We have remained very close friends, and this is a beautiful thing,” he said.

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**Sports**

**Spring CYO sports flourish**

**BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN**

FORT WAYNE — If Sunday’s conclusion to University of Saint Francis Spring Football Drills was any indication of the 2008 season, hang on to your seats.

The Cougars White edged the Cougars Blue, 20-17, on Sunday afternoon in the 11th Blue & White football game scoring the winning touchdown as time ran out. Running back Kyle Miller scored from the 1-yard line after White team quarterback Justin Hoffer’s pass from 14-yards out. In early season softball action, the Queen of Angels-Precious Blood ladies hung tough against St. Vincent’s ace pitcher losing by just a run 2-3.

In his varsity debut, Coach Denver Jordan feels he has a very good defensive team. “We are hitting the ball fairly well at the start and hope to develop our pitchers this year,” he said. “Improving from where they started and being the best they can be” are the goals he has set for his 17-member squad this year. “I’ll consider the season a success if we can reach our goals, regardless of our win/loss record,” Jordan concluded.

**White edges Blue in USF Spring Football wrap-up**

FORT WAYNE — If Sunday’s conclusion to University of Saint Francis Spring Football Drills was any indication of the 2008 season, hang on to your seats.

The Cougars White edged the Cougars Blue, 20-17, on Sunday afternoon in the 11th Blue & White football game scoring the winning touchdown as time ran out. Running back Kyle Miller scored from the 1-yard line after White team quarterback Justin Hoffer’s pass from 14-yards out. In early season softball action, the Queen of Angels-Precious Blood ladies hung tough against St. Vincent’s ace pitcher losing by just a run 2-3.

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**Director of Christian Formation**

St. Joseph Parish, South Bend, Indiana seeks a Director of Christian Formation. A member of the Pastoral team, this full-time minister furthers the mission of the parish through oversight of the process that includes both Christian initiation and ongoing formation for the Christian life. Qualified applicants will have a love for the Church, be conversant in Church teaching, and have a pastoral theological understanding. They will have a collaborative spirit and a desire to grow with the parish community. Applicants must possess a bachelor’s degree, and at least one year of ministry experience. A bachelor’s degree in theology or a related field is preferred; an advanced degree in ministry is highly preferred. Salary is commensurate with education and experience and in compliance with diocesan guidelines. Qualified candidates should send a letter of introduction and a resume to:

**Director of UHSA**

Director of Middle & High School Faith Formation

Responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing religious education and sacramental preparation programs for the youth of Little Flower Catholic Church in grades 6 through 12. Bachelor’s degree in Religious Education, Education, Theology, related field, or equivalent. Leadership experience with youth a plus.

Submit resume with references to receive complete job description and application.

Attn: Search Committee, Little Flower Catholic Church, 54191 N. Ironwood, South Bend, IN 46635-1611

**Golf outing joins Masons and Knights**

SOUTH BEND — Both the Scottish Rite Masons and the Knights of Columbus of the Fourth Degree announced their preliminary plans for their 60th annual golf outing on July 9 at the Four Lakes Country Club in Adamsville, Mich.

This ecumenical golf outing has blended into a fellowship that has grown larger almost every year since its inception and in which the championship trophy has been shared by each group.

Chairmen for the event are Thomas Mellander and Orville Thornburg of the Masons and Kevin Large of the Knights. Reservations must be made by July 2 to Mellander, 6340 Redenbacher Ct., South Bend, Ind. 46614. — EJD

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School Website: scbss.org

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I n 2005, Anne Rice, an author most noted for novels about the undead (vampires, specifically), turned her attention to the one who truly ever lives: Christ the Lord. While writing passionately about her return to the Catholic Church in an appendix, Rice’s main effort was an interesting take on the early life of Jesus Christ (“Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt”), which presented as a historical slice of life in first-century Palestine, with some biblical and theological references thrown in.

Many critics, including this one, praised the book for what it was, a novelist’s debut attempt at connecting with something that is important in his or her life. To be sure, there was some vitriol let loose by some Catholic commentators, especially in the then new and rapidly growing blog world on the Internet. It did seem though, that to call into question Rice’s reversion, as it were, delved into an area that most of us should be wary of — questioning another’s faith.

Three years on and Rice has completed a follow-up to the story of the early years of Christ with “Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana” (Knopf, $25.95), just released this spring. Here we join Jesus some months before his baptism, and then witness the beginning of his public ministry with the miracle at the wedding at Cana. Many will probably pick up the book anxious to see how Rice sets the backdrop and incorporates what we know from the Gospels. Yet she begins her tale prior to what the Gospels present as the beginning of Christ’s ministry and spends several chapters on the inner workings of the Holy (and, here, extended) Family and the community at Nazareth.

Unfortunately, the tale she chooses to explore has a difficult time holding our attention. Though told from the first person point of view — that of Jesus — much of the center of attention is Avigail, a young woman who the community thinks Jesus should marry (remember, no one yet knows he is God’s Son — though, of course, Mary does and Joseph has a good idea). The ancillary characters that cause the community much turmoil and Avigail heartache never really grab the reader. Rice surely thinks she was being clever here — Avigail is our bride at Cana.

Lack of character development means this group may be part of the problem, but, to be honest, the reader is likely more interested in when Jesus will realize, and then admit, who he is. In fact, the whole story centers on that little issue: does it entitle us, the little Jesus in “Out of Egypt” seems to have had more of a clue of his divinity than the adult Jesus in “The Road to Cana”?

This time, Catholic commentators in the blog world are musing on when Christ will turn his attention to his divinity. Whether Rice is right or wrong is effectively irrelevant, as it’s a minor point the church is in the midst of a veritable firestorm over the so-called “good news” and rapidly growing blog world on the Internet. It did seem though, that to call into question Rice’s reversion, as it were, delved into an area that most of us should be wary of — questioning another’s faith.

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WHAT’S HAPPENING?

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send in your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. Mail to: Today’s Catholic, PO. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46856; or e-mail: ftcogan@fw diocesefw sb.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.

MISC. HAPPENINGS

COHS news
Fort Wayne — The Central Catholic High School Alumni Association will meet Saturday, June 28, at the Archbishop Noll Center (corner of Clinton and Washington) at 3 p.m. An Alumni Mass will be at 4:30 p.m. RSVP to Mary Lou Morris (260) 485-6164.

Altar and Rosary Society to meet
Elkhart — The Altar and Rosary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 1405 N. Main St., will have a spring luncheon on Wednesday, April 23, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the church basement (elevator available). A donation of $6 includes hot chicken salad, many cold salads, bread, dessert and beverage. Carry-outs are available. Tickets may be purchased at the door or by calling (574) 262-1265.

Silent card party and meeting
South Bend — The Daughters of Isabella, Notre Dame Circle 572 will have a silent card party at their May 5 meeting at 2 p.m. at the Logan Center, 2505 E. Jefferson Blvd. Helen Deppe, state regent, will attend.

Performing arts at Dwenger supported
Fort Wayne — There will be a Nelson’s Chicken BBQ at the outside concessions stand off the main parking lot of Bishop Dwenger High School Sunday, May 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cost will be $5 for a half chicken.

A celebration of writing
Avilla — St. Mary School will have a celebration of writing on Tuesday, April 29, from 6-8 p.m. Read works by student authors or meet Barbara Olenyik Morrow, author of “A Good Night for Freedom.” Journey to unknown lands with a storyteller, create crafts, or win free books. Visit the Reading/Writing Restaurant presented by the kindergartner class. Shop at the 2-for-1 Scholastic Book Fair or listen to poetry at the coffee shop.

Natural Family Planning
Fort Wayne — The updated and streamlined Couple to Couple course in symptothermal Natural Family Planning will begin on Sunday, April 27, at 6 p.m. in the home of Ron and Marilyn Shannon. The course consists of three one-per-month classes, optional premenopause or breastfeeding classes, and follow-up counseling as needed. Call (260) 489-1856 for more information and registration.

Knights plan fish fry
South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a fish fry on Friday, May 2, from 5 to 7 p.m. Adults $7.50, children (5-12) $3. Chicken strips for $7.50 and shrimp for $8.50 will be available.

DEVOTIONS

All family rosary
Fort Wayne — The all family rosary will be Sunday, April 27, at MacDoulgall Chapel from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Attending will be Father Francis Chukwuma from the cathedral and Sister Jacinta Keecek, OSF, from Campus and Young Adult Ministry.

Day of reflection planned
 Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be Wednesday, May 21, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. Francis Convent on Dragon Trail. Participants are asked to bring their Bibles. The cost is $15 and includes lunch. Call (260) 727-2044 for reservations by May 15.

Queen of Angels Parish in Fort Wayne — The Ascention of the Lord
The Ascension of the Lord — Father Daryle Rybicki St. John the Baptist Fort Wayne

Pentecost Sunday
Pentecost Sunday — Father Dan Leew Provena Sacred Heart Home Avilla

Trinity Sunday
Trinity Sunday — Father David Ruppert St. Therese Fort Wayne

Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi — Father Adam Schmitt St. Joseph Fort Wayne
Hernandez became American citizens. Hernandez was born in Aguascalientes, Mexico, where his mother, Marie de Lourdes Hernandez still lives along with his three brothers and four sisters. He resides in South Bend and attends Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Warsaw. Hernandez began his studies for the priesthood in 1999. He attended St. John Seminary, Brighton, and then spent two years learning English-as-a-second language before beginning classes at St. Mary Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary where he graduated in 2005 with a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy.