In Genoa, pope fights battle for the soul of Italy, all of Europe

By John Thavis

GENOA, Italy (CNS) — At first glance, Pope Benedict XVI’s two-day visit to the northern Italian city of Genoa seemed designed to highlight the ascendency of the region’s prelates in his pontificate.

The pope chose Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the former archbishop of Genoa, as his secretary of state. He named the new head of the archdiocese, Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, president of the Italian bishops’ conference. And the archdiocese’s liturgist, Msgr. Guido Marini, is now the master of papal liturgical ceremonies at the Vatican.

But for all the local pride it evoked, the pope’s May 17-18 visit had broader implications and a deeper purpose. Despite its strong Catholic traditions, Genoa has become a new front in the church’s battle to maintain its social and political influence.

“It’s a struggle being played out not only in Italy, but throughout the European continent, where secular culture has drifted away from Christian foundations. Indeed, church leaders sometimes describe this as a battle for Europe’s soul,”

In Genoa, these tensions have found an unlikely focus in the figure of Cardinal Bagnasco, a soft-spoken man who has defended church teaching on a number of controversial social issues, including gay marriage and cohabitation.

That prompted criticism and even death threats, and the cardinal now travels under armed escort provided by the state.

Pope Benedict’s trip to Genoa and the nearby city of Savona was, therefore, an important opportunity to defend the church’s voice in the moral and ethical battles of the region.

One of his most moving encounters was his visit May 18 to the Giannina Gaslini Institute in Genoa, the biggest children’s hospital in northern Italy. He blessed children in wheelchairs, listened to a 10-year-old cancer patient’s eloquent greeting and smiled in appreciation of their gift — a large portrait of the pontiff.

“The church does not own or manage the hospital, but it helps fund it and has a permanent voice in its administration. That kind of cooperative arrangement, the pope said, reflects Genoa’s historic reputation as a “city where the church and the state have always worked together,”

“Pope Benedict XVI waves to the faithful before reciting the Angelus prayer in Genoa, Italy, May 18.”

Sharpening Father Heintz

St. Matthew Cathedral rector received doctoral degree in theology from Notre Dame May 18

By Michael O. Garvey

NOTRE DAME — Origenes Adamantius, to whom the academy has given the nickname “Origen,” was a second and third century Alexandrian monk and genius who became one of the most influential theologians and biblical scholars of the early church. He was described by St. Gregory of Nazianzus, one of his students, as “the stone that sharpens us all.”

Origen has undeniably sharpened Father Michael Heintz, rector and pastor of St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend, who received a doctoral degree in theology from Notre Dame at the May 18 commencement ceremonies.

“Father Heintz, already quite sharp in the knowledge of Latin and Greek, has completed and defended his dissertation on “The Pedagogy of the Soul: Origen’s Homilies on the Psalms” under the direction of Jesuit Father Brian Daley, Catherine F. Huisking, a professor of theology, and John Cavadini, chair of the theology department at Notre Dame. His project required him to translate these homilies into English for the first time, and the resulting collection is soon to be published by Catholic University of America Press in its “Fathers of the Church Series.”

“By any measure, such scholarship would be an impressive accomplishment, but Father Heintz also has the unique distinction of having pursued and earned his theological doctorate on a part-time basis. No one has ever done that before.

“It is truly astonishing to realize that such high quality work — a dissertation, which is already contracted to be published — was accomplished without Father Heintz missing a pastoral beat in his ‘day job’ as rector of a diocesan cathedral,” Cavadini said. “Even the stream of postcards he is accustomed to write, congratulating the youth of his parish...”
Corpus Christi helps us focus on presence of Christ in Eucharist

**The feast of Corpus Christi**

While I was not supportive of changing the feast of the Ascension to a Sunday, the decision to place the feast of Corpus Christi on Sunday in this country is a very positive change as it helps us to focus on the presence of Christ in the holy Eucharist.

The feast of Corpus Christi was last observed in the Church and came out of the profound faith of the people. From the very beginning, the Catholic Church has always believed that the presence of Jesus Christ remains in the consecrated Eucharist after Mass. I recall an intense dialogue a few years ago with our dear Lutheran friends. While they are in communion with us on this, namely, the presence of Christ remaining in the Eucharist after Mass, I found them to be quite interested in this truth and open to conversations about it.

From the very beginning, the church has taken the Eucharist to the sick. This tradition brought the necessity of a proper place of preservation and eventually to prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

I believe this was a very important factor in my own spiritual formation. I remember at Boston College High School, then located in a very downtrodden part of that old city, how after class we would go into the chapel located in a central place on the first floor and pray in the presence of Christ. I have to admit that we prayed there a bit more at exam time. Often in the early morning there would be a priest there hearing confessions, and I can remember taking advantage of this and my joy when I found a good confessor who had returned after serving as a missionary in Japan. Remember above all his kindness and understanding, and I recall how I admired him.

Adoration in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, whether exposed in a monstrance as is done in many of our churches or present in a place of reservation, is a blessed gift to the church.

**A weekend of graduations**

It was my privilege to offer the baccalaureate Mass for Bishop Luers High School on Friday morning and then head directly up the toll road to Granger to visit with a very special man, I refer to Bishop William Houck, originally a priest of Mobile, Ala., who served especially in Catholic secondary education. He served 24 years as a bishop in Jackson-Natchez in Mississippi, five as auxiliary and 19 as ordinary. There he was known especially for his emphasis on Catholic education, evangelization and catechesis. In fact, he later served as chair of the bishops’ committee on evangelization. After his retirement, he served five years as executive director of Extension Society. This is an extraordinary foundation, which has raised millions to build new churches across the land. Archbishop Alfred Hughes told me how generous the Extension Society was to the Archdiocese of New Orleans after the flood. Bishop Houck visited the devastated city three times to bring aid.

Now back in Mississippi, he came at my request to do seven confirmations. He homily, followed by a second short word to the young people after the gift of the Holy Spirit and reception of holy Communion, has been well received by parents and priests. I was only able to spend an hour with him, but it was a grace. He has been staying at St. Pius X in Granger. Of course, Father Bill Schookler, the pastor, and some seminarians were off bicycling hundreds of miles to the north. Youth is great. Bishop Houck will return to St. Pius X to receive a collection for his mission in mid-July. A splendid man.

**College graduations**

I was off then to Saint Mary’s College where it was my privilege, as I have done just about every year, to celebrate the baccalaureate Mass and preach to the young people. I drew heavily on “Mullert’s Dignitatem,” the apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II on the dignity of women. The 20th anniversary of that historic document was observed.

Among the other things the pope does in that document is to reflect on the different meetings and conversations between Jesus Christ and women in the New Testament.

A day at Notre Dame

I dropped into a back seat at Notre Dame on Saturday morning to watch our own Father Mike Heintz, Ph.D., receive his doctorate in theology. Congratulations to Father Mike, who did all this academic work while at the same time taking good care of St. Matthew’s Parish.

In the afternoon, I attended the baccalaureate Mass and spoke my few words at the conclusion. Father John Jenkins, CSC, was celebrant and gave a fine homily on the Holy Trinity.

The next day we were rewarded by a fine baccalaureate address by Cardinal McCarrick followed by a talk by Martin Sheen, the famous actor and winner of the Laetare Medal, Notre Dame’s highest honor. He was obviously thrilled and is a great Notre Dame fan.

**Meeting with a scholar**

For me, however, one of the most precious moments of the weekend was when I met Peter Brown. He is an eminent scholar of early Christianity and the author of a life of St. Augustine. I am so grateful for the kind words he said to me at the end of Sunday as graduation was over. I also had the good fortune to sit next to his wife, Betsy, who is a student of medieval history. I did not realize that Dr. Brown was born in Ireland, but educated at Oxford and now a professor at Princeton. The humility of this extraordinary scholar and his kindness and his rich Irish accent, which has survived the years, touched me deeply, as did the words he spoke to me. In a day filled with celebrities, I was moved by his humility and aware also of the depth and extent of his scholarship. Notre Dame has many scholars of St. Augustine; such as, John Cavadini and Brian Daley, SJ, and our own Father Mike Heintz. Of course, our Holy Father Benedict XVI did his own doctoral work on St. Augustine and recently gave four talks at the general audiences on this extraordinary saint of whom he often speaks.

**The question of immigration**

The question of immigration is not only a legal question, but a moral one. The presence of the church is rooted in the dignity of every human person created by God and redeemed by Christ. Next week, I will begin some brief reflections on this topic in this column. Also, we are sending out some bulletin announcements to be used throughout the diocese, so our people will have accurate information.

As I write this, I am preparing a day with our priests and so much more as well. See you next week.
Chinese Catholics observe silence to mourn quake victims

CHENGDU, China (CNS) — Catholics joined other Chinese in observing three minutes of silence May 19 to pray for and mourn those killed by the earthquake that hit southwestern China a week earlier.

The Chinese government declared an unprecedented three-day period of national mourning May 19-21 for victims of the magnitude 7.9 quake. Entertainment businesses were to be closed and the Beijing Olympic torch relay in Zhejiang and Shanghai was suspended until May 22, reported UCA News, an Asian church news agency.

After a Mass at Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Chengdu May 19, about 100 Catholics stood and observed the three minutes of silence at 2:28 p.m., the time at which the quake struck a week earlier. The quake’s epicenter was in Wenchuan, just north-west of the city.

Around the country, air-raid sirens and the horns of cars, trains and ships were sounded in expressions of grief as the Chinese stood in silence.

Father Simon Li Zhigang, director of a seminary, told UCA News May 19 that not many people attended the Mass because it was called on short notice. He added that about 100 people attended a memorial Mass for the dead that morning.

In Hong Kong, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-chien led diocesan priests in observing the three-minute silence. Donald Tsang Yam-kuen, a Catholic and the chief executive of Hong Kong, led about 500 local officials in the moments of silence, after which he made the sign of the cross.

Government offices and schools in Hong Kong flew the Chinese flag at half-staff as did all government offices on the mainland, in neighboring Macau and at all Chinese diplomatic missions abroad.

Zhang Jingqi, a 22-year-old Catholic volunteer who recently returned to Chengdu from hard-hit Mianyang, told UCA News May 19 that she could never have imagined such a silence as during those three minutes, which she said showed the “huge power of solidarity among the people.”

Mianyang is nearly 50 miles north of Chengdu, and Zhang said she helped register the names of quake survivors. She recalled one woman who underwent surgery around the time the quake occurred and later returned home to find her husband dead and her two children missing.

“The woman was still weak after the surgery, but just kept crying and said nothing,” Zhang said.

Li Yuan, another Catholic volunteer who administered first aid to quake survivors, told UCA News May 19 that what moved her most was hearing a teacher who died using his body to shield three primary-school children from falling masonry. The children lived.

On May 16, 50 priests and nuns from Hebei, Tianjin, Shanxi, Shaanxi and other provinces — including a team sent by Jinde Charities, a nationwide church-run nongovernmental organization — arrived in Chengdu to help survivors. Many Catholic youths also helped.

A May 18 report from Jinde Charities said its team went to Shifang, another hard-hit city. Team members helped spread disinfectant to avoid disease and consolled survivors who took shelter in tents and makeshift huts.

In Chengdu, Father Li said the government’s Earthquake Relief Committee and the Red Cross enlisted church workers for coordination, because such a huge crisis cannot be handled by individual organizations or units.

Approximately 35,000 people died and more than 245,000 people were injured in the quake.
Missionaries of the Precious Blood welcome four new members

CELINA, Ohio — Four young men, including a native of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said yes to their vocational call on Saturday, May 17, and became full members of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood (CPPS), a religious congregation of priests, brothers and lay associates.

The ceremony, called the rite of definitive incorporation, took place during a Mass at Immaculate Conception Church in Celina, Ohio. Precious Blood Father Angelo Anthony, provincial director of the Cincinnati Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, accepted the young men’s commitment to the Congregation.

Making their definitive incorporations were: Father Angelmiro Granados Acevedo, CPPS, 31, a native of Colombia, who was ordained a deacon in 2003. When he went searching for a religious community that could foster his call to the spirituality of the Precious Blood, a native of the missionaries through their Web site, beginning a five-year formation process. Father Granados serves as a teacher and chaplain at a school in Bogota, Colombia, where he is studying for a master’s degree.

Kevin Scalf, CPPS, 32, a native of Cincinnati, is in advanced formation with the missionaries. A high school teacher before he entered the community, he recently completed a masters of divinity degree at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and also teaches lay ministry classes in the Diocese of Gary. Scalf, a priesthood candidate, will be ordained a deacon at St. John the Baptist Church in Whiting on July 1.

From left, Kevin Scalf, Brother Antonio Sison, Vince Wirtner and Father Angelmiro Granados hold the mission crosses they received during the rite of definitive incorporation, signifying their full membership as Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Vince Wirtner, CPPS, 45, a native of Fort Wayne, is a former youth minister and a licensed practical nurse. He also brings his gift of music to the congregation. He is currently in advanced formation and is studying at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago in preparation for the priesthood.

With the rite of definitive incorporation, Antonio Sison, CPPS, 42, becomes Brother Antonio, a religious brother with the community. A filmmaker, teacher and spiritual director, he is a native of the Philippines who received a doctorate in theology while studying in the Netherlands. Brother Antonio teaches at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where he has spent two years in advanced formation.

The celebration was a joyous day for the congregation, whose members carry on many ministries across the United States. “For those of us who pray for vocations to the religious life, for those who have asked God to send more people to work in his vineyards, a day like this is an answer to those prayers,” said Father Anthony. “These four men, from such different backgrounds, all displayed the same commitment to our community and to a life of service in the church. They bring many gifts to our Precious Blood family, and we welcome them and honor the years of preparation it took for them to make this step.”

Typically, a candidate in formation with the missionaries spends two to four years in initial formation, a time of discovery and study. He then spends a year or more in special formation, during which he lives at a parish where Precious Blood members are in ministry. Advanced formation is a time of intensive study and preparation before ordination first as a deacon then a priest, or before profession as a religious brother, and can last two years or more.

Recently, the community celebrated with two other young men. Fathers Hilton Rodriguez and Nino Caldwell, who were ordained as Precious Blood priests in Lima, Peru.

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood is a religious society of priests, brothers and lay associates founded in 1815 by St. Gaspar del Bufalo. Society members work as missionaries in parishes in the U.S. and abroad, in education and in a wide range of apostolates, promoting the gift of God’s reconciliation worldwide.

The Josephinum held its 109th commencement Saturday, May 10, during which seminarians from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend were awarded degrees. Msgr. Paul Langfeld, rector and president of Josephinum, conveyed the degrees. Those receiving degrees from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend were, Deacon Kevin Bauman, master of divinity, School of Theology; Deacon Andrew Curry, master of divinity, School of Theology; Jacob Meyer, bachelor of philosophy, pre-theology program; and Benjamin Muhlenkamp, pictured above, bachelor of philosophy, pre-theology program.

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Conference Retreat
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July 13-18, 2008

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With: Sr. Janet Barn, OSP
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Rev. Peter Pearson
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Lindenwood is located 40 miles from South Bend and 75 miles from Fort Wayne in Donaldson on Lake Gibrath. Call 574-935-1780 or visit www.lindenwood.org

A Ministry of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ
**Monroeville’s St. Joseph’s School celebrates achievement of its exemplary ISTEP scores**

**BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN**

MONROEVILLE — Two St. Joseph Schools, one in South Bend, one in Monroeville, take top honors for their state scores, announced by the Department of Education’s Public Law 221 ranking. St. Joseph School, South Bend, scored a 97.4 while St. Joseph School, Monroeville, was a 97.2.

Staff, parents, students and friends of St. Joseph School, Monroeville, held a “Celebration of Achievement,” recognizing the accomplishment of the school’s teachers, administrators and 46 students in grades 1-8, on May 16. During the ceremony, Principal Carolyn Kirkendall explained just what the celebration was about, saying, “Our school mission statement challenges students towards academic excellence. St. Joseph School teaches Christ — the way, the truth and the light — to ensure a lifelong formation in faith. We are celebrating being exemplary.”

All in attendance celebrated with pizza, shaved ice cones and a parking lot full of games and activities.

Public Law 221 (PL 221) is Indiana’s comprehensive accountability system for K-12 education. This law was passed by the General Assembly in 1999 with broad bipartisan backing and the support of all education and business communities. PL 221 aims to establish major educational reform and accountability statewide.

Based upon both “improvement” and “performance” data from the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+), PL 221 places Indiana schools into one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress, one of five categories: exemplary progress, commendable progress.

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

Phoenix Institute, a small family oriented foster care agency, is looking for stable and supportive families, single parents, married couples, families of color, empty nesters, people who rent or own. What you do need is a commitment to learning and working as part of a team, a sense of humor, flexibility, and patience. And you need to want to provide a stable and supportive home to a child. Phoenix Institute has a staff with a rich history of working in foster care. Free training - 24 hour staff support reimbursement provided.

May is FOSTER PARENT Appreciation Month
Vatican says 2005 document on homosexuality applies to all seminaries

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a clarification approved by Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican said its 2005 document prohibiting the admission of homosexuals to the priesthood applies to all types of seminaries. That includes houses of formation run by religious orders and those under the authority of the agencies dealing with missionary territories and Eastern churches, said a statement signed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State. The two-sentence clarification was published May 17 by the Vatican newspaper L’Osservatore Romano. It came in response to “numerous requests for clarification,” the Vatican said. In 2005, after more than eight years of study, the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education issued “Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations With Regard to Persons With Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders.” The nine-page instruction said the church cannot allow the priestly ordination of men who are active homosexuals, who have “deep-seated” homosexual tendencies who support the “gay culture.” It urged bishops, major superiors and “all relevant authorities” to make sure the norms were followed.

African Cardinal Gantin, former Vatican official, dies in Paris

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, a pioneering church figure for Africa and an influential voice at the Vatican for more than 30 years, died in Paris May 13 at the age of 86. Pope Benedict XVI, in a telegram of condolences, praised Gantin for his pastoral ministry and for his generous service in Rome, where he worked for seven years as “one of the most prominent sons of Benin and of Africa.”

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago gives the greeting of peace to newly ordained Father Grzegorz Wojcik during the ordination of 11 men at St. Juliana Church in Chicago May 17. Five of the priests are from Poland, two are from Mexico, one is from Ecuador, one is from Colombia and two are from Tanzania. The new priests will all serve the Archdiocese of Chicago.

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Writing celebrated at St. Mary School, Avilla

Stephanie Ehmeke and Alyssa Grimm create bookmarks with “Amelia Bedilia” (teacher Cindy Stahl) and “Sarah Plain and Tall” (teacher Brenda Kline) as part of the school’s Celebration of Writing, held April 29 to highlight authors and their work.

Support for grieving parents offered by Visiting Nurse and Hospice Home

FORT WAYNE — Visiting Nurse and Hospice Home Bereavement Programs is offering a full-day retreat for grieving parents on Saturday, May 31, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., to be held at Huntington at the Victory Noll Center. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

The retreat will focus on the natural process of grief through the exploration of the seasons of the year. Participants will reflect on the writings of James E. Miller in “When Mourning Dawns: Living Your Life Fully Through the Seasons of Grief.”

There will be opportunities for personal reflection, sharing, relaxation and time to enjoy the beautiful and peaceful environment of Victory Noll.

The program is free and open to anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age and from any cause. Breakfast and lunch will be served.

For reservations contact Lali Carroll at lilocarroll@vnhh.org or Bonnie Knuth at bonnieknuth@vnhh.org or call (260) 435-3222 or toll-free (800) 288-4111.

USF celebrates opening of Outdoor Gallery, public art project

FORT WAYNE — The School of Creative Arts at the University of Saint Francis announces the opening of the 2008 Outdoor Gallery, Images of Our City public art project, a program made possible in part by a Creative Alternatives Programs (CAP) Grant from Lincoln Financial Foundation, Foellinger Foundation and Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne.

Based on the belief that arts experiences can be a stabilizing influence in the lives of at-risk youth, the CAP Grant Program stimulates, funds and supports hands-on art programs. To recognize and encourage artistic talent, the School of Creative Arts created The Outdoor Gallery, Images of Our City project in which students from 17 high schools in Allen County worked with a photographer, artist and learned various aspects of digital photography and photo manipulation. Each high school team built a collaborative photographic montage guided by the artist and their own CAP student mentor. The final 17 pieces will be printed on large format banners and displayed this summer. Charles Alexander, executive director of the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, will judge the final pieces and name a "Best in Show" which will be printed on a billboard-sized banner.

The Grand Wayne Center, located at 120 West Jefferson St., will house the Outdoor Gallery. The exhibit will be part of the Downtown Improvement District’s Second Annual Arts Crawl. Awards will be presented at 6 p.m.

Anglican-Catholic dialogue set May 28

SOUTH BEND — An evening event entitled “An Introduction to the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue” will take place on Wednesday, May 28, from 6-9 p.m. at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 115 N. Noble St., South Bend. Bishop John M. D’Arcy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will open the evening with a presentation titled “Night Prayer at 6 p.m.” A meal of home-made soups will follow in the church’s Mary Magdalene Room. The Anglican Center in Rome, and Professor Lawrence Cunningham, of the Department of Theology at Notre Dame, will each give brief presentations on the state of the dialogue. Night Prayer will be led by Father Don長, pastor of the Diocese of Northern Indiana. An RSVP to (574) 297-6404 is appreciated, but not necessary.
Executive director of World Apostolate of Fatima USA to speak in Fort Wayne BY SUSAN BRINKMAN, OCD

FORT WAYNE — The Pilgrim Virgin statue of Our Lady of Fatima that was once denied entrance to Russia is finally on her way home, and it is making a farewell journey through the United States this summer.

World Apostolate of Fatima divisions throughout the country, including the diocesan apostolate, will host Michael La Corte, executive director of the World Apostolate of Fatima USA, who will bring the statue, known as the Odessa Pilgrim Virgin statue, along with several intriguing films.

“One film contains original footage of a rare interview between apostolate cofounder John Haffert and Dominic Reis, a witness to the miracle of the sun that took place on Oct. 13, 1917 in Fatima,” La Corte said. “Another film I’ll be showing is ‘Fatima, the Path to an Era of Peace,’ which explains terrorism and its solutions.”

In some locations, he will also be showing a draft of a professionally made movie by Lou Reda Productions about Fatima, which is scheduled to debut in theaters sometime in 2009. Suitable for people of all faiths, it recounts how the return of Russia’s most venerated image of Our Lady, the Icon of Kazan, is enthralling.

It started in 1679 when Our Lady appeared to a 9-year-old child named Mariana and told her where to unearth the diamond-encrusted image of Our Lady known as the Icon of Kazan. It had been buried ever since the Tartars sacked the Russian city of Kazan in 1239. The image was revered in Russia until the advent of atheist communism when it had to be smuggled out of the country. It found its way to England where it was purchased by the World Apostolate of Fatima and eventually turned over to Pope John Paul II until it was returned to the country in 2004.

Meanwhile, in 1971, 238 pilgrims attempted to deliver a Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady to Russia that had been blessed at Fatima by Pope Paul VI, but she was denied entrance. While sitting on a ship at the Ukrainian port of Odessa, they made the decision to fly the statue to Moscow in a chartered plane, wrap it in rags and secretly process it through the heart of Red Square. It was then flown back to the ship and eventually brought to the Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Washington, N.J., where it came to be known as the Odessa Pilgrim Virgin statue.

As only heaven can arrange, La Corte was visiting Fatima in 2004 when he met a Russian man named Dmitry Khafizov who had played a role in the historic return of the Icon of Kazan to Russia. He invited him to Kazan, a half-Muslim, half-Orthodox Christian city, where he claims everyone lives and prays together in peace. Wondering how believable this could be, La Corte found out for himself during his first visit to Kazan in 2006. He asked the spiritual and government leaders of Kazan to join in prayer with faithfulness from all over the world.

LOCALLY, ON SATURDAY, JUNE 14, Bishop John M. D’Arcy will offer 9 a.m. Mass and give the homily at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. The diocesan Apostolate of Fatima breakfast will follow at St. Mary’s Hall, St. Mary Church, Fort Wayne. Guest speaker and presenter of the Odessa statue and films will be Michael La Corte, executive director of the World Apostolate of Fatima, USA, from Washington, N.J. Fort Wayne is one of his stops of the U.S. final tour with the statue. Space is limited. For information or for those wishing to make reservations for the breakfast, call (260) 625-1281 by June 6.

For information on the World Apostolate of Fatima, USA, visit: www.wafusa.org.

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Presidents examine Holy Cross education

BY SUSAN BAXTER

NOTRE DAME — Three distinguished college-university presidents met at Saint Mary’s College April 25 to discuss “the uniqueness, values and traditions of a Holy Cross education.” Although the setting was decidedly formal, the event overflowed with the Holy Cross Spirit of hospitality and quickly became more like having the cousins over for a visit than a public forum.

Saint Mary’s College President Carol Mooney hosted Holy Cross Brother Richard Gilman, president of Holy Cross College, and Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, in the student center for the chat as members of the college and university communities, students and donors listened. The presidents answered questions from Shari Rodriguez, Saint Mary’s vice president for college relations, who moderated the event. Each brought a unique perspective about the bond with Holy Cross principles and the relevance of these values in a Holy Cross education.

Mooney, the first lay alumna to hold the Office of President at Saint Mary’s, said Holy Cross has had a profound influence on her life.

“I don’t think when I graduated from here in 1972 that I realized the impact Saint Mary’s would have and how differently I would live because of this,” Mooney said. “And I saw it over the years in my classmates and friends. . .I saw a difference in their lives. It’s not so much what we say, but what we inspire.”

Rodriguez began the discussion by quoting the recently-beatified founder of the Holy Cross.

“In 1849, Blessed Basil Moreau wrote that ‘We shall place education side-by-side with instruction; the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart. While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for eternal life.’” Rodriguez said. “How do you see that applying to your institutions today?”

Gilman said that although Moreau’s writings were not source materials for Holy Cross training and formation, mind-heart education has always been a hallmark of the congregation.

“Many people do not realize that what Father Moreau wrote was not translated until the 1970s; it was not used by Holy Cross as a source document,” Gilman said. “But when we reflect back over the years, we realize that many of those characteristics are indeed part of a Holy Cross education.”

“As I look at my own institution, our board of trustees just adopted a new strategic plan, after almost two years of work. After reflecting on what Moreau said, we finally merged our student life, residence life, academic planning into one whole. What we’re trying to do, particularly as a Holy Cross environment, is to have a sense of” all does not just take place in the classroom.”

Father Jenkins agreed, noting in particular students who enter Notre Dame with goals and dreams of their own often graduate from Saint Mary’s with a passionate desire to serve the needs of the world. “The charism of (Holy Cross) is carried so much by documents, but by embodying principles in the lives and practices at our institutions,” he said. “The education of mind and the heart is so central; it is perhaps the central value to the Holy Cross tradition. It is a powerful presence on campus; it has a powerful effect on our students.”

Mooney said her belief in the spirit of Holy Cross was confirmed during the recent meeting of college presidents with Pope Benedict XVI.

“The pope said that ‘those who hear the Gospel should as a result live differently.’ Holy Cross has a special emphasis on mission, on work, on living Holy Cross and making it come alive, rather than preaching a certain message in a certain way,” she said. “The young women who come here — so proud, so happy to be here — leave four years later much different people. So much more mature, so much more confident, so much more ready for the challenges of life that lie ahead. That gives me immeasurable joy.”

Several of those young women were eager to confirm the presidential messages in interviews after the event. Sarah Dalton is a senior from Wethersboro, Pa., who says that faith in the cross of Christ is a decision.

“If you were to ask me what the Catholic/Holy Cross mission statement is, I would not be able to state it word for word,” Kolling said. “I do, however, know how important education, religion and preparation for life is at this college. We are not just here to earn a degree so we will be able to go out and make millions of dollars. As a student here, I can tell that our education involves learning life skills; how to be moral women and be a part of a community.’

Dalton and Kolling said that even those who choose to ignore the religious dimension to the Holy Cross environment are still touched by it.

“Friends, teachers and faculty do not follow the mission statement or particularly care about it; they are still benefiting from it through knowing and interacting with others.”

“Everything we do at this school involves the mind and the heart,” Kolling said. “If we just worked with our minds, we all would be robots; our hearts make us human. When we make decisions, we consider others and how they will be affected.”

All three presidents agreed that Blessed Basil Moreau would be equally comfortable educating the people of “opposition to ideas.”

“He always said that . . . We have nothing to fear from knowledge. We can encounter it all and explore it, and that’s not going to undermine our faith,” Mooney said. “There is a fearlessness about knowledge and dialogue and the ability to examine ideas from a variety of perspectives because we are not afraid of engagement with the world.”

For the event, three identical banners had been hung from the ceiling over each president’s chair. The banners proclaimed a prophecy of Blessed Basil Moreau: “Holy Cross will grow like a mighty tree.” They may have been intended to designate three distinct branches of that tree: Priests, sisters and brothers, but by the end of the event they spoke only of unity in the holy cross of Christ.

Holy Cross College President Brother Richard Gilman, CSC, and Father John Jenkins, CSC, president of the University of Notre Dame, were the guests of Saint Mary’s College President Dr. Carol Mooney for a discussion of the Holy Cross Mission in Catholic Education. Shari Rodriguez, far left, Saint Mary’s vice president for college relations, moderated the event.

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Provena Health, a Catholic health system, builds communities of healing and hope by compassionately responding to human need in the spirit of Jesus Christ.
I can’t help getting older, but I’m never going to get old

BY SISTER ANGELITA FENKER

This topic of getting older charges that “fire in my bones.” It is a pursed study in holistic family spirituality and have given seminars in this field since 1974 throughout the U.S. and Canada. As I did this, I noticed something strange when it came to stages live and six of the family life cycle retirement and aging. Most information available in both countries focused on faulty, deterioration or carefree retirement instead of on maturity adulthood faith formation that is practical, relevant, changing and personal.

In my heart, I felt a more positive view. In my ongoing post-doctoral research, I finally found authors who agreed. This article’s title reflects both of my parents’ philosophies. Dad lived fully till 85. Mother was active to 100. I came to understand what they meant by older and old. Some people are old at 30; others are never at 120. You know them; so do I. Older people we’ve known form these pursuits study toward aging. We frequently absorb their mindset.

Many adults describe themselves as old when they sense cheerless bodily changes happening. They emphasize loss/diminishment (what can’t be done), instead of gain/wellness (what’s possible because of lived experience). Aging is traced as a disease, instead of an opportunity for further, holistic, dynamic growth. Attitude is the primary predictor of the maturing process and dictates our answer to the questions: “What is the difference between older and old?” and “How do I know when I am old?”

Answers usually center around a subjective emphasis by society with its stress on ageism and illness. At no other time in life are disabilities equated with personhood except when one is labeled elderly. Refrain from using the terms elderly or old in our society as these concepts diminishment and finality. I encourage use of older as this fits anyone, even a baby. The answer to the posed question is simple: If I choose to love God, self, others and creation — I’ll never get old. I’ll grow older in wisdom, grace and vitality until my life’s mission is complete, but I will never be old. A person becomes old when they choose to stop loving — and that choice can happen at any age.

Love is the only anti-aging pill that works — and, it’s free.

We all get older; life is a creation in progress. If we stop getting older, then what? We plan for our future financially; why not spiritually? We can’t stay young, but can stay youthful in spirit by our choice of love, since our choice of love is as young as when God first created it. God’s love in us keeps us wondrously life-giving and still discovers us. Goddream at each new time of life. This attitude works as long as we’re alive, no matter how often we’ve been around the sun — that’s all birthdays tell us anyway.

I believe that spiritual maturing refers to this loving, and to the ongoing enrichment of soul/spirit, body/brain and mind throughout the life-cycle by which we express love. We can’t isolate these human functions from spirituality. Spirituality is all of these working in harmony and balance. A strong, faith-filled spirit drives our total system. Studies show that Alzheimers’ patients can still be aware of prayer and spiritual connections even if their other faculties are unable to respond.

Church and society must play a critical role in promoting this wellness focus and change fundamental attitudes toward the maturing process. Many services are provided for frail adults. However, there aren’t many which help the non-fragile with their emergent spirituality and empowerment.

My dream is that every diaconate have a person trained in this phase of pastoral ministry — someone free to assist parishes with this incredible empowerment: grace-filled transitions unto transformation throughout the stages of the life-cycle. Until then, consider the question, “How can I help develop spiritual maturing?”

Seven ways to expand the gift of Christ-abundant life are to:

1. Develop a positive attitude — focus on can-dos, not can’t-dos.
2. Maintain a proper balanced diet — portion control/calorie restriction; medications, vitamins and adequate rest.
3. Exercise 30 minutes daily stretching, walking, aerobics.
4. Socialize — take the initiative to stay connected with friends, serve others.
5. Do fun things — create time for relaxing and enjoyable activities.
7. Spend quiet time with Christ — try new prayer forms, write some of your own, read Scripture; and above all, do something to let Christ talk to you.

Reflection:

What is my attitude toward spiritual maturing? Toward getting old.

Scripture: “By me your days will be multiplied and the years of your life increased.” (Prv 9:11)

Sister Angelita Fenker, SFCF, has been involved in education at all levels for over 60 years. She holds a doctorate in spirituality; and continues postdoctoral certification in the area of spirituality for maturing and aging. Her book “Grace-filled Transitions unto Transformation” (2004) is available at Barnes & Noble.

Sally Cover, senior from St. John the Evangelist Church, spoke about her passion for youth on a recent spring day at an area tourist destination near her Middlebury home.

BY DENISE FEDOROW

GOSHEN — A St. John the Evangelist grandmother Sally Cover has found a new passion. The last few years, Goshen teens have been camping out with teams, Sally Cover as an adult volunteer for the Catholic Heart Work Camp that St. John’s youth participate in each summer.

The Catholic Heart Work Camp’s mission is twofold, according to the organization’s literature. “It is to share the love of Jesus and serve the neglected, broken, ill and marginalized in any way needed.” The Catholic HEART work-camp mission is to develop, sustain, communities and beauty homes for the elderly, disabled and those who cannot afford needed repairs.”

And second, “to empower participants as disciples of Christ through serving others. To foster growth of each participant through the sacraments, Catholic faith sharing and prayer”.

Sally was first introduced to the program in 1995 by fellow parishioners Pat her daughter, Kathy Turco, organizes the work camp at St. John’s. “They expressed their love for it and were so dedicated,” Sally explains. “I wanted to see if this was something that would be good for my grandchildren to do.”

Family is important to Sally, who grew up on a farm in Iowa, one of 11 children. She and husband Jim, who passed away in 2004, moved to Indiana in 1978 and in 1996 built their home in Middlebury and became St. Johners, she says. The couple have five children: Mary, Elizabeth, Allen, Bill and Tricia and 13 grandchildren. Sally’s sons and eight of her grandchildren attend St. John’s.

Aside from volunteering for the Catholic Heart Work Camp, Sally is involved in the parish holy hour, a Eucharist ministers and, when her husband was alive, they visited the home-bound together. But she said “loves being a grandmother — I’ll never get old. I’ll grow older in wisdom, grace and vitality until my life’s mission is complete, but I will never be old. A person becomes old when they choose to stop loving — and that choice can happen at any age.”

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St. John’s youth will leave July 6 for a mission work camp in Omaha, Neb. For more information on the camp, visit www.heartworkcamp.com

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“By me your days will be multiplied and the years of your life increased.” (Prv 9:11)
Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods graduate inspired by St. Mother Theodore Guérin statue dedication

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — When Dorothy Heiny, parishoner of St. John the Baptist Parish and 1939 Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods College alumna, heard about the special dedication of the statue of St. Mother Theodore Guérin to be held in Washington, D.C., this month, she knew immediately that she wanted to go. The Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, founded by Mother Guérin in 1840, helped shape the Catholic education she holds so dear.

This 91-year-old native of Fort Wayne attended Catholic schools throughout her academic career, beginning with her first six years at the Cathedral Grade School. Heiny recalls being taught by the Sisters of Providence.

“I’m very fond of the Sisters of Providence. They were not too strict and not too lenient,” she says, adding, “They were good educators, I thought.”

She then attended the newly-opened St. Jude School in her seventh and eighth grade years. Her high school days were spent at St. Augustine Academy in what is now the diocesan chancery, each year taught by the sisters. That, she says with pride, has been a blessing passed down through three generations as her grandmother and mother were both taught by the sisters at the academy before her.

Following high school graduation in 1935, she won a four-year academic scholarship to Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods College near Terre Haute but says she would have chosen to go there anyway. In 1939, the young graduate had earned her degree in English and Latin thanks to the Sisters of Providence.

After raising nine children, then teaching part-time at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne (IPFW) for 20 years, Heiny retired and eventually was recognized for her widespread community service with the Francis Murphy Rumely Award, an honor presented to alumni of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for exemplary volunteer work.

These rich historical ties to the Sisters of Providence meant one thing for this nonagenarian — a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., to honor the saint who brought the sisters to Indiana. Early May 9, in Indianapolis, Heiny and daughter Mary Kowalski boarded one of three buses filled with pilgrims, alumni and friends of the sisters headed for the nation’s capital. Thirteen hours later, the weary but still enthusiastic travelers arrived in Washington D.C.

“It was a long trip, but I didn’t mind it much,” says Heiny, with daughter Mary adding, “…The people we met on the bus were wonderful.”

The next morning, Heiny and the eater group were transported to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception where tours were held. Many, including Heiny, attended an alumni brunch held at Trinity College located near the basilica. Following the brunch, Heiny says she and her daughter didn’t dally as they made their way to the ground-level basilica Crypt Church for a special Mass celebrated by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the papal representative to the United States.

“There were 500 people there in the crypt for Mass,” says Heiny of the standing-room-only crowd in attendance. The nuncio gave a “lovely homily,” emphasizing Mother Guérin’s reliance on Providence.

“I was most impressed by the nuncio’s remark that peace is not just the absence of violence but that we must surrender ourselves to the providence of God,” says the inspired Heiny.

Following Mass, those in attendance processed to Mary’s Garden where the statue of Mother Guérin stands.

“The grounds were gorgeous,” recalls Heiny. “The basilica and the statue were surrounded by yellow and white flowers.”

Once there, voices were lifted in song and prayer as Archbishop Sambi blessed the statue, after which many, including Heiny, joyfully touched the outstretched hand of the statue in solidarity of faith.

The statue is the design of artist Teresa Clark of Terre Haute, who sculpted it in clay. A mold of the sculpture was then sent to Nicholas Fairplay in Ohio, who carved the statue from Indiana limestone. Clark was present for the blessing and dedication.

A reception was held within walking distance of the garden at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center where the faithful enjoyed refreshments after the inspiring ceremony. Adding to the excitement of the day, Heiny says, “I saw quite a few of the sisters I knew from Saint Mary’s College. A lot of the sisters went. It was a big occasion for them!”

Daughter Mary adds, “It was interesting meeting a friend of mom’s from the class of 1941. I could really feel that all the Woods’ alumni, no matter the year, shared a common bond.”

After the long and engaging day, the tired pilgrims gathered in their respective hotels to prepare for the trip home. Heiny and her daughter arrived back in Indianapolis Sunday evening filled with the Spirit.

“I had energy,” says the 91-year-old Heiny, “I was running on enthusiasm!”

Upon returning to her home in Fort Wayne, Heiny brings with her this inspiration. “Mother Guérin’s emphasis on Providence and not getting upset about things is a strong prescription. It’s not easy to do … But if you follow it, it works well.”

St. Mother Theodore Guérin was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on Oct. 15, 2006.
Mary: The perfect example in living a life of stewardship

The Magnificat is Mary’s prayer in which she responded “yes” to God’s calling that she be the mother of the Son of God. In the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55), Mary spoke the Magnificat during the visit to her cousin, Elizabeth, which the church celebrates on May 31 as the feast of the Visitation. As Mary greets Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptist, the baby leaps for joy in Elizabeth’s womb. Elizabeth, in admiration for Mary’s deep faith in God, proclaims, “Blessed art thou among women and blesst is the fruit of your womb.” Mary responds to her with the Magnificat as a steward of God’s great gift of divine life that is within her.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the U.S. bishops wrote that in Mary’s example are all the essential elements of being a good steward. “She was called and gifted by God. She generously, creatively and prudently responded to her mission.” Mary’s Magnificat, then, is a prayer of true stewardship and can be the inspiration and guide for each person in answering God’s call on the journey to a stewardship way of life. The Magnificat can be prayed as follows:

My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, For he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant girl. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me, And holy is his name. God’s mercy is from generation to generation for those who fear him. God has shown might with his arm; He has confounded the arrogant in the conceit of their hearts. God has pulled down the powerful from their thrones, And lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich he has sent away empty. God has come to the help of his servant Israel, Remembering his mercy, According to the promise he made to our ancestors, To Abraham and to his descendants forever.

The Magnificat Bequest Society, named in honor of Mary who is patroness of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, recognizes and thanks generous individuals who have remembered their parish, school or other diocesan organization through a gift from their estate plans or other type of planned gift or endowment, we wish to invite you to join the Magnificat Bequest Society.

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Elisa M. Smith, CPA/PFS, is the director of Planned Giving for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and vice president and director of financial planning for STAR Wealth Management, 127 W. Berry St., P.O. Box 10600, Fort Wayne, IN 46853-0600.
Graduation, a new beginning

I have been watching “Dancing with the Stars” with an interest that verges on addiction. I enjoy the dancing, but it is the costume and makeup magic that draws me in every Monday night. The tricks are wide ranging: spray-on tanner, fake eyelashes, body glitter, ornate costumes. Swirled together, they create aesthetic firewoks.

In Day commercials, I grab my 5-pound weights and do triecp curls, huffing and heaving into toned conformity. Wedding and swim suit seasons have arrived, and I’m not quite ready. It seems nearly impossible for a young adult — even a ground ed, faith-filled one — to resist bouts of beauty yearning and seeking. The pursuit can be a lifetime process. We either continue to grow and develop or will regress. There is no such thing as standing still.

I work for my congregation, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, and spend a lot of time at our administrative headquarters located at Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame. Many of our senior sisters live there. I am continually edified and challenged by their ongoing thirst for learning and their zest for life. They participate in many types of activities including those offered by our Saint Mary’s College. Right now I am in a Spanish class with a sister who is 98. She hasn’t missed a class, and she studies more than I do.

Unfortunately, it is sad that few of us reach our potential. God has given each person gifts and talents. It is our responsibility to discover, develop our own and use them for the building up of the body of Christ and the world. They are not for us alone. They are given to us to be shared with the community.

All who are graduating this year have been given the wonderful gift of an education, and it is up to you to decide how you are going to use it. Education is a lot more than learning skills to enable one to go out into the world and make a lot of money. The purpose of education is to help a person become what God created him or her to be. In the parable about the talents, a master gave his three servants a number of talents to develop and use. As the master in the story, Jesus will ask us what we did with the gifts God gave us. Will we be able to say that we developed them or not? Like the 98-year-old sister in my Spanish class, will we stay interested in life for as long as we are able and continue to grow? Hopefully our diplomas will be more than framed documents hanging on some wall or put in a box somewhere. Our education should stimulate us to continue to discover and develop our gifts and use them to build the reign of God. It really doesn’t matter how much we are given. What matters is how we use the skills and talents we have been given. Finally, a good education is not just book knowledge. Hopefully it encompasses good values that will help us to live the Christian life.

I pray for God’s blessing on all who have or will soon graduate. May you continue to grow in faith and knowledge and use the potential God has given you to make this world a better place for all.

Sister Margie Lavonis, CSC, a former campus minister and vocation director, works for the Sisters of the Holy Cross communications department. mlavonis@cscsisters.org.
California decision on marriage challenges us to deepen our witness

On May 15, in a 4-3 decision, the California Supreme Court declared that a proposition that stated that “only marriage between one man and one woman is valid and recognized in California” violated the equal protection clause of the California Constitution. In other words, not only must the State of California provide to homosexual civil unions all the rights and privileges of marriage, but the California Constitution mandates that it be called “marriage” as well.

It is important to remember that Proposition 22 passed in a statewide vote eight years ago with more than 60 percent approval. Now, the California Supreme Court has ruled that it is bound by the will of the majority of the people of California, but has likened laws that do not recognize “homosexual marriages” to laws that forbid unions in the marriages. According to these judges, it is simple bigotry, and they know better.

In response to this decision of the court, the Catholic Bishops of California have made clear that “Catholic teaching maintains that marriage is a faithful, exclusive and lifelong union between one man and one woman joined in an intimate partnership of life and love — a union instituted by God for the mutual fulfillment of the husband and wife as well as for the procreation and education of children.”

In addition, Archbishop Neiderauer of San Francisco pointed out that “at a moment in our society when we need to reinforce the strength of marriage and family, this decision of the Supreme Court presents a serious threat to perceived understanding of marriage to deepen their witness to the unique and essential role that marriage between a man and a woman plays in the life of society.”

Consider these words of Pope Paul VI from his historic 1968 encyclical, “Humanae vitae”: “Conjugal love reveals its true nature and nobility when it is considered in its supreme origin, God, who is love, ‘the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named’ (Eph. 3:15). Marriage is not, then, the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind his design of love. By means of the reciprocal personal gift of self, proper and exclusive to them, husband and wife tend towards the communion of their beings in view of mutual personal perfection, to collaborate with God in the generation and education of new lives.

Indeed, as Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his encyclical on the topic of love, “Deus Caritas Est,” love is the primordial center of the cosmos as it is the first great moral work contributed to the deeper appreciation of the dignity of marriage — and especially of the woman — to Western civilization. The equal dignity of men and women is something that modern society takes for granted, but the source of this insight and conviction is to be found in the Christian understanding of the human person. In a pagan society where wives could easily be tossed aside by a no-longer interested husband, St. Paul instructed husbands to love their wives unselfishly, to be faithful to them and to submit themselves to their well-being. It is no accident that the medieval idea of chivalry — of using masculine strength to protect women, children and the vulnerable — sprung from a Christian view of the world.

Service to the truth

In proposing that our society should maintain through our laws and customs the recognition that marriage reflects the complementarity of the sexes, that the child is not an impersonal by-product, but rather a service to the truth. Undeniably, our nation is filled with people of good will, but for some reason it is not on the agenda to think about the moral and civic consequences of that action.

Then, in a democracy, it is up to the majority through referendum or elected representatives to make the decision. A decision establishing “homosexual marriages” should not be aggressively imposed on the people. It was several years ago by four judges in Massachusetts and, now, by four judges in California.
Immigration vs. jobs and opportunity

Perceived myth: Immigrants take jobs and opportunity from Americans.

Known fact: The largest wave of immigration to the U.S. since the early 1900s coincided with our lowest national unemployment rate and fastest economic growth. Immigrant entrepreneurs also create jobs for U.S. and foreign workers. While there has been no comprehensive study done of immigrant-owned businesses, there are countless examples: in Silicon Valley, companies begun by Chinese and Indian immigrants generated more than $19.5 billion in sales and nearly 73,000 jobs in 2000. — Source: Immigration and Unemployment: New Evidence, Alexis de Tocqueville Institution.

Aren't immigrants taking jobs from U.S. workers? Why do businesses hire them?

During the 1990s, half of all new workers were foreign-born, filling gaps left by native-born workers in both the high- and low-skill ends of the spectrum.

Immigrants fill jobs in key sectors, start their own businesses, and contribute to a thriving economy. The net benefit of immigration to the U.S. is nearly $10 billion annually. As Alan Greenspan points out, 70 percent of immigrants arrive in prime working age. That means we haven’t spent a penny on their education, yet they are transplanted into our workforce and will contribute $500 billion toward our social security system over the next 20 years.

The U.S. Department of Labor projects that by 2010, the U.S. will create 22 million new jobs — 9 million more jobs than new (native-born) workers entering the job market. This gap will increase after 2010 as the “baby boomers” reach retirement age and leave the labor force.

Today, our immigration laws do not adequately support our economic and economic reality. Our immigration laws should be reconciled with the economic needs of supply and demand. Immigration reform would address a range of workforce realities — legalizing a workforce that is here to stay, providing more legal visas for workers to come in the future, and providing for the tempo-

rinary employment of foreign workers who help American employers in sectors of the economy that pro-

vide seasonal jobs.

Quot: “Migrants have a right to life with dignity, and therefore a right to migrate to that end.” — Apostolic Constitution on the Spirituality of the Migrant, Pope Pius XII, 1952.

To correspond with materials distributed at parishes in the Dioceses of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the Indiana Catholic Conference is offering this series of information pieces concerning perceived myths vs. known facts on im-

migration. For information visit the Indiana Catholic Conference Web site at www.indianacatholic.org.

‘I am the living bread come down from heaven’

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Feast of Corpus Christi
Jn 6:51-58

This weekend the church celebrates the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, as it perhaps is better known by its Latin transla-

tion, Corpus Christi.

The first reading is from the Book of Deuteronomy, one of the first five books of the Old Testament. Deuteronomy recalls the passage of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land.

Moses is the central figure in this book, in the Pentateuch, and in the list of ancient Hebrew prophets. He is the principal figure in this reading.

To understand this book, and indeed to understand the plight of the Hebrews as they fled from slavery in Egypt, across the Sinai Peninsula, and eventually to the Promised Land, it is necessary to realize how bleak and sterile the Promised Land was, and still is for that mat-

ter.

The fleeing Hebrews virtually were helpless. They faced starvation, as well as possible death from thirst, since food and water were nowhere to be found.

Through Moses, God supplied. As a result, the people lived. They did not perish. In time, they arrived at the Promised Land.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians supplies the second reading. Along with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, First Corinthians provides the New Testament records of the institu-

tions of the Eucharist.

The presence of this record in First Corinthians indicates how important the Eucharist was in early Christianity. The similarity among all the accounts shows how carefully the first Christians wished to repeat the Last Supper. St. John’s Gospel is the source of the last reading; it is powerful-

and eloquent. Jesus states, “I am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he shall live forever; the bread I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

The Lord spoke these words, almost certainly, in Aramaic. They were recorded in the Gospel in Greek. The English version is a further translation. Despite the years, and despite the translation, it is clear that Jesus is speaking of the Eucharist, as we understand it today. He used no symbolic phras-

es, no vagueness, no illusions. The biblical texts are clear. He said, “I am the living bread come down from heaven.”

Reflection

The circumstances of the flight of the desperate Hebrews, trapped for generations in slavery in Egypt, across the Sinai Peninsula, as recalled by Deuteronomy, the source of the first reading, is a fit-

ting imitation for the church’s les-

sion on this feast of Corpus Christi. They were completely at the mercy of an unknown and very merciful God. Without food and water, without any direc-

tion as to where to go, they were facing death itself.

God supplied them with food and water, pointing them on the right path to the Promised Land. God gave them life. It is important that we realize who and where we are. Today, as humans in any time, we are lost in our own stark and sterile Sinai Peninsula.

We may have earthly food and water (although many humans do not). We may assume that we know where we are and where we should go with our lives.

But, in fact, we too are at the mercy of conditions surrounding us. In the spiritual sense, we may be facing death. We can do nothing ultimately to rescue ourselves on our own. God enters the picture. He gives us the Jesus, the Son of God. The Lord gives us the Eucharist. As the early Christians so firmly believed, the Eucharist is not merely a symbol. The Eucharist is Jesus, the Lord’s “body, blood, soul and divinity.” In the Eucharist, Jesus gives us life.

READINGS
No intercommunion based on the theology of the Eucharist

Does and what it signifies. of the Eucharist: what it is, what it munion is based upon a theology Christians than nominal Catholics. and others — who are perhaps Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists Catholic Church’s limitations on stood. The rationale behind the munion are generally misunder- ed, and that Catholic limitations on that an injustice is being perpetrat- ing, Benedict XVI put serious benedict XVI had barely left the Catholic University of America on April 17 when the Catholic higher education establishment’s spin machine shift- ed into high gear. One university president said that what most impressed him about the papal address to Catholic educators was what he called a “dressing down.” Still another president cooed that she felt “affirmed.” An administra- tor at another institution said, “That, as the pope hadn’t cited “Ex Corde Ecclesiae.” John Paul II’s concerns about Catholic identity were there, but there is a distinct impression from the spin that a lot of people thought they’d dodged a bullet — and were grateful they weren’t going home to face irate alums and dubious donors. The “Benedict loves what we’re doing” blah-blah has contin- ued ever since. The facts, to put it gently, suggest something rather more com- plicated. Consider these excerpts from the Holy Father’s address: “A university’s or school’s Catholic character would question of conviction — do we really believe that only in the mystery of the Word of God is the identity of man truly become clear? Are we ready to commit our entire self — intellect and will, mind and heart — to God? Do we accept the truth Christ reveals?” (What percentage of this year’s Catholic college and university classes could honestly answer those questions with a convened “Yes”?) “We must have sought diligently to engage the intellect of our young, perhaps we have neg- lected the will. Subsequently we observe, with distress, the notion of freedom being distorted. Freedom is not an opting out. It is clear from the New Testament and early Christian liter- ature that the celebration of the Eucharist, the breaking of the bread, was part and parcel of the newborn church’s self-understand- ing. In Luke’s description of the first Christian community (Acts 2:42-47), it is clear that the common life, prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist of the infant church; that link between community life and the eucharistic celebration is not insignificant. Justin Martyr, a convert to Christianity writing about 60-70 years after the Evangelist Luke, lays down the rationale for admission to eucharistic Communion: baptism, acceptance of basic Christian doctrine, and a moral lifestyle. Justin further emphasizes the importance of what the later tradi- tion would refer to as “real pres- ence” — the Eucharist is not to be received as ordinary bread and wine but as the flesh and blood of Jesus, himself took flesh for our salvation. Many Christian denominations do not share the historic understanding of the Eucharist that Catholicism holds, teaches and cel- ebrates: that the Eucharist is simply as a symbol and memorial what Jesus has done for us. Such ideas about symbol and memorial are ultimately insuffi- cient; that is, they are not true enough. Catholicism maintains that the Eucharist is more than a symbol: it is a special kind of sign, which effects, or brings about what it sig- nifies, it is technically called an “efficacious sign.” Jesus Christ, in the words of the Council of Trent is truly present “body, blood, soul, and divinity,” under the appear- ance of bread and wine. The Mass is also more than a memorial meal. It is a re-presentation of the paschal (from the Greek word for Easter) mystery of all the power and promises of Jesus’s life-giving death and resurrection are made present and available to us through the celebration of the Eucharist; it is not as though Jesus is “re-sacri- ficed” at the Mass — his one sav- ing sacrifice in fact makes present every time the Mass is celebrated. But doctrinal differences regarding the Eucharist are not the sole obstacle to intercommunion. We need to look at what the Eucharist signifies and effects (does) in order to understand pre- cisely why intercommunion is, in actuality, a counter-sign to the Eucharist itself. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) notes that the Christian com- plete (what he calls the re- s) of the Eucharist is the building up and strengthening of unity of the church. The grace particular to the Eucharist is to draw communics into greater unity in the body of Christ, by the church, by the same — that signifies unity. The Eucharist, simply put, is both a sign and source of unity in the church. This notion is neither new to Aquinas nor unique to him. An ancient Christian document called the Didache contains what is arguably the most ancient Eucharistic Prayer. The prayer found in the Didache asks God not for private graces for individual believers, but to gather, protect, and safeguard his church. Thus the Eucharist is not only about uniting individual believers to Christ through a share in communion, but more fundamentally about uniting a community of believers together through their communion with Jesus through the Eucharist. When one receives the Eucharist, she is placing herself in communion of mind and heart with the church. It is an act which signifies not only a spiritual union with Christ, and, through him, with other members of the church, but it is also a public affirmation of the beliefs of that community and a commitment to the practice of the faith as it is experienced and shared by that community (recall Justin’s prerequisites). The pope and the universities B enedict XVI had barely left the Catholic University of America on April 17 when the Catholic higher education establishment’s spin machine shift- ed into high gear. One university president said that what most impressed him about the papal address to Catholic educators was what he called a “dressing down.” Still another president cooed that she felt “affirmed.” An administra- tor at another institution said, “That, as the pope hadn’t cited “Ex Corde Ecclesiae.” John Paul II’s concerns about Catholic identity were there, but there is a distinct impression from the spin that a lot of people thought they’d dodged a bullet — and were grateful they weren’t going home to face irate alums and dubious donors. The “Benedict loves what we’re doing” blah-blah has contin- ued ever since. The facts, to put it gently, suggest something rather more com- plicated. Consider these excerpts from the Holy Father’s address: “A university’s or school’s Catholic character would question of conviction — do we really believe that only in the mystery of the Word of God is the identity of man truly become clear? Are we ready to commit our entire self — intellect and will, mind and heart — to God? Do we accept the truth Christ reveals?” (What percentage of this year’s Catholic college and university classes could honestly answer those questions with a convened “Yes”?) “We must have sought diligently to engage the intellect of our young, perhaps we have neg- lected the will. Subsequently we observe, with distress, the notion of freedom being distorted. Freedom is not an opting out.
CYO athletes shine at City Meet

**BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN**

FORT WAYNE — Saturday, May 10, marked the first season in the history of Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) track and field. Not only did the weather cooperate beautifully for the city meet at Bishop Luers High School, but five new city meet records were set — four girls’ and one boys’.

St. John’s New Haven Raider girls scored 109 team points to take home top honors once again for 2008. The Lady Cardinals from St. Charles were runner-up in the meet scoring 83 points. The team from St. Jude placed third with 58 points, while the St. Vincent Panthers tallied 47 points to earn fourth place.

The Raiders were led by a first-place finish from their 4x100 relay team of Courtney Heddens, Kori Lahrman, Elizabeth Luers High School, and Addie Reimbold (St. Joseph/St. Elizabeth) in the 800- and 1,600-meter runs and Ali Tippmann from St. Charles in the 100-meter dash and 400-meter run. The Lady Cardinals were also crowned in the 200-meter dash (Danielle Messman) and long jump (Paige Sordelet). Finally, Sordelet and Messman were joined by Erin McIague and Mary Beier to win the 4x200-meter relay adding 10 more points for St. Charles.

**Boys’ action**

In boys’ action, St. Charles won the “battle of the unbeatens” edge-to-edge in the St. John New Haven team 83-78 to win this year’s city meet. St. Joseph/St. Elizabeth came in third place with 56 points, while St. Therese (51 points) and St. Jude (45 points) were not far behind in fourth and fifth.

The winners got first place in three out of the 12 events from Bryan Tippmann (discus), Austin Zeherda (100-meter dash) and Bobby Jauch (800-meter run). St. John New Haven also earned blue book in the 4x200-meter relay in three events. The Raiders were led by a triple winning effort from eighth-grader Andrew Yaney (4x200 relay) and fifth-grader Luke Little and Corey Leffers who each added 101-feet-7-inches at the April 17 regular season meet. The discus winner was Chris Widner and his amazing performance from Chris Widner.

**CYO baseball enters final phase**

**BY ELMER J. DANCH**

SOUTH BEND — Christ the King in the John Bosco Division and St. Thomas Spartans of Elkhart in the Martin DePorres Division continue to be the only unbeaten schoolboy baseball teams in the Inter-City Catholic League as the circuit prepares to enter the final two weeks of action.

Meanwhile, Holy Family Blue holds the top spot in the junior varsity division, a full two games ahead of St. Joseph Gold of South Bend.

Christ the King dipped Holy Family from the unbeaten list with a stunning 11-1 victory behind the sterling two-hit performance of Jake Stone. The Kings’ 12-hit offensive was powered by Sam Pressal and Denny Scanlon each of whom batted in three runs a piece. Bud Zehlendra singled to bat in the only run for Holy Family.

In the wildest slugfest of the year, St. Joseph Gold of South Bend outlasted St. Thomas Maroon of Elkhart, 14-9.

A post season varsity tournament will follow the close of the regular season.

**Live comfortably. Make the most of every moment.**

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

Hospice care is fully covered for eligible patients by Medicare and Medicaid and many other types of health plans, including HMOs, PPOs and other private insurance. No one is turned away because of an inability to pay for hospice care.
NEW YORK (CNS) — “You may find Narnia a more savage place than you remember,” the dwarf Trumpkin warns the four Pevensie children on their return to the magical realm in “The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian” (Disney). He speaks the truth.

As exciting and well-crafted, if less emotionally absorbing, as 2005’s “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,” the follow-up is more reliant on martial action. This is in keeping with the hellscape second volume in C.S. Lewis’ seven-part series, which has a thinner plot and affords less opportunity for character and thematic development.

The increase in the violence quotient is modest enough not to prevent “Prince Caspian” from qualifying as salubrious entertainment. However, it does edge the franchise closer to “Harry Potter” and other more secular films.

One year after the events of “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” (but 1,300 years in Narnian time), the Pevensies’ siblings (William Moseley, Anna Popplewell, Skandar Keynes and Georgie Henley) are summoned back to Narnia by the title character (Ben Barnes).

This time, their portal is not an armoire but a World War II-era London Underground station through which they’re transported to an idyllic Narnian beach. Prince Caspian’s uncle, Miraz (Sergio Castellitto), rules the kingdom following the invasion by his people, the Telmarines, who have forced Narnia’s residents into hiding.

In the opening sequence, Caspian, rightful heir to the Telmarine throne, flees the castle when Miraz’s wife gives birth to a son. Now dispensable, Caspian is dispatched to an idyllic Narnian beach. The Telmarines hotheaded descendants of swarthy pirates whose most noble hero isn’t as reliable as the sensibly faithful Anglo-Saxons.

This ethereal and cultural overtone is compared to the movie’s general attitude toward war, which some might find problematic. Courageous individual and communal sacrifice in the service of peace is the ultimate theme, and the costs of armed conflict, no matter how honorable, as a feasible — let alone morally justifiable — solution is another matter.

This doubt is enforced by the movie’s bloodless yet fairly graphic fighting, including two close-quarter stabbings, a decapitation and Susan’s prolific use of bow and arrow.

Nature plays a key role in vanquishing the enemy and is clearly on the side of the righteous and faithful, imparting a green message which serves to temper the film’s more sanguine aspects.

The film contains much battlefield violence and deadly hand-to-hand combat, a decapitation, a brawl involving schoolchildren, some intense scenes of child peril and frightening sequences.

The continuation of the religious allegory revolves around whether the Christian lion voiced by Liam Neeson, will return. Has he abandoned Narnia? Will he play the role of “deus ex machina”? Ardent believer Lucy claims to see Aslan, but Peter wants proof and grudgingly Trumpkin is especially skeptical.

Caspian never upstages the Pevensies brood, a further indication that the saga’s deeper import has not been lost, only temporarily eclipsed. In the one-dimensional role of heartthrob foil, Barnes is hampered by a faintly ridiculous accent that underscores Lewis’ decision to make the Telmarines hotheaded descendants of swarthy pirates whose most noble hero isn’t as reliable as the sensibly faithful Anglo-Saxons.

The Pevensies’ prolific use of graphic fighting, including two close-quarter stabbings, a decapitation and Susan’s prolific use of bow and arrow.

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The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-II — adults and adolescents.
WHAT’S HAPPENING

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

DEVOTIONS

All family rosary
Fort Wayne — The all family rosary will be Sunday, May 25, from 7:30-4:30 p.m. at MacDougal Chapel. The intention is for all families. Attending will be Father Pius from St. Vincent de Paul and Sister Carol Meyers, OSF, from the University of Saint Francis.

First Saturday Devotions
Saturday, June 7, devotions will be held at the following parishes: Fort Wayne — St. Joseph, 7:15 a.m.; St. Charles, 8 a.m.; Sacred Heart, 7:30 a.m.; St. Rose, Monroeville, 8:10 a.m.; St. Patrick, Arcola, 7:15 a.m.; St. Joseph, Garrett, 8:40 a.m. Call (260) 456-396 to have your listing added.

German Mass celebrated
Fort Wayne — St. Peter Church, 500 E. DeWald St., will celebrate a German Mass at 11 a.m. on June 1. Father Charles Herman will be the celebrant, and the Fort Wayne Mennerchor and Dammenchor will provide music. A German dinner may be purchased after Mass in the Pavilion. Both the church and Pavilion are handicapped accessible, as is the large parking lot.

Day of reflection Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be held Wednesday, May 28, at St. Francis Convent, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “Ecclesiastes.” Please bring your Bible. The cost is $15 and includes lunch. Register by Friday, May 23, to (574) 259-5427.

FUNDRAISERS

Chicken and rib drive through
Fort Wayne — St. Therese on Lower Huntington Road will have a Nelson’s chicken and ribs drive-through on Sunday, June 1, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Half chickens are $6 each and full slabs of baby back ribs are $8 each. Pre-sale tickets available after Masses Memorial day weekend or just stop by that day. Proceeds help buy bells for the bell choir.

St. Jude Eaglemania
Fort Wayne — St. Jude Parish will offer Eaglemania on Friday, June 13, from 5 to 6 p.m. From 5:30-8:30 p.m., food, kids games and a talent show will be offered. From 9 p.m. to midnight a beer garden and junior and senior high dance extravaganza will finish the evening.

Precious Blood announces festun Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Parish will have Festun on Friday and Saturday, May 30 and 31. Friday offers food from 5-8 p.m. and music by Paul and Susan from 7-10 p.m. On Saturday kids games, Texas Hold ‘em and Blackjack, hog roast, family fun, beer tent and a raffle. Loose Change will perform from 8-11 p.m. Free admission.

Christ Child garage sale time Fort Wayne — The Christ Child Society will have a garage sale Friday, June 6, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday, June 7, from 8 a.m. to noon at Queen of Angels activity center, 1500 W. State Blvd.

Luers Looting Garage Sale Fort Wayne — The Luers Looting Garage Sale will be Saturday, May 31, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. A bag sale will begin at 1 p.m. Items may be dropped off any Saturday in May from 9-11 a.m. Large items may be donated by calling Meg Hanlon at (260) 456-1261 Ext. 3256.

WHAT’S HAPPENING TO-DAY’S CATHOLIC

Organist/Pianist

Vibrant suburban parish of 3000 families, known for excellence in liturgy and music, seeks a part-time Organist/Pianist. O/P must work collaboratively with Director and Assistant Director of Liturgy and Music. Responsibilities include assisting Director with Sunday Liturgies, School Liturgies, Holy Days, Funerals, and Weddings; children’s, handbell and adult choirs; office work. Requirements include piano and pipe organ skills, ability to work with other instrumentalists, and a degree in music or equivalent. Salary is commensurate with experience and degree. Please send resume with references no later than June 16, 2008 to:

Director of Liturgy and Music
Saint Pius X Roman Catholic Church
52553 Fir Road • Granger, IN 46530
Phone: 574 272 8462 ext 28 Email: jhoy@stpius.net

CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

FORT WAYNE

SONG BEND

June 1 9th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Father John Pfister St. Mary Huntington
Father Leonard Chrobot St. Hedwig and St. Patrick South Bend

June 8 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Father David Voors St. Mary of the Assumption Decatur Avis at 6:30 a.m.
Father Glenn Kohrman St. Mary of the Lake Culver

June 15 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Father Robert Schulte Cathedral of the immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
Father Bob Lengerich St. Pius X Granger

June 22 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Father Gary Sigler Queen of Angels Fort Wayne
Father Chris Cox, CSC St. Adalbert and St. Casimir South Bend

June 29 Feast of St. Peter and Paul Apostles
Father Larry Kramer St. Paul of the Cross Columbus City
Father Charles Herman St. John the Baptist South Bend

DATE FEAST
FORT WAYNE
CHANNEL 33 - WISE
10:30 A.M.
SOUTH BEND
CHANNEL 16 - WNDU
10:30 A.M.

“Catholic Comment” airs Sundays: at 7:05 a.m. on WOWO 1190 AM in Fort Wayne and at 7:30 a.m. on WSBT 960 AM in South Bend.

“Radio Rosary” airs M-F at 11 a.m. Saturday and Sunday at 7:30 a.m. on Redeemer Radio WXYV 1450 AM

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Father Larry Kramer St. Paul of the Cross Columbus City
Father Charles Herman St. John the Baptist South Bend

12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Plymouth - June 18, 20 and 25
12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Volunteer opportunities
South Bend — The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care, Inc., is in need of volunteers and invites mature individuals to register for training by calling the volunteer resource coordinator nearest to them in the Elkhart area call Kathy at (574) 264-3321. In the Plymouth area call Angie at (574) 935-4511. In the South Bend area call Jackie at (574) 243-3100. The next training dates are: Elkhart - June 9, 12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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PRINCIPAL

Pre-K through 5

St. Lawrence Catholic School in Muncie, Indiana, seeks a principal to lead our Pre-K through 5th grade school. St. Lawrence School has a strong tradition of educating children for 127 years. We are a diverse, multi-ethnic, socio-economic population, with high ISTEP scores, and a caring and dedicated staff. We seek leadership committed to academic excellence in the Catholic tradition. Send cover letter and resume to:

Search Committee St. Lawrence Church 820 East Charles Street Muncie, IN 47305
Lapas family finds God’s grace in suffering

By Kay Cozad

The Lapas family stands in front of their temporary housing while Emilija awaits proton radiation treatment for central nervous system cancer at M.D. Anderson Proton Radiation Center in Houston, Texas.

Treatment

Returning home, Emilija had immediate surgery to remove her thyroid, in treatment of other symptoms and for the next four months this resilient child was taken to the Children’s Hospital in Chicago every three weeks for a five-day round of chemotherapy.

“Emilija’s great and child-like faith is an incredible witness to all of us concerning what it means to trust God,” he says.

Remission

So for the next year and a half, the Lapas family got back to the joy of living. Emilija returned to her studies, which included her love of writing and reading.

“It was with a fortitude and... and read about the saints. My favorites are St. Margaret Mary, St. Isaac of Siberia, patron saint of young girls,” she says, adding that someday she would like to be a teacher, a published author. Tennis and basketball kept her now healthy body active. And going to Mass and praying with her friends and brothers felt normal again.

In July of 2007, the Lapas family again relocated for a job opportunity, this time to Valparaiso. Shortly thereafter, Emilija began to experience numbness in her feet, but her parents never even considered a recurrence of cancer. “We never dwelled on cancer. It was all history now. We just looked forward,” says Vilux about his daughter’s symptoms.

Recurrence

An MRI confirmed that the cancer was back, this time as a tumor on her upper spine. Emilija cried, says her dad, as he and his wife spoke with her about the tumor, and were touched when she said, “I’m not worried about me, but about you. You are so distressed.”

That October, Emilija underwent yet another surgery to remove the new tumor. Following surgery she endured a procedure to harvest stem cells from her own bone marrow to be used later in her treatment. Two more rounds of high dose chemotherapy in Chicago brought her immune system to zero. Then with prayer, financial and child-care support from family and friends, Paulette and Vilux took Emilija for a three-month stay in New York for the stem-cell transplant.

Redemptive suffering

Though all who know her say Emilija is a courageous little girl, she says sometimes she doesn’t feel so brave. “I’ve wondered ‘why?’... It’s been hard... but praying always is something that helped me. God is there and always with me,” says this incredible survivor.

Her parents agree saying, “Emilija has a keen love for God. It’s hard to understand why. But we’ve learned a lot from her. We see the truth about suffering. There’s so much beauty in it. God works through people. We’re touched and changed us tremendously.”

More treatment

This month Emilija and her entire family traveled to M.D. Anderson Proton Radiation Center in Texas, where she is receiving treatment of radiation therapy.

“I’m not so worried about radiation,” she says. “The doctors have all been really nice. They all want the best for me.”

Hope for the future

Though these treatments have caused such physical hardships on this little lady as loss and extreme fatigue, she is most frus- trated with being away from family, friends and home. But she has complete faith that this experience is God’s will, saying, “I don’t think this will change me much. I see what cancer is and every day is a blessing. I think it will make me stronger and stronger in my faith. But I’ll be the same.”

Her parents are grateful to Fort Wayne for their generous and con- tinued support. “And thank you for prayers, for your support of us,” they say. This they say is a story of community and grace. “It’s the story of every family with a child with a serious illness. Emilija is not the only one. There are so many others who need help and care. We hope to open the rest of our lives helping others.”

V Alparaiso — “God never gives you more than you can handle,” says Vilius Lapus. The family was delighted to be involved as parishioners as well. In 2000, the family relocated to Michigan where Vilux studied law. And in 2003 with law degree in hand, the Lapas family moved back to Fort Wayne where Vilux worked with a federal judge.

Initial diagnosis

2005 dawned bright for the close-knit family, who by then had become firmly rooted in their work, faith and homeschool community. At nine, Emilija was a “healthy, normal kid,” recalls Vilux, until she began to be excessively thirsty. Following visits not only to their family doctor, but to several specialists across three states, Emilija, who was first thought to have hyperthyroidism, was diagnosed with a central nerv- ous system germ tumor.

It was by God’s intervention, says Vilux, that their doctor at Chicago’s Children’s Memorial Hospital, was a specialist with the particular type of brain tumor Emilija exhibited. “Her tumor,” says Emilija’s dad incredulously, “is only found in 2 percent of chil- dren. It’s not easy to diagnose.”

Recommended treatment was rigorous chemotherapy. But before Emilija was to begin her treatment, the family went on a pilgrimage to Italy to visit the shrine of St. Philomena, the patron saint of those with cancer, and like so many other events, the trip fell right into place.

“It was pretty cool, knowing there was a saint who was there,” says Emilija. During the pilgrimage, the family was delighted to be part of an audience to see Pope Benedict the XVI where Emilija was able to shake hands with the pope. “That was probably the most amazing thing that’s ever hap- pened. I actually touched him. It was so exciting. When he looked at you, he had a nice, gen- tle, kind look in his eyes.” She was also touched to see the pope pick her brother John Paul up and kiss him.

PROVIDED BY THE LAPAS FAMILY

Feast of Corpus Christi

Sunday, May 25, 2008

St. Jude Church • Fort Wayne • www.stjudefw.org

- Eucharistic Adoration in Church 1 - 5 PM
- Eucharistic Procession with the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction 5 - 6 PM

Come join the Lapas Family FUNdraiser

A fundraiser will be held on June 28 from 5-8 p.m. in the Bishop Dwenger gym (door 5). Cost is $15 for adults, $5 for ages 6-17. Five years and under are free with maximum $60 per family. The evening includes a silent auction and 80/20 raffles, dinner and refreshments, activities for adults and children, and danc- ing to the music of Frankie and the Holy Rollers. A personal video message by “The Passion” star Jim Caviezel will also be shown. A volleyball clinic for fifth through 12th graders, spon- sored by the University of Saint Francis, who has adopted Emilija as an honorary team member, will be held from 2-4 p.m. in Bishop Dwenger’s main gym on June 28 as well. Cost is $10 per person. All pro- ceeds go directly to the Lapas family.

For reservations contact Tricia at (260) 484-6840 or tri- ciapost@hotmail.com