TODAY’S CATHOLIC

Ecumenical Advent service celebrates shared Christianity

BY DENISE FEDOROW

ELKHART — Clergy, choir members and lay people from 23 different churches came together as one to celebrate the event that unites us all as Christians — the Advent of the birth of our Lord and Savior.

The Advent Lessons and Carols service was held at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Elkhart, on Sunday, Nov. 30. This was the ninth year for the ecumenical event, which according to St. Vincent Music Director Lucy Minichillo, grew from a combined choir service held with St. Thomas and St. Vincent parishes in Elkhart years ago.

The 64-member ecumenical choir is under the direction of Walter Ginter, retired University of Notre Dame professor. Ginter said what he enjoys most about this event is “working with the people — they’re a good bunch.”

The choir rehearsed together for several weeks prior to the event. Minichillo said organizing the event is a pleasure. “People like to come back. I give Walter a lot of the credit for that — he makes it enjoyable for them. ‘Perfection with a smile,’’ she said.

Father Phil DeVolder, pastor of St. Vincent, welcomed everyone to the service. He acknowledged that sometimes there are differences in the way that we practice our faith or in our beliefs.

“But today we all gather to celebrate the coming of our common Savior, our precious Lord and we rejoice in our common faith in the Lord Jesus,” he said.

Father DeVolder told the congregation as he lit the first Advent candle that we pray for the darkness to be dispelled. The service consisted of several readings, prayers and hymns — some in Spanish. There was a free will collection for Church Community Services in Elkhart, a non-denominational food pantry and other social services.

After the service, Father DeVolder said, “I don’t think we could’ve gotten better music at Notre Dame or some other large cathedral than we heard here tonight — the music was heavenly.”

A chili supper was held in the Mother Teresa Center following the service.

Pope begins Advent by asking Christians to be signs of hope

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In their prayers and through their actions in Advent, Christians are called to be signs of hope for a world marked by holiness and justice, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“Advent is the spiritual season of hope par excellence, when the whole church is called to become hope for itself and for the world,” the pope said Nov. 29 as he celebrated vespers on the eve of the first Sunday of Advent.

The pope’s homily at the evening prayer service in St. Peter’s Basilica, the morning Mass he celebrated Nov. 30 at Rome’s Basilica of St. Lawrence Outside the Walls and his midday Angelus address at the Vatican afterward all focused on Advent as a time to remember that Christ became human, died for our sins, rose from the dead and will return at the end of time.

Advent hope, he said during the evening prayer service, is a recognition of the ongoing need for salvation.

“We do not await the Lord as some beautiful decoration for a world already saved,” he said, but as the only one who can bring to completion the work begun with his incarnation, death and resurrection.

In his Angelus address, the pope said Advent is a time when Christians prepare to
Advent is a time for Catholic charity; gift of the heart

A heart which sees

It is a time for Christian charity, for Catholic charity, in the deepest sense. I received this year from St. Mary’s Soup Kitchen. They are feeding 50 percent more than a year ago. The same is true of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities and the Christ Child Society. There is more need for clothing and food than ever. It is my hope that every parish will be alert to these needs. It is not enough just to give food or clothing or a clothing basket for Christmas — it must be a gift of the heart. Pope Benedict XVI expressed it this way in his remarkable encyclical “Deus Caritas Est”:

“The Christian program — the program of the Good Samaritan, the program of Jesus — is “a heart which sees.” This heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly. Obviously when charitable activities are carried out by the church as a communitarian initiative, the spontaneity of individuals must be combined with planning, foresight and cooperation with other similar institutions.

“Love is free; it is not practiced as a way of achieving other ends.” — “Deus Caritas Est” (50).

Indeed, every family this Christmas should look at some concrete way that they can reach out to a neighbor in need. At the end of this column, I have placed some phone numbers for you to call if you wish to help.

Speaking of the Good Samaritan

Well, we buried Jerry Henry this week. The Mass was at his beloved Precious Blood Parish in the old neighborhood, and the church was packed. This followed a day when huge crowds, rich and poor, young and old, stood in long lines down Calhoun Street to console the family and say a prayer for a special person.

His life, for many years, centered around three places: Precious Blood Church, his office at Catholic Social Services and his home. He died at 2:15 in the morning on the feast of Christ the King, and that day and everywhere throughout the Catholic Church and other Christian churches, the Gospel was of the Good Samaritan. “I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, Lord — when did we do it to the least of these?”... Whenever you did it to one of these, you did it to me.”

Pope John Paul II used to say there are no coincidences in life, and this Gospel surely said what Jerry Henry was all about.

Also about family

Seventeen children. One of them is the mayor of Fort Wayne; others are leaders in business and active in parish churches. This is an age when child is less welcomed. Pope John Paul II, not long before his death, in a historic speech before the Italian parliament, pleaded that people would be open to children. He told the people of that beloved country that they had no future, for there is no future without children. In Western Europe, population is on the decline.

Jerry and his extraordinary wife, Margaretn, knew this and our community is richer for their love and their openness to life.

One person present at the wake said to Jerry Jr., “Your father had nothing, and yet he had everything.”

A season of Advent

In many ways, it is the most beautiful time of the year. Not from the point of view of weather, surely. It seems the sun gets shut out of northern Indiana from Thanksgiving to February. But a beautiful season for prayer.

"Deus Caritas Est":

It is my hope that every church is the most beautiful time of the year. Not from the point of view of weather, surely. It seems the sun gets shut out of northern Indiana from Thanksgiving to February. But a beautiful season for prayer.

I like the words of St. Charles Borromeo. He was a great pastor, a bishop of Milan, heavenly patron of one of our great parishes, and a key part of something we do not hear about a lot; namely, the Catholic reformation. He wrote a beautiful pastoral letter to his people one Advent, and I used the following words very hopefully for the first Sunday of Advent:

“The church asks us to understand that Christ, who came once in the flesh, is prepared to come again. When we remove all obstacles to his presence, he will come, at any hour and moment, to dwell spiritually in our homes, bring in the riches of his grace.”

This Sunday, we meet the striking figure of John the Baptist, calling us to repentance and a good life and doing simple things well. He is the forerunner, an example for all those in ministry, as he declares, “I am not the one.” He points to the Lamb of God. This is the spirituality of all those involved in God’s work, pointing not to ourselves, but to Christ.

Thanksgiving weekend

Beautiful, but quiet, and only two pieces of mince pie. A Mass of thanksgiving at the cathedral, a visit to the dinner at St. Mary’s Soup Kitchen. The crowd was larger than ever. A visit to the Knights of Columbus for their dinner on Reed Road. Mass on Saturday morning for Jerry Henry at Most Precious Blood Church. Mass in the evening at St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, and a beautiful dinner with Father Rybicki and Mary Glowaski, and our longtime liturgy director, Beverly Rieger, an excellent musician, now liturgy director at St. John’s. Mass on Sunday at the cathedral, and in the evening, our wonderful traditional Catholic and Lutheran prayer service, so beautifully carried out at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church on Goshen Road.

Some beautiful moments ahead

A cathedratical day with our Hispanic catechists on Saturday at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Warsaw, presided over by Father Virgil Elizondo. An ecumenical prayer service scheduled for Sunday at St. Adalbert, Mass earlier at St. Matthew. I talk to the Fort Wayne St. Vincent de Paul Society the following week, and several visits to Hispanic parishes for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

A heart breaker

Bishop Dwenger had one of the best football teams in their storied history this year and they went to Indianapolis, to the new stadium undefeated. They played a stalwart game and lost 10-7. They have a marvelous coach, and I was honored to be with them before and after at their great school for pep rallies. See you all next week.
Catholics, Lutherans gather for annual Advent vesper service

By Deb Wagner

FORT WAYNE — Over a dozen clergy and nearly 100 members of the Lutheran and Catholic faiths gathered at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne for the seventh annual Catholic-Lutheran Advent Vespers. Bishop James R. Stuck, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, co-pressed at the service with Bishop John M. D’Arcy. The theme of the evening was the continuation of the dialogue between the Catholic and Lutherans.

An adult choir comprised of members from the local Roman Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America churches, a cantor and musicians blessed the congregation with prelude music and hymns of praise and thanksgiving throughout the service. Father Tom Shoemaker, pastor of St. Jude Parish and Rev. Dr. Frederick W. Meuter III of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church both in Fort Wayne proclaimed the Psalms prayers.

After a series of prayers remarkably similar to the Catholic Prayers of the Faithful were prayed, Bishop D’Arcy invited all to pray the Lord’s Prayer. Bishop Stuck then asked those in attendance to offer each other peace.

Following salutations Bishop Stuck tolled the bronze bell that the meaning of Advent is interrelated with three events: the end of time, the babe at Bethlehem and something he learned from his parents growing up, namely to ask Jesus to come into his heart to stay.

He cited Matthew 25:31-46 and the parable of the sheep and goats saying that the flock is divided at the end of time with sheep are on the right hand of God, goats are on the left. He reassured the faithful that regardless of the merciful deeds performed, such as feeding the hungry or clothing the naked that none can do enough to be saved without Christ. Bishop D’Arcy followed by commenting that Lutherans and Catholics share the same Lectionary. The bishop spoke of Jerry Henry, former Catholic Social Services director, who he laid to rest the day prior to the vesper service. Henry was the father of 17 children and lived Matthew’s Gospel through giving to the poor in the Fort Wayne community, noted the bishop.

Bishop D’Arcy also acknowledged that in these difficult economic times “we are entering a time of great challenge. The holy Eucharist is the same Christ of the poor.” He stressed that this prayer service is for forgiveness as he pleaded for the congregation to follow the recommendations of St. Charles Borromeo and “root out the obstacles, such as concrete acts of charity towards others and the truth that Lutherans and Catholics are not yet in full union. He asked that prayer be offered for an increase in charity towards others and the poor to make up for the painful history between the two faith denominations. “May we be on the side of the sheep and not the goats on the final day,” Bishop D’Arcy proclaimed.

The vesper service ended with Bishop Stuck asking the congregation to recite the Apostle’s Creed together to proclaim common faith. Following a closing prayer, both bishops proclaimed a blessing and the service closed with a hymn. A reception followed the service.

Catholic and Lutherans gather at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne for the seventh annual eumcennial vesper service on Nov. 30.

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It’s Christmas! ...is his gift in your heart?

He doesn’t need toys. He makes do with what he has. What he needs is comfort; the kind that comes from having a warm home, food and clothing and the feeling that things are going to be all right. You can be the one to provide that feeling by giving generously to Catholic Charities.

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CUBA
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

she was so sick was how often she had to have needles stuck in her veins.

And her parents live on a street in Camaguey named for Brother Olallo, because it is an area where he often worked with the neighborhood’s poor. She said that was an unusual coincidence, “but these are the ways of God.”

Daniela said she feels like now she has an obligation to give thanks to God for her miracle “because in the hospital waiting room there were many other children, as sick as I was, and they died.”

Speaking before the beatification, she said she planned to ask for a cure for her father, who needs a kidney transplant.

“I will ask that God put his hands on all the children and that they are healed, since he did it for me and he reigns in peace and love over all the earth,” she said.

Jose Lopez Piteira was the first Cuban to be beatified, in a 2007 ceremony in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican. At age 23 he was among nearly 300 martyrs killed during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s. Lopez was an Augustinian deacon, born in Cuba to Spanish parents; he returned to Spain as a child.
Real faith shows itself as love for others, pope says at audience

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If Christian faith is not translated into love and concrete help for the poor, it is not real faith, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Real faith becomes love and expresses itself in charity. A faith without charity, without this fruit, would not be true faith. It would be a dead faith," the pope said Nov. 26 at his weekly general audience.

The gathering was held in the Vatican audience hall on the first day solar panels installed on the roof began generating energy for the Vatican’s power grid.

The audience began with Pope Benedict entering the hall side by side with Armenian Orthodox Catholicos Aram of Cilicia.

The pope told an estimated 9,000 people at the audience that the visit of the Lebanon-based patriarch "is a significant occasion for strengthening the bonds of unity already existing between us as we journey toward that full communion which is both the goal set before all Christ’s followers and a gift to be implored daily from the Lord."

Catholicos Aram told the pope that all Christian churches must work together to fight "the decay of moral values" and to minister "in a world in dire need of spiritualas and guidance." In his main talk, Pope Benedict continued a discussion he began the week before about St. Paul’s teaching on how people are made just in the eyes of God and on the relationship between faith and good works.

St. Paul taught clearly that people can do nothing to make themselves just in the eyes of God, but rather that justification is God’s gift to those who believe, the pope said.

"But this faith is not a thought, an opinion or an idea," he said.

Faith implies communion with Christ and conformity to him, he said. Those who have faith in Christ strive to act as Christ did.

Pope Benedict focused on St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, especially the passage that begins, "If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal."

Like the people of Corinth to whom St. Paul wrote, he said, Christians today also can be tempted to think that because they are saved by faith alone, they do not have to worry about anything but their prayers.

"What would we be reducing the liturgy to if, at the same time as we turned to the Lord, we did not also serve our brothers and sisters? A faith that does not express itself in charity," the pope said, answering his own question. Christianity is not a rulebook, he said. "The Christian ethic is not born of a system of commandments, but is the consequence of our friendship with Christ."

"The Christian life is nourished by the action of the Holy Spirit, which gives rise to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are the fruits of the spirit that grow from faith," he said.

"Believers know that love for God becomes concrete in love for one another," Pope Benedict said.

"Justified through the gift of faith in Christ we are called to live in the love of Christ for our neighbors because it is on this criteria that we will be judged at the end of our existence," he said.

Editor’s Note: The text of the pope’s audience remarks in English is posted online at: www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences

New phase of Father Peyton's sainthood cause opens in Baltimore

Baltimore (CNS) — Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien of Baltimore Nov. 20 presided over the opening of a new phase in the sainthood cause for Father Patrick Peyton during Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Father Peyton is best known as the "Rosary Priest," who encouraged families through his radio and television programs in the 1940s and ‘50s to pray together daily, especially by praying the rosary.

According to the archdiocese, the investigation into the priest’s cause for sainthood, which opened in June 2001 in the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., was moved from that diocese to Baltimore by the Vatican.

Members of the Baltimore ecclesiastical tribunal, which will investigate the life and ministry of Father Peyton, were sworn in by the archbishop during the Mass and are to receive instruction from him as to how their inquiry is to take place.

Since 2001, Father Peyton’s writings, documents and unofficial testimony have been collected in the Fall River Diocese, where the priest is buried.

Father Peyton died in 1992 and is buried in Easton, Mass. North Easton is the home of Holy Cross Family Ministries, founded by the priest, which includes Family Rosary, Family Theater Productions, Father Peyton Family Institute, and Family Rosary International.

Known for coining the phrases “The family that prays together, stays together” and “A world at prayer is a world at peace,” Father Peyton founded Family Theater Productions in Hollywood in 1947. Through it he produced more than 600 radio and television programs that featured hundreds of movie stars and celebrities, and had more than 10,000 broadcasts.

He emigrated from Ireland to the United States in 1928 when he was 19. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1941 and founded Family Rosary in Albany, N.Y., the following year. He conducted rosary crusades in 40 countries, drawing 28 million people.

In the church’s process leading to canonization, the first step is the declaration of a person’s heroic virtues, after which the church gives him or her the title venerable. In general, the church must then confirm two miracles before sainthood is declared. The first miracle is needed for beatification and the second for canonization.
Catholic Charities USA warns against fraudulent e-mails on Internet

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Charities USA officials have demanded that groups using the Catholic Charities name to solicit funds on the Internet discontinue using the trademark and urged potential donors to research the authenticity of an organization before making a contribution.

“Fraudulent e-mails that are mis-appropriating the name of Catholic Charities USA and its affiliates are being sent to extract money and/or personal information from unsuspecting recipients and are circulating on the Internet,” said Brandon Pinney, spokesman for Catholic Charities USA. The e-mails are labeled with the subject titles “Grant Notification,” “The Catholic Charity,” “The Catholic Charity Foundation” and “From the Office of the Cash Grant Program,” Pinney told Catholic News Service Dec. 1.

“The name ‘Catholic Charities’ was used within the body of some of the e-mails, said Candy S. Hill, senior vice president for social policy and government affairs at Catholic Charities USA. The messages which come from several different e-mail addresses and provide a variety of contact names — ask recipients for detailed personal information, Pinney said. In an effort to stop the e-mails, Father Larry Snyder, Catholic Charities USA president, replied Nov. 26 to each of the addresses brought to the organization’s attention, insisting the sender stop disseminating such confusing messages or suffer consequences.

Tentative plans confirmed for papal visit to Holy Land in 2009

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican has confirmed tentative plans for Pope Benedict XVI to visit Israel and the Palestinian territories in 2009.

Israeli sources said the most likely time for the visit would be in May, with stops in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The pope was invited to visit Israel by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2007. At that time, the pope made it clear he hoped to make the trip, but Vatican diplomats said the timing would depend in large part on efforts to calm the simmering Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In recent months, several Vatican officials began making more concrete plans for a papal visit.

The contacts were first reported Nov. 27 by the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, and were confirmed by the Israeli Embassy to the Holy See. Ha'aretz said the most likely time frame for the trip was the second week in May.

Bishop Weigand retires; Bishop Soto succeeds him in Sacramento

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Bishop William K. Weigand of Sacramento, Calif. He will be succeeded by Bishop Jaime Soto, who has been coadjutor of the diocese since Oct. 11, 2007, and is one of 26 active Hispanic Catholic bishops in the United States. A coadjutor automatically becomes the head of the diocese upon the retirement or death of its bishop. The announcement was made in Washington Nov. 29 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States. At the end of a two-hour Mass of thanksgiving Nov. 30, which drew more than 1,200 people to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento, Bishop Weigand handed his crozier to Bishop Soto, whose episcopal motto is “Gozo y Esperanza” (“Joy and Hope”). In his homily, Bishop Weigand told the congregation it had been “an honor and a privilege” to be their bishop. He told his successor: “You are inheriting a very special diocese. It is your duty to make it a diocese where the faithful are happy to belong and be active. It is your duty to make it a diocese where the future generation will be happy to have been brought up.”

People attend prayer service in Tijuana, Mexico

Lidia Duarte and Patricia Gallegos pray during a Nov. 26 prayer service held in response to rising crime and violence in Tijuana, Mexico. About 2,500 people attended the service in a sports stadium.

Pope condemns terrorist attacks in India, prays for victims

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI condemned the wave of terrorist attacks in India as acts of “cruel and senseless violence,” and led prayers for the victims of the attacks.

An address Nov. 27 to the 35th session of the U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Financing for Development Nov. 29-Dec. 2 in Doha, Qatar. The archbishop led a Vatican delegation to the conference.

Nuncio warns: Without ethics, financial crisis could be a catastrophe

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A leading Vatican diplomat warned that the current financial crisis could become a catastrophe unless solutions are found that respect ethics and involve all levels of society.

“Politics is a reality which produces negative effects in many areas of social life. But it must be politics of democracy, of freedom and of ethics over the sole criteria of power and money. Without ethics, without justice, without freedom, without the forces to withdraw from Iraq no catastrophe is possible,” Sako said. Under the pact, the United States would remove combat forces from Iraqi cities and villages by the end of June 2009.

Vatican official warns of increasing food insecurity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Vatican representative warned of increasing food insecurity in the world and called for a greater global commitment to long-term agricultural improvement.

Iraqi archbishop: U.S. pact is step forward, but instability remains

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Iraqi parliament’s success in a timetable for U.S. troop withdrawal represents “a step forward,” but the country still faces deep divisions, Iraqi Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk told the Rome-based agency AsiaNews Nov. 28. “One cannot speak of national unity, and even less of national government,” he said. Everyone is trying to gain greater influence in his own territo ry, and even to become a president of Baghdad, which should represent the symbol of unity, is in reality subdivided into sectors controlled by very specific factions,” Archbp. Sako said. He made the comments the day after Iraq’s parliament voted to approve a security pact that requires U.S. forces to withdraw from Iraq no later than Dec. 31, 2011. Under the pact, the United States would remove combat forces from Iraqi cities and villages by the end of June 2009.

Pope gives thanks for improved Catholic-Orthodox relations

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — After meeting three times in one year with Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, Pope Benedict XVI said it was obvious that official relations between Catholics and Orthodox are growing deeper. “I give thanks to God that he has enabled us to deepen the bonds of mutual love between us, supported by prayer and ever more regular fraternal contact,” the pope said in a message to the Istanbul-based spiritual leader of the world’s Orthodox believers.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, delivered the message to the patriarch during ceremonies marking the Nov. 30 feast of St. Andrew, the patron saint of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In his message, the pope said he had hoped to address the world Synod of Bishops on the word of God.
Bishop Dwenger hosts Fair Trade Sale
FORT WAYNE — The Bishop Luers High School Social Justice and Faith Formation team is sponsoring a Fair Trade Sale 7:30-8 a.m., 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 3-3:30 p.m. on Dec. 8-12, near the main office.

Gifts, housewares, jewelry and other products handmade by artisans living in developing regions around the world will be available for purchase. All proceeds will benefit Catholic Relief Services. The club will also be sponsoring a 24-hour food fast in support of Catholic Relief Services beginning after breakfast on Dec. 8.

For more information about the Fair Trade Sale, sponsor a food fast participant or participate in the fast, contact Melissa Wheeler at (260) 496-4700 or e-mail mwheeler@bishopdwenger.com.

Crèches on display at Archabbey Library
ST. MEINRAD — An exhibit of Christmas crèches from around the world will be on display in the St. Meinrad Archabbey Library, from Dec. 3 through Jan. 10.

The display contains crèches from the monastery collection, as well as from the Catherine A. Smith Nativity Collection, which was donated to St. Meinrad in 2002 in memory of Charles Patrick Smith.

Smith began collecting nativity sets in 1971, purchasing many during his extensive travels throughout the world. She donated the collection to St. Meinrad in memory of her brother, who studied for the priesthood at St. Meinrad and later served as a priest in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The exhibit is free and open to the public. Exhibit hours are: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9-11 a.m. and 1-5 p.m.; and Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Luers from Dec. 6-10, the library will have evening hours from 7-10 p.m. From Jan. 6-10, evening hours extend from 7-10 p.m. The library will be closed the morning of Dec. 8 and all day Dec. 24-28 and Dec. 29-30, and through Jan. 4. All times are Central time.

Keever-Henry family sponsors scholarship
FORT WAYNE — This year Bishop Luers High School will again offer the tuition assistance scholarship to 10 incoming freshmen who score well on the scholarship placement exam. However, thanks to the generosity of a local family the amount awarded will be doubled.

Originally $5,000 was divided and awarded each year to 10 students who achieved the top exam scores. But this year, due to the commitment to Catholic education of the Keever-Henry family, the fund has doubled and now will divide $10,000.

This merit-based scholarship is a way to honor the academic excellence of the school, says scholar- ship benefactor Becky Keever-Henry. Henry and her husband, Jerry, are proud of their Catholic academic heritage, spanning from St. Hyacinth and Precious Blood to Central Catholic High School and credits their faith-filled parents for their education.

Subsequently, all five of their children are alumni of Bishop Luers High School and have attended Catholic universities as well.

Henry says, noting the excellent college preparation their children received at Luers, “Luers has many areas to be very proud of, but their academics has always been wonderful,” she says.

During her tenure, Henry, who worked at Bishop Luers as director of development and fundraising from 1994 to 2006, was “touched by the family commitment to the school and Catholic education.” As she worked with then-principal Norm Gislam, who recognized the need for tuition support for students, together they worked to offer the scholarship to incoming freshmen for the past 14 years.

The Henry family, who has long been involved with Bishop Luers fundraisers such as Luers Knight, Adopt a Knight, Student Ambassadors and the Alumni Association, have committed to sponsoring the scholarship fund for the next five years.

“We all want what’s best for the kids. Everyone deserves to have a Luers education,” offers Henry, adding, “We’re privileged and blessed. The Lord has been good to us and we want to share it with others.”

Current Bishop Luers High School Principal Mary Keever, who is married to Henry's brother, says of the contribution, “The Henry’s have been such supporters of Catholic education. They donated in honor of their own parents. I am thrilled and grateful to Becky and Jerry for helping Luers.” K.C.

ACE receives grant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment initiative
NOTRE DAME — The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program at the University of Notre Dame has been awarded a $436,500 grant from the Louis Calder Foundation to support its Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIAK) initiative, a professional development model for teachers and principals in Catholic schools.

This partnership with the Calder Foundation and the pioneering Web-based curriculum program Curriki represents a milestone for ACE in its efforts to foster academic excellence in Catholic education.

ACE has structured its CIAK initiative so schools and teachers are meeting required accreditation standards through their participation. Workshops are spread over a period of three years, giving participants time to engage with ideas and concepts, while respecting demanding schedules and responsibilities. The first year focuses on curriculum development and the second year emphasizes classroom instruction that implements the curriculum designed during the previous year. In the third year, the emphasis is on assessing students’ learning and growth.

The Alliance for Catholic Education program was founded in 1994 to address the urgent need for effective Catholic school teachers and places nearly 200 young men and women annually as full-time teachers in under-served Catholic schools throughout the country. ACE participants earn master’s degrees in education from Notre Dame during the course of their two-year teaching commitment.

ACE also established a principal preparation program, the ACE Leadership Program, in 2001 to form the next generation of lay Catholic school principals.

More information on these and other ACE programs are available on the Web at http://ace.nd.edu.

Twelve Days of Christmas Project helps needy
NOTRE DAME — The Office for Civic and Social Engagement (OCSE) at Saint Mary’s College is coordinating its fifth annual Twelve Days of Christmas Project, Dec. 1-12. Students, faculty and staff will participate in special events, service projects and fundraisers, which will provide food, clothing and gifts to Michiana families in need this Christmas season.

Two unique opportunities are included in this year’s Twelve Days’ efforts: A Christmas craft show and an adopt-a-family program. The craft show, which is open to the public, will feature the original works of over 35 local artisans. It will be held on Dec. 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Reinebeau Lounge in LeMans Hall. The craft show is a way for the local community to support both local artisans and families in need. Money raised will go to the Twelve Days’ program to purchase food and clothing for families and individuals.

This year, for the adopt-a-family part of the program, college is supporting 15 families and 15 individuals. The families come through the Salvation Army, Grandparents as Parents (GAP) and the partner Title 1 Schools in South Bend where Saint Mary’s students tutor children.

For more information, contact OCSE at (574) 233-6618.

Eccumenical service planned at St. Adalbert
SOUTH BEND — An Advent Ecumenical Prayer Service is planned at St. Adalbert Church to bring together the South Bend area Christian community in a prayerful response to the recent increase in violence. The service is titled “Preparing for the Prince of Peace in a Violent Community: 2008,” this year’s theme is modeled on an Advent prayer service held in 2006 to an overflow crowd.

This year, it will be on Dec. 7, the second Sunday of Advent, in St. Adalbert Church, at the corner of Olive and West Huron streets.

The Rev. John M. D’Arcy will be present and offer the closing prayer. A reception will follow the program and parking is available.

ACE receives grant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment initiative
NOTRE DAME — The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program at the University of Notre Dame has been awarded a $436,500 grant from the Louis Calder Foundation to support its Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIAK) initiative, a professional development model for teachers and principals in Catholic schools.

This partnership with the Calder Foundation and the pioneering Web-based curriculum program Curriki represents a milestone for ACE in its efforts to foster academic excellence in Catholic education.

ACE has structured its CIAK initiative so schools and teachers are meeting required accreditation standards through their participation. Workshops are spread over a period of three years, giving participants time to engage with ideas and concepts, while respecting demanding schedules and responsibilities. The first year focuses on curriculum development and the second year emphasizes classroom instruction that implements the curriculum designed during the previous year. In the third year, the emphasis is on assessing students’ learning and growth.

The Alliance for Catholic Education program was founded in 1994 to address the urgent need for effective Catholic school teachers and places nearly 200 young men and women annually as full-time teachers in underserved Catholic schools throughout the country. ACE participants earn master’s degrees in education from Notre Dame during the course of their two-year teaching commitment.

ACE also established a principal preparation program, the ACE Leadership Program, in 2001 to form the next generation of lay Catholic school principals.

More information on these and other ACE programs are available on the Web at http://ace.nd.edu.

Twelve Days of Christmas Project helps needy
NOTRE DAME — The Office for Civic and Social Engagement (OCSE) at Saint Mary’s College is coordinating its fifth annual Twelve Days of Christmas Project, Dec. 1-12. Students, faculty and staff will participate in special events, service projects and fundraisers, which will provide food, clothing and gifts to Michiana families in need this Christmas season.

Two unique opportunities are included in this year’s Twelve Days’ efforts: A Christmas craft show and an adopt-a-family program. The craft show, which is open to the public, will feature the original works of over 35 local artisans. It will be held on Dec. 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Reinebeau Lounge in LeMans Hall. The craft show is a way for the local community to support both local artisans and families in need. Money raised will go to the Twelve Days’ program to purchase food and clothing for families and individuals.

This year, for the adopt-a-family part of the program, college is supporting 15 families and 15 individuals. The families come through the Salvation Army, Grandparents as Parents (GAP) and the partner Title 1 Schools in South Bend where Saint Mary’s students tutor children.

For more information, contact OCSE at (574) 233-6618.
What can I give ... give from the heart season

BY ELISA M. SMITH, CPA/PPS

“Can I give Him Poor as I am? What can I give Him, Poor as I am? ‘What can I give Him, Poor as I am?’ — Christina G. Rossetti

By making a gift of a long-term appreciated stock to charity, you receive a win-win situation. First of all, you avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation of the stock. Moreover, you receive an income tax deduction for the fair market value of the stock on the date of the gift. If you itemize, your gift is deductible for federal income tax purposes up to 30 percent of adjusted gross income. If your gifts exceed this limit, you may carry the excess forward and deduct it in additional years. Make sure the check is delivered or postmarked by Dec. 31 in order to take the deduction in the current year.

Gifts of stock. By making a gift of a long-term stock to charity, you receive a win-win situation. First of all, you avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation of the stock. Moreover, you receive an income tax deduction for the fair market value of the stock on the date of the gift. If you itemize, your gift is deductible for federal income tax purposes up to 30 percent of adjusted gross income with the additional five-year carry forward.

Gifts of real estate. You may own real estate such as your home, a vacation property or farm that has appreciated in value over the years. You decide to sell that vacation home or 40-acre farm, you may realize capital gains on the appreciation. Instead of selling the property and incurring a capital gains tax, you can avoid the tax and gift the property outright to charity. In exchange for a charitable income tax deduction for the fair market value of the real estate.

Gifts to a 529 college savings plan. Grandchild, grandchild, or nephew or niece will appreciate in years to come a gift toward their future. By investing in a state-sponsored 529 plan, you can establish an account for a student with qualified college expenses. Your investment grows tax-free and distributions to pay for the student’s college costs come out federally tax-free. In addition, you, as the donor, may receive some special state income tax deductions or credits.

Give to charity in the recipient’s name. What do you give the person who has everything? A gift to their favorite charity made in their honor. You can give a donation to grandparents and grandpa’s parish in their honor. You can set up a trust fund for their beloved Catholic school in their honor through the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana. Design an inexpensive plaque or framed certificate that you can hang on a wall. You are giving the legacy gift made in their honor. It can help you and your children go green and find the real meaning of the holiday season.

Organizing on lives for the journey ahead

BY ELISA M. SMITH, CPA/PPS

As you think “Ah, another year older” and reflect on the changes in your life during the past 12 months whether it be a health situation, a family situation or a financial situation, it may be time to organize your life for the new year ahead.

Last Will and Testament. If you do not have a will, you should. A will is one of the most important documents you can have ever have. It transfers property you own in your name to the person or charity that you wish to have it. A will will typically name someone you select to be your personal representative to pay all final expenses and carry out your instructions and names a guardian if you have minor children.

As you may already have one. If so, you may wish to review the documents with your attorney to see if it reflects your current life situation. Ask yourself: “Are the personal representatives I named still alive and well? Are my beneficiaries still living?” Have I remembered my beloved parish and our church? Do I want to provide for my beloved Catholic school in my will? Beneficiary designations. Have you recently lost a spouse through divorce or death? Although your divorced spouse may no longer be a beneficiary under your will, he/she could be a beneficiary under your current retirement or 401K plan. If your former spouse continues to be named as beneficiary on your individual retirement account, your 401(k) plan, 403(b) account or profit sharing plan, or even a life insurance policy, that former spouse may still be eligible to receive these assets at your death since they will pass outside of your estate and are not covered by your will.

Business succession plan. Do you own a business? If so, then a business succession plan may be the key to the success of your business. Leaving your business to your estate or your church is one of the best solution. Perhaps your children are not interested in having the business. Or if only one or two children are interested in carrying on the business, you will need to balance their interests with your other children.

Durable power of attorney for property. If you were to become physically or mentally incapacitated, you will need to appoint a person who will act for you and handle financial matters should you be unable or permanently disabled. A durable power of attorney for property appoints a person whom you designate to act for you and handle financial matters should you be unable or permanently disabled. A durable power of attorney for health care.

In addition to your property, you must also look after your health care. You need to name a person whom you designate to make health care treatment in the event that you are unable to provide informed consent. This can make serious health care decision in life and death issues such as where you live or more emotional issues such as whether to stay on life support.

December 7, 2008
Making a list and checking it twice Year-end financial planning reminders

BY ELISA M. SMITH, CPA/PFS

‘Tis the season to be jolly ... for last minute tax saving strategies. There’s still time to take advantage of ways to save money on 2008 taxes and to get in the practice of good habits for the coming year and beyond. Here are some suggestions you prepare your own year-end financial planning checklist.

Flexible spending accounts: If you participate in your company’s flexible spending account programs for medical expenses or dependent care, check to see if you have a remaining balance in the account and make sure you spend this money. While flexible spending accounts have the excellent tax advantage of letting you pay for these expenses with pretax dollars, any money that is not used by the end of the year will be forfeited, which can easily negate these advantages. For example, if you still have money in your flexible medical account, it would be better to find items that you can purchase — such as over-the-counter drugs — rather than lose the money.

Max out your 401(k): If your employer offers a 401(k) plan in which you participate, check to see how much you have contributed for the year. The maximum 401(k) plan contribution limit for 2008 is $15,500 if you are under age 50, with an additional catch-up contribution amount of $5,000 if you are over age 50. If your employer matches up to a certain percentage, make sure that you have at least contributed enough to receive these matching funds. If you still have plenty of room to contribute, contact the personnel department to see if it is possible to make a one-time contribution toward your account. At the same time, adjust your monthly contributions to make sure you take full advantage of this retirement vehicle next year.

Health care: If your health insurance plan has an annual deductible that you have already reached, consider whether it is possible to receive any medical treatment you may need before the beginning of the New Year. On the same note, if you have not reached your annual deductible, it may be wise to delay medical treatment you may have planned until after Dec. 31. If you itemize your taxes, you can also deduct medical expenses, but it has to be greater than 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income to qualify. Keep this in mind when deciding whether it is better to get treatment before or after New Year’s Day.

Go green: There are a number of environmentally friendly upgrades that you can make to your home, including property taxes as well to increase your mortgage deduction. This can be beneficial if you anticipate being in the same or lower tax bracket next year. In addition, you can prepay your property taxes as well to increase your gross itemized deductions.

Year-end bonus: If you will receive a bonus this year, take the time to estimate whether it will be better to receive that money this year or next year for tax purposes. If you anticipate that your tax rate will stay the same, it is better for your employer to delay payment until after Dec. 31. While you will still have to pay taxes on this income, by receiving it in January you delay these taxes for a year, which allows the money that would have gone to the IRS in April 2009 to earn interest for a year. If, instead, you believe that your tax rate will increase next year, you may wish to accelerate the payment.

Underperforming stocks: Review your stock portfolio and determine if there are any losing stocks that need to be sold because you believe they are not going to rebound. If so, you can use these losses to offset taxable gains from other investments. In addition, you can also use up to $3,000 of these losses to reduce your taxable ordinary income for 2008. If you have a loss in excess of that amount, you can carry it over to future tax years.

Make 529 plan contributions: If you have set up 529 college saving plans for your children or grand-children, contributions need to be made by Dec. 31 to qualify toward this year. This can be important, since 529 contributions are subject to the annual gift tax exclusion of $12,000 per individual for 2008.

Take a minimum distribution from your IRA account: If you are age 70-1/2 or older, you will need to take a minimum distribution from your IRA account by Dec. 31. Please consult with your financial advisor or tax accountant regarding the amount you must withdraw to fulfill the required minimum distribution.

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend does not provide advice on tax or legal matters. As you contemplate these important issues, we suggest that you consult with your professional advisor.

Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana recognized in top 10

CHICAGO — The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) Plannned Giving Committee conducted a survey in the summer of 2008 to discern which foundations and diocesan planned giving offices have the “best practices” in several areas of work. Data was collected from 59 participating dioceses and archdioceses around the country, including the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Of these archdioceses, 48 have foundations. Results were announced Oct. 11-12, at the ICSC 2008 Seminar for Catholic Foundations held in Chicago, III.


Note: The Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana was created in 1995 by Bishop D’Arcy for individuals to financially support the spiritual, educational and charitable needs of the Catholic community in northeast Indiana through endowment funds, charitable gift annuities and unrestricted funds. The foundation administers approximately 100 endowment funds for parishes, schools and other agencies and the endowments established through the Legacy of Faith campaign. As of June 30, 2008, assets in the Catholic Community Foundation were valued at approximately $44 million. — ES

YEAR END TAX TIPS

Have you taken full advantage of your employee retirement plan?

2008 Federal Limits for Retirement Accounts

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Account Type</th>
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<th>Catch-up Contribution — Age 50+</th>
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<td>$1,000</td>
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</tbody>
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For more information, contact Todd E. Haines, CPA, JD or Elisa M. Smith, CPA/PFS

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Parishes can help individuals equip their finances according to the Catholic faith

Times are tough economically, and they could get worse before they get better. But in some parishes across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, one may only have to look surrounding a small group study called “7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free” to help cope with the financial difficulties and gain a new perspective on being a good steward of our money.

Many readers may be familiar with Crown Ministries or Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University — programs that help their church members become debt free. Some Catholic parishes have utilized these fine programs. What makes 7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free is that it is created by Phil Lenahan of Veritas Financial Ministries, a Catholic accountant who works with financial planning, and these parish kits are assembled and published by Our Sunday Visitor in Huntington. The goal is not just financial, it helps those participating become models of providence.

Here are some startling facts that Lenahan writes in the book. “7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free”:

- The average American household has about eight major bank credit cards (7 when you include debit cards and gas cards) that carry a combined balance of almost $8,000. (Business Week, April 25, 2005 and the Gallup Organization: 2004)
- More than 19 million households, or about 17 percent of American families, make only minimum payments on their cards. (Business Week, April 25, 2005)
- There were nearly 1.6 million bankruptcy filings in 2004, compared to less than 400,000 in 1986. (www.warcouts.gov)
- More than 50 percent of Americans are worried about not having enough money for retirement. (The Gallup Organization: May 18, 2004)
- Charitable giving averages 1.7 percent of household income for all Americans and about 1 percent for American Catholics. (Independent Sector; The Barna Group: 2000)
- “The concept of permanent and personal stewardship means that the interest in the things of God is the main symbol of success in life. (The Barna Group: 1997)
- Fifty percent of all marriages end in divorce, and money issues are pointed to as a significant cause in many breakups. (www.family.org)

We live in a time of bailouts where banks and big businesses are asking for a handout from the taxpayer. Many decry the government bailout plans, but do we also look at our own personal financial difficulties. The agencies that assist them have great need. Lenahan, in his book, writes, “The way you can achieve true financial freedom and peace is to recognize that God has a plan for your life — including your finances. Our faith provides the framework to analyze and improve the spiritual opportunities present in our lives.”

Do tax breaks diminish our generous spirit

With the assistance of the diocesan Planned Giving Director Elisa Smith, Today’s Catholic spends a good bit of time discussing tax break options and other financial planning goals this week.

One may question: Is our stewardship somehow diminished if we take advantage of tax breaks. We will answer, “no.” In fact, a parable from a stewardship brochure from Our Sunday Visitor, “sometimes (tax breaks) can extend and encourage good stewardship.”

As we receive end of the year requests for donations, let us especially reach out for those hungry, homeless and those facing financial difficulties. The agencies that assist them have great demands from those at the receiving end and the giving end. Tough economic times call for wise prudent monetary decisions.

Encourages committee to visit

Closing 132-year-old grade school — St. Aloysius and merging with St. Therese: this sounds like a death knell but think about it. Transportation would be a real problem. No bus service would be available and a private school bus would be prohibitively expensive.

Parents of school children transferred to St. Therese would lose interest in St. Aloysius and attendance would go down, income become lower and our parish changed to a mission and eventually closed.

St. Aloysius is and always has been an excellent school. Bishop Luers had invited members of St. Aloysius for over 80 years. We raised five children who also attended school. I have been a member of St. Aloysius for over 80 years. I feel that closing this school would be a mistake in judgment and a great disservice to the cause of Catholic education.

I feel sure that this recommendation of the special committee to change would impact the group visits and finds the true value of St. Aloysius School, as a fine school and central part of St. Aloysius Parish for now and in the future.

Robert W. Freiburger

School source of pride in parish

In regards to the recent announcements of parish consolidations, I feel compelled to write this letter. As we all know, consolidations will result in the loss of a quality Catholic education for those students who will lose their school. The retention rate would be expected to move will probably be less than 10 percent. A direct result will be the loss of those students not matriculating who would attend Luers High School. But more importantly will be the students, for the large majority of them, who will lose the ability to learn Mass, rosary or confession, let alone the loss of religious instruction.

What about the great teachers who have chosen to sacrifice and teach in the private sector? Certainly some will be offered jobs in our system, but not all will be due to the limited positions available.

One of the goals of our schools is to educate and prepare our children for life in all facets. Those goals being met academically with achievement in the STEP program, and also daily on a spiritual basis. From that point our schools are a resounding success, and a great source of pride in our parishes.

Rosaquetion why you would want to change something that is working so well and reaching the goals set for them.

I extend an invitation to those decision makers to visit our schools and see the fine work that is being done. Come to a school Mass and see our reverent and attentive students. As parents we have chosen to send our children to these parish schools. We sacrifice our time, talents and treasures to ensure that our faith, children and schools remain strong.

Mike and Judy Moring

Prayer in parishes brings others the Christ

Since the elections, there has been a great deal of analysis of what the bishops did or did not do, especially about pro-life issues; but the truth is: bishops do what the bishops do. Our job is to do what we are asked to do, which includes dramatically improving the spiritual opportunities and atmosphere of our parishes. It is not as hard as it sounds. It is simply a matter of encouraging your parish to be a “cardinal parish.” A “cardinal parish” is one that sponsors eucharistic adoration, Divine Mercy devotions and the Parish Rosary Project (www.parishprojects.com).

There is no greater work than to bring souls to Jesus. “We are called to be faithful, not successful,” said Mother Teresa. We are not to be like the servant who buried the single talent he was given because he feared he might not trade it successfully. How awful for anyone who fails to wholeheartedly attempt to lead others to Jesus; even worse, for those who deliberately, inadvertently, or by omission, like the Pharisees, become stumbling blocks to the sources of grace.

As a new year approaches, I can’t imagine a better way to show Jesus that you love your neighbor than to do everything you can to make your parish a “cardinal parish” this new year.

Patrick S. Hirzel

Battle Creek, Mich.

Field guide maintains ecology balance

I totally support Pope Benedict XVI’s stand on “Ecology of Peace.” He believes we should respect the natural environment. The articles that I sometimes read in the Catholic newspaper make it seem that it is our duty to have manicured lawns and dispose of untreated plants and leaves. It seems to me that in order to fulfill the pope’s stance on ecology, it would be better if charitable helpers of the elderly and disabled came not to clean up yards but to help identify plants, insects, wildlife and processes that make an ecosystem feasible.

I have done this with field guides in my own yard and found many uses for plants that some people call weeds. Anybody can do this, all you need is the proper field guide that you can get from your local library.

Gregory J. Koger

Fort Wayne

St. Aloysius School heart of parish

I feel that a very heavy heart that I understand you are considering closing St. Aloysius School. My family is fairly new to the community but my children and grandchildren have attended St. Aloysius School. There are many families that are on their fourth or fifth generation of attendance. The school has been the heart of the church for over 153 years.

These are only a few of the reasons why this parish-based 7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free, visit the Web site, http://7steps.osv.com/.

Do tax breaks diminish our generous spirit

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One may question: Is our stewardship somehow diminished if we take advantage of tax breaks. We will answer, “no.” In fact, a parable from a stewardship brochure from Our Sunday Visitor, “sometimes (tax breaks) can extend and encourage good stewardship.”

As we receive end of the year requests for donations, let us especially reach out for those hungry, homeless and those facing financial difficulties. The agencies that assist them have great demands from those at the receiving end and the giving end. Tough economic times call for wise prudent monetary decisions.

Today’s Catholic editorial board consists of Ann Carey, Kay Coxard, Fred and Lisa Everett, Father Mark Gurtner, Father Michael Heintz, Tim Johnson, Vince La Barbera and Mark Weber.
The reading for this Second Sunday of Advent is from the second section of Isaiah. When this book was written, very few decades seemed to belong to God’s people. Their long, dreary exile of four generations in Babylon was about to end. They were about to return to their homeland. The people’s joy and relief is evident in this reading. Readers can see their long exile and the promise of return to their homeland. Also, and importantly, readers can recognize that the people saw their rescue as a gift from God, given in God’s faithfulness to the Covenant. Divine mercy formed to provide this rescue. The people had neither created their escape, nor had they earned it. Actually, their sins had caused their trouble. God mercifully forgave them and eradicated the effect of their sins, name-ly, the exile. Thus, the prophet urges the people to be thankful, insisting that upon returning to their homeland, the people must go to Jerusalem, to the holy mountain where stood the temple, and there proclaim aloud the goodness of God. To any who doubt, this release from exile is proof of God’s existence and of God’s love, the prophet declares. For its second reading this weekend, the church presents a passage from the Second Epistle of Peter. Its theme differs from that of the first reading. The first reading was wonderfully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and of gloom. However, the psalmist’s forecast everlasting death. Bad things will happen. Difficult times will come. But, God will protect the faithful. In this last reassurance, the reading parallels the message of the first reading. The last reading is from the beginning of Mark’s Gospel’s story of the Lord’s public ministry. This reading quotes Isaiah’s prophecy that God, as pledged, will send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of their sins to the bright realms of God’s forgiveness. The Gospel then tells of John the Baptist, who went throughout Judea calling people to repentance. John reinforced his role as a prophet by being thoroughly detached from the concerns of this world. His very appearance, and behavior, emphasized the fact that only the spiritual matters. Only God matters. Mark’s Gospel, however, is careful to say that John himself was not the messenger promised by God in the writings of Isaiah, but rather that John came before this messenger. The messenger, the Savior, of course was the Lord Jesus. The key to obtaining this mercy personally is to recognize personal sin and repent. The church’s powerful reassurance in these readings is God never turns away a sincerely sorrowful sinner. Always, we can rely on God’s love. But, God does not drag us kicking and screaming into heaven. We must turn to God voluntarily and wholeheartedly. Advent calls us to realize that we need God, especially in our sinfulness. We need God’s mercy, but we personally must seek it by repenting.

The Year of St. Paul

Paul and traditional liturgy

The Sunday Gospel

MGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

2nd Sunday of Advent

Mk 1:1-8

The reading for this Second Sunday of Advent is from the second section of Isaiah. When this book was written, very few decades seemed to belong to God’s people. Their long, dreary exile of four generations in Babylon was about to end. They were about to return to their homeland. The people’s joy and relief is evident in this reading. Readers can see their long exile and the promise of return to their homeland. Also, and importantly, readers can recognize that the people saw their rescue as a gift from God, given in God’s faithfulness to the Covenant. Divine mercy formed to provide this rescue. The people had neither created their escape, nor had they earned it. Actually, their sins had caused their trouble. God mercifully forgave them and eradicated the effect of their sins, namely, the exile. Thus, the prophet urges the people to be thankful, insisting that upon returning to their homeland, the people must go to Jerusalem, to the holy mountain where stood the temple, and there proclaim aloud the goodness of God. To any who doubt, this release from exile is proof of God’s existence and of God’s love, the prophet declares. For its second reading this weekend, the church presents a passage from the Second Epistle of Peter. Its theme differs from that of the first reading. The first reading was wonderfully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and of gloom. However, the psalmist’s forecast everlasting death. Bad things will happen. Difficult times will come. But, God will protect the faithful. In this last reassurance, the reading parallels the message of the first reading. The last reading is from the beginning of Mark’s Gospel’s story of the Lord’s public ministry. This reading quotes Isaiah’s prophecy that God, as pledged, will send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of their sins to the bright realms of God’s forgiveness. The Gospel then tells of John the Baptist, who went throughout Judea calling people to repentance. John reinforced his role as a prophet by being thoroughly detached from the concerns of this world. His very appearance, and behavior, emphasized the fact that only the spiritual matters. Only God matters. Mark’s Gospel, however, is careful to say that John himself was not the messenger promised by God in the writings of Isaiah, but rather that John came before this messenger. The messenger, the Savior, of course was the Lord Jesus. The key to obtaining this mercy personally is to recognize personal sin and repent. The church’s powerful reassurance in these readings is God never turns away a sincerely sorrowful sinner. Always, we can rely on God’s love. But, God does not drag us kicking and screaming into heaven. We must turn to God voluntarily and wholeheartedly. Advent calls us to realize that we need God, especially in our sinfulness. We need God’s mercy, but we personally must seek it by repenting.

The Year of St. Paul

NOTRE DAME CENTER FOR LITURGY

DEDICATED TO LITURGICAL RESEARCH AND PASTORAL LITURGY

Paul, Advent time of repentance and mercy

December 7, 2008

COMMENTARY

1. In the Old Testament this name is often used for the area known later as Syria:
   a. Aram
   b. Edom
   c. Galilee

2. In the book of Amos the Lord promises to “break the bar of Damascus.” What does that mean?
   a. destroy all male inhabitants
   b. break the bar that is used to lock the gates
   c. remove the exclusive male priesthood of Dagon

3. In Hosea 12:6 it is related that Jacob fled to the country of Syria. He then worked to get a wife. What occupation did he have?
   a. He became a shepherd.
   b. He preached the truth of Yahweh.
   c. He made tents.

4. The book of Isaiah starts with a dramatic prophecy about Damascus saying it would be:
   a. the capital of Syria
   b. integral to the future of the church
   c. utterly destroyed

5. The Old Testament notes with disgust that King Ahaz was inspired to copy this, after seeing it in Damascus:
   a. an altar for the temple
   b. a statue of Baal
   c. Antioch

6. 1 Maccabees relates that Jonathan, on his way to Damascus, was welcomed everywhere except this city, still in the news today:
   a. Azzeppo
   b. Gaza
   c. Nica

7. Matthew’s Gospel is thought to have probably been written in this city, which, rather than Damascus, was the capital of Syria:
   a. Tarsus
   b. Aleppo
   c. Antioch

8. 1 Maccabees also mentions the Syrian king Antiochus III. He, however, had to pay tribute to this rising imperial power, which would come to dominate the region before the time of Christ:
   a. Cartaghe
   b. Rome
   c. Egypt

9. This Roman soldier was associated with the military cohort headquartered in Syria. His baptism by Peter is recorded in Acts:
   a. Cornelius
   b. Nero
   c. Simon Magus

10. Some authorities believe that the Gospel of John was written in Syria, but the most common home for this work is thought to be:
   a. Cyprus
   b. Ephesus
   c. Crimea

11. Luke’s Gospel describes the census ordered by Caesar Augustus as taking place when Quininas was governor of Syria. How does this help date Jesus’ birth?
   a. It doesn’t; historians don’t find it helpful.
   b. It ties it down to either 45 B.C. or A.D. 1
   c. It means that Dec. 25 in the year zero is the true date.

12. Who was converted on the road to Damascus?
   a. Peter
   b. John the Baptist
   c. Paul

13. What is not mentioned in this account?
   a. hearing voices
   b. a horse
   c. his destination

14. Syrian Catholics may be Roman, Melkite or Maronite Catholic. But there is also a Catholic Church. This is one of these:
   a. Eastern Catholic churches
   b. Muslims for Jesus churches
   c. Russian Evangelical churches

15. The population of Catholics in Syria has been increased by this unforeseen event:
   a. the expulsion of Catholic Palestinians from Gaza by the Israelis
   b. The increased rate of Christian converts from Islam
   c. The flight of Chaldeans from Iraq

ANSWERS:
   1a, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5a, 6b, 7c, 8b, 9a, 10b, 11a, 12c, 13b, 14a, 15c
The great places: St. John Lateran — the church standing erect

Rome. Because the media
drama of the papacy often
twists Peter’s for its stage,
many Catholics may not know
that the Papal Archbishops of the pope’s
cathedral, St. Peter’s, belongs in a
sense to a special church, and
the pope presides there as univer-
sal pastor of the Church. The Lateran
basilica was built by Constantine as a
cathedra of the Bishop of Rome.
Long styled as “mother and
teach and persuade the nations,
and of kings and emperors. He died
in Perugia a relatively young
man, in 1216, on a mission that
combined diplomacy with the
spiritual renewal of northern
Italy. Innocent’s tomb remained in
Perugia until 1891 when Leo
XIII (who served as bishop of
Perugia ) brought it to the
Lateran, where the greatest
cardinals of the Church were
buried. The Lateran is the
most important after the Vatican.
Leo XIII was buried opposite,
in the transept’s other arm —
a papal memorial parallelism that
prompts some thought.
When Pecchi was elected pope
in 1878, the church controlled no
sovereign territory (the Papal
States had been absorbed into
the Kingdom of Italy ); the pope was
the “prisoner of the Vatican,”
and many among the worldly wise
imagined the Office of Peter a
spent force in human affairs.
(England’s Cardinal Henry
Edward Manning, fearful of
Italian pope Leo XIII in 1878,
proposed altering the papal
election in Malta under the
protection of the Royal
Navy). Yet Leo XIII’s 25-year
pontificate saw the papacy begin
to assert the kind of influence
that would culminate in the
vital role played by Pope John
Paul II in the collapse of
European communism and
the liberation of central and eastern
Europe. This was the power of
moral argument and persuasion,
and Leo XIII was its first suc-
cessful modern papal exponent.

The Catholic Difference

Continued from Page 11

ditional if it hands on Jesus’ sacri-
cificial action to repeat again, and
his body and blood to eat and
drink. It is traditional if it hands on
Christ’s life to us.

There is one more part to the
tradition, and Paul hands it on, too.
“Do this in remembrance of me.”
There was a command that
night, and we are not to forget it.

To be traditional means not to for-
get this, either. Keep gathering the
people of God to hear the Word
and share the meal of life.

That is what the Lord com-
manded, and Paul handed on (tra-
ditionally), and we obey. It is part
manded, and Paul handed on (tra-
ditionally), and we obey. It is part
manded, and Paul handed on (tra-
ditionally), and we obey. It is part
manded, and Paul handed on (tra-
ditionally), and we obey. It is part
manded, and Paul handed on (tra-
ditionally), and we obey. It is part
Eagles soar in preseason tourney

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — While most people were out shopping for after-Thanksgiving bargains, the boys and girls’ teams from St. Jude were busy kicking off their 2008-2009 basketball season. Both eighth-grade groups were crowned champions of the Queen of Angels Thanksgiving Invitational in a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) preseason sneak preview.

Denny Jamison, former Queen of Angels athletic director first started coordinating the tournament for CYO teams which originated as a Youth for Christ function. In 1993 the games were moved to the University of Saint Francis site. Jamison said he loves running the tournament and also hosts one over the Christmas break.

He added, “I couldn’t do it without the support of people like Wendy Flesot, the Saint Francis staff and all of the officials who come back year after year from as far away as Florida.” The teams added to the record books for the Friday, Saturday, Sunday marathon of games were as follows:

Boys

In a challenging feat, the St. Jude Eagles eighth-grade team came out of the loser’s bracket and downed the unbeaten Raiders from St. John the Baptist, New Haven, twice to take the top spot in the boys’ eight-team tourney.

After opening wins over Most Precious Blood and St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, the Raiders knocked the Eagles into the loser’s bracket by handing them a 31-29 loss. From there, the Eagles went on to beat Hessen Cassel again to earn another chance to play the Raiders.

On Sunday afternoon, the two met again: this time the Eagles beat the Raiders handily, 33-16, thus creating a loss for each team and a final championship showdown. St. Jude came out on top two out of the three times by a two-point margin sealing the victory, 33-31. Facing Tim Pedro’s 5-1 group was Andrew Spencer with 12 points, while Weston Punter led the Raiders with 11 points and 14 rebounds in the championship game. Jake Britton added 10 points in the loss. Pedro felt the game was a real battle and both teams played hard fighting to the very end.

Raiders coach Steve Petrick added, “I was very proud of our boys’ effort.”

His team, whose stellar football season ended just a few weeks ago, was down by two points with 1.3 seconds left and could not get the shot off.

“St. Jude is a solid team and I give a lot of credit to their defense,” concluded Pepe. The two teams encountered each other several times during the summer months competing in tournaments and Recreation basketball splitting their meetings 2-2 and will face each other yet one more time in the opener of the CYO regular season this weekend.

On the girls’ side, the Lady Eagles went undefeated to come out the victors of their 10-team tournament. But the Gators from St. Aloysius did not make it easy. After beating a young St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, 38-16, and a tough St. Vincent seventh-grade squad, 38-25, St. Jude got by St. Aloysius on a thrilling last second-oud shot, 41-40, which gave the Girls one loss in the double-elimination process. Then in the loser’s bracket, Bad Song’s ladies beat St. Vincent 7 to get another chance at the Eagles, but again came up short, 30-33. In the championship game, Kelsey Richard and Allyson Christian combined for 23 points for St. Jude. Maria Zaremba paced St. Aloysius.

In his 15th season at St. Jude, Coach Dave Westendorf switched from coaching boys’ teams three years ago when his daughter, Meg, started fifth grade.

“It has been a lot of fun coaching this group of girls grow up together. They are a very talented bunch from top to bottom,” Westendorf said of his 12-player roster.

Westendorf, who is assisted by Jack Bazar, Barbara Campbell and Paul Spaulding, feels blessed his team has a lot of depth this season. He used four different starting lineups during the tournament and plans to settle into a final group by midseason.

He added, “The team has a good mix of guards and big players and doesn’t lose much with our second group.”

These girls have had much success over the years with CYO championships and just three losses at the fifth- and sixth-grade level. As seventh graders a year ago, the Eagles went undefeated finishing both the regular season and tournament titles. Westendorf expects the CYO Gold League to have many tough teams this year.

“We are looking forward to working hard and having a fun season,” concluded Westendorf. And opening 4-0, the Eagles are off to a good start.

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The runner-up state Class 4-A football team, the Bishop Dwenger Saints, gather around their trophy after a 10-7 loss to Indianapolis Cathedral on Saturday at Lucas Oil Stadium.

INDIANAPOLIS — The Bishop Dwenger Saints came up one victory short Nov. 29 for the state Class 4-A football championship played at Lucas Oil Stadium. The statistics and the score didn’t match as the Saints lost a heart-breaker, 10-7, to the Indianapolis Cathedral Fighting Irish.

Prior to the game the Saints out scored, out-gained and out-defended the Irish but some key miscues led to the loss.

Four key mistakes including a missed field goal, a dropped interception, a dropped touchdown pass and a blocked field goal lead to the Saints loss.

“We didn’t have the offensive play to keep up with this team,” said Bishop Dwenger Coach Chris Svarczkopf, “We stopped them many, many times, but we just had to be more productive on offense.”

Bishop Dwenger held Cathedral (12-2) to 131 yards, but both of the Irish’s scores were set up by Saint’s mistakes. The Saints, who averaged 327.2 total yards of offense per game, were held to only 179 yards of total offense.

“They are just a great football team,” said Cathedral Coach Rick Streiff of Bishop Dwenger. “They were not going to go away.”

“Both teams made plays,” Dwenger senior receiver and Notre Dame recruit Tyler Eifert said. “It was a hard-fought game. It could have gone either way.”

The Saints’ Joe Colone was aptly named the 4-A Mental Award winner.

Prior to the game, Bishop Dwenger High School held a Tuesday afternoon rally. Bishop John M. D’Arcy prayed with the team and school, rallied the team and participated in a football toss competition.

He also mentioned the honor of playing for the first time at that “extraordinary stadium,” Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis — the first Catholic high school team in the diocese to play at the venue.

The mood was more subdued Monday Dec. 1 at Bishop Dwenger, as the senior football players filed in to take their place in the front row with their fellow teammates. The somber-faced Saints gathered one last time as a unit to honor and recognize the senior players and Indiana Class 4-A state runner-ups.

Instead of talking about the “what if’s” of the game, Coach Svarczkopf chose to focus on an article written by junior Mary Cebalt in last week’s school newspaper, titled “What makes a team a team?”

Cebalt wrote that God inspires Bishop Dwenger students in their daily lives, on and off the field, and our faith in him gives us something not every school has — one thing that we all share in common, despite our diversity otherwise.

Bishop D’Arcy offered his words of encouragement and thanks to the team and Coach Svarczkopf for representing Bishop Dwenger with grace and dignity in the face of a painful loss.

In his closing remarks, Bishop Dwenger’s principal recalled the teary-eyed fans who lamented, “It just isn’t fair” as they left Indianapolis. Tone sympathized and could agree, but concluded the pep session with a challenge to the student body to see the positive in every situation and vowed to wear a t-shirt sporting the words, “Don’t Mess With Mr. Positive” on Fridays for the remainder of the school year.

Greg Jones, Michelle Castlemam and Tim Johnson contributed to this article.
This little crimson book may be small in size, but it is mighty in meaningful text and brilliantly juxtaposed ancient artwork. The preface tells the reader it “brings together in one volume two earlier books by Joseph Ratzinger that perfectly complement each other: ‘The Light That Shines upon Us,’ 1978 and ‘Praise of Christmas,’ 1982.”

The text curiously begins with the “burden of sickness,” which then-Cardinal Ratzinger relates to the purification and waiting of Advent. In that anticipation there is hope, he says, while using examples of the beauty of nature and the frailty of man to illuminate his message of eternal joy in Christ.

Three of the seven chapters begin with a numbered Scripture verse that brings to life the message on the pages. Scripture and surprising personal anecdotes are interspersed throughout the tome and the text is packed with new meaning to an age old Biblical inheritance. Ratzinger describes how some of the most cherished Christmas customs come from the Advent liturgy, such as the Christmas tree and decorations. Even the custom of Christmas baking comes from liturgy: “In that day, the Christmas baking comes from liturgy.”

In the genealogy of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI writes of the Scripture reference lineup focusing on the five women of the yuletide as God works to change hearts from within. He addresses the truth that God came to mankind as the child Jesus in the openness of a child give us hope.”

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“In that day, he will bring together in one volume two earlier books by Joseph Ratzinger that perfectly compliment each other: ‘The Light That Shines upon Us,’ 1978 and ‘Praise of Christmas,’ 1982.”

Ratzinger describes how some of the most cherished Christmas customs come from the Advent liturgy, such as the Christmas tree and decorations. Even the custom of Christmas baking comes from liturgy: “In that day, the mountains will drip sweetness and the rivers will flow with milk and honey.”

In the genealogy of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI writes of the Scripture reference lineup focusing on the five women of “Faith and Grace.” He speaks at length of the freedom of Jewish history and Mary in Matthew’s genealogy account in chapter two.

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Questions for discussion

• When have you experienced the “burden of sickness,” whether physically or spiritually? How did the waiting purify you?

• Discuss the ramifications of the four women from Jewish history and Mary in Matthew’s genealogy account in chapter two.

• How are you like the ox and ass in chapter four, who bow before the Christ child born in a stable?

• What does “Silence is the space of this child. Silence is the sphere where God is born” mean to you? How can silence bring you closer to God? (Page 90)

• How can a renewed focus on the truth and beauty of the Christmas message bring you hope for your personal future?

Visit www.diocesefwsb.org/blog for discussion on this book.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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

Fish fry hosted by Knights
Warsaw — The Knights of Columbus Council #4511 will have a fish fry on Friday, Dec. 5, from 4:30-7 p.m. at the Knights Hall on Bell Drive. Tickets are $8 for adults and $4 for children ages 6-12. Fish, baked beans, green beans, coleslaw, applesauce and beverage are included.

Knights plan fish fry
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus #506, 910 Reed Rd., will have a fish fry on Friday, Dec. 5, from 5-7:30 p.m. Fresh Cut Flowers • Silk and Dried Flowers Imported and Domestic Gifts and Candles 232-3354 •(800)994-2687

Rosary Society candy and bake sale
Fort Wayne — Precious Blood Church, 1515 Barthold St., will have a candy and bake sale Saturday, Dec. 20, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 21, from 8 a.m. until noon in the school gym.

Holiday Christmas concert
Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Parish will host a Christmas concert Sunday, Dec. 28, at 7 p.m. in the church. This concert is free.

Community sing along
Fort Wayne — The Fort Wayne Bach Collegium is sponsoring a community-wide Messiah sing-along Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m. at Queen of Angels Church, 1500 W. State St. Opportunities for soloists are available. Bring your own score, or one will be provided. Admission is $5 and includes holiday cookies and coffee during intermission. Call (260) 482-9411 or visit www.bachcollegium.org for more information.

Pancake breakfast helps support Women’s Care Center
Fort Wayne — St. Joseph Women’s Care Center has a fish fry on Friday, Dec. 5, from 5-7:30 p.m. at the Knights Hall on Bell Drive. Tickets are $8 for adults and $4 for children 12 and under. Fish, two sides and beverage are included.

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