Christmas Message

Jesus Christ has come to set us free. Free from what? Free from sin, surely. Free also from hopelessness and despair.
The first decade of the new century and the new millennium has brought international terror and in recent months a great economic recession, which some are calling a catastrophe.
In our own cities and towns, we read every day of men and women being deprived of income for their families. A retirement in dignity and comfort, once thought to be a bright hope for so many, seems now to have dimmed. Even the joy of a quiet old age lived in dignity seems less likely.
Young people find themselves captured by a lack of hope, which comes from thinking that pleasure has to be instant, or it brings no joy.
Where should we turn? And how do we guide our children? For surely we want to convey hope to them.
Pope Benedict XVI gives us the school of hope, which we find in prayer. Indeed, what is Christmas without time for prayer and adoration?

A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer. When no one listens to me anymore, God still listens to me. When I can no longer talk to anyone or call upon anyone, I can always talk to God. When there is no longer anyone to help me deal with a need or expectation that goes beyond the human capacity for hope, he can help me.
When I have been plunged into complete solitude ...; if I pray, I am never totally alone. The late Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, a prisoner for 15 years, nine of them spent in solitary confinement, has left us a precious little book: “Prayers of Hope.” During 13 years in jail, in a situation of seemingly utter hopelessness, the fact that he could listen and speak to God became for him an increasing power of hope, which enabled him, after his release, to become for people all over the world a witness to hope — to that great hope which does not wane even in the nights of solitude.

— Pope Benedict XVI: “Saved in Hope,” “Spe Salvi”

Hope is a gift of God. We realize the fullness of Christmas when we accept that the child is God’s promise. Indeed, the child is God himself, and our nature has been joined to his.
Christmas is only fully realized in myself when I look at the crib and accept the promise it contains; namely, his presence in my heart and his promise of eternal life.
The babe in the manger is my salvation and my promise. Indeed, the child of Bethlehem is my salvation and my promise. The gift I give is myself.
The question put to Jesus Christ: Who is my neighbor? No one should pass this feast by without hearing the answer.

— John M. D’Arcy, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Mary feted in Warsaw

BY JODI MAGALLANES

WARSAW — Regaling her with bells, dance and flowers, parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Diocesan Shrine in Warsaw honored their namesake on her feast day, Dec. 12.

Tradition holds that on that date in 1531, Mary made her third apparition to a converted Indian peasant in central Mexico and charged him with asking the local bishop to build a church in that place. The bishop was ultimately convinced of her appearance by a gift of roses, which do not grow in that region, and roses continue to be one of her symbols.

Likenesses of the peasant Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, in the persons of various choir members and children, lent historical perspective and color to the Mass held in observance of her feast and celebrated by Bishop John M. D’Arcy.

“IT is a joy to be with you in this place. I’m especially grateful to see so many young people,” said Bishop D’Arcy, before switching languages and celebrating the rest of the Mass in Spanish.

Our Lady of Guadalupe has been instituted as the patron saint of all the Americas but is especially dear to Mexicans, Bishop D’Arcy said. Venerating her is an expression of our love for her and for her son Jesus Christ, he continued.

The bishop also encouraged the several hundred parishioners present to think of the Catholic Church as their home and to not let those who are not experiencing the fullness of the faith to distance them from the church.

“I give thanks to God for this parish and this church ... Mary has sought out her children who live in Warsaw,” he continued.

During the Mass Bishop D’Arcy also blessed the church’s new tabernacle in its
Bishop observes festivities with feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

**BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY**

A weekend to remember

I was off west on a cold Friday afternoon to Warsaw, the center point of our diocese, having been there just two days previously for a meeting of our Presbyteral Council. To the chagrin of some, when I went to Warsaw, it was usually to Sacred Heart Parish — but now, it might mean the new church of Our Lady of Guadalupe; and that was the case on this cold Friday night. For this was the great feast of the Patroness of all the Americas, a Fiesta de Señora de Guadalupe. I was informed by Father Paul Bueter, the pastor, and Sister Joan Hambers of the Fort Wayne area, that the church had been full from midnight until 2 a.m. for prayer, and the rosary, and song and dances of praise. The church cleared out about 2 a.m., but another group took it at 5 a.m. This is what is called “Las Mañanitas,” the beginning of the observance of this feast day, which is especially important to Catholics from Mexico.

For Mass, the church was packed, standing room only — out the doors. A beautiful Eucharist of prayer and song, People came from all over the area and it is a great consolation to this community, and certainly to me, that we now have this church sitting high on a hill for their prayer and worship.

Afterwards, I called my good friend, Savina Kralis, to come to the front so the congregation could greet her. It was Savina and her dear husband, Jerry — a Warsaw businessman, as I have reported earlier, who gave us the land for this church. They had driven north to Michigan once, and everywhere, saw signs that indicated that many of the Hispanic Catholics were attending Evangelical churches, and so they gave us this land — but Jerry put a condition on it — that we had to build a church for the Latino Catholics. It is done, and it is a blessing. Their daughter, Suzie Light, a member of our Catholic Charities Board, was also present.

Back home, late in the evening, after filling up my gas tank, which was almost empty, it was a joy the next morning to celebrate Mass for St. Vincent de Paul Society members and some from our Fort Wayne area at St. Joseph Church. A holy Mass, and then after a substantial breakfast, I gave a talk similar to the one I had given a few weeks before to the staff of Catholic Charities. I took most of it from the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est.” In the first half is an extraordinary theological and philosophical analysis of love, but the second half talks about the church’s work of charity; and what characteristics should mark the work of those engaged in the church’s ministry of Christ.

By my invitation, also present was Ampy Blaine. Ampy is a cantor in many of our churches in Fort Wayne, and a parishioner of the cathedral parish. A native of the Philippines, she has stepped forward to assist the Catholics who are refugees from Burma, many of whom came with the help of Catholic Charities. Ampy spoke with some emotion about her efforts to assist the Catholics and find transportation for them so that they can get to Mass on Sunday. Afterwards, several people offered to help.

I have correspondence from two priests, whom we hope to bring here around Christmas to celebrate Mass and hear confessions, and I am willing to ask some of our parishes in the Fort Wayne area if they can help with transportation and other needs that we that are finding. Pope Benedict XVI makes clear that the service of charity is for everyone and that there are no conditions. It is a simple act of love. He also indicates that we have special obligations to those “of the household of the faith,” and with the help of Ampy Blaine, members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charities and others, we will fill this obligation with love and tender care.

Sunday at St. Patrick’s

This special weekend came to completion on a remarkable Sunday, as I celebrated the Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Patrick Church, Fort Wayne.

It is difficult to express the gratitude in my heart to the Society of the Divine Word, a congregation I knew well in New England, a great missionary congregation for what they have done for St. Patrick Parish.

With the coming of Father Chau Pham, and now Father Tom, the people have sensed a fresh beginning, and a great sense of hope is evident.

It began when we obtained the assistance of Father Chau Pham, SVD, to give pastoral care to the Vietnamese community. Later, at the approval of his provincial support, I appointed him pastor. I wrote to his superior asking if we could have a Spanish-speaking priest for the community of St. Patrick’s. Also, we have received Father Tom Ascheman, SVD. He is the assistant provincial and has served six years in Mexico, and is not only fluent in Spanish, but understands the Mexican culture. In fact, he has a doctorate in religion and culture from Catholic University and his doctoral dissertation included a study of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the culture surrounding it and its impact itself, the popular devotion in Mexico, the spirituality of the Mexican people, and the nature of the conversion, which followed the apparition.

There must have been close to 1,200 people at this beloved old church. I read a few words in Spanish at the beginning of Mass. Father Tom gave a beautiful homily in Spanish with English interspersed. He talked about this feast day and related it to St. Patrick Parish.

After a fine Mexican lunch, I met with the lay leadership of the Latino community, along with Father Chau, and Father Tom. I learned about the strong prayer groups, which meet every week and saw clearly the lay leadership that is growing in this parish.

Some pastoral stability

I have been trying for considerable time to seek stability at St. Patrick’s. Through the fault of no one, there has been a turnover in pastoral leadership. With the coming of Father Chau Pham, and now Father Tom, the people have sensed a fresh beginning, and a great sense of hope is evident.

Here is a statistic that all of our priests and people may find of interest. I was told there will be 250 baptisms this year at St. Patrick Parish. Currently, there are 250 in the religious education program. But if the rate of baptisms continues, that means in five or six years, there will be an enormous need for catechists. Remember now, that most of the children speak English, so we will be able to help from other parishes and from our Office of Catechesis.

Father Tom, with his strong experience in pastoral care pointed this out clearly. I was especially pleased to see my dear friends, GISela Feil, director of religious education and Dorothy Cuellar, who teaches at St. Patrick’s. There are many physical needs at St. Patrick’s. The St. Patrick School, which serves as a meeting place, needs a roof. There is need for tuck-pointing in both the school and the church. But we are better as a church, when there are challenges like this. I met with the Hispanic leadership for over an hour. The challenges were clear, but so were the joy and the hope.

Another statistic

I had an occasion this week to meet with some people from the Women’s Care Center. They are seeing 45 women every day in the Fort Wayne area and over 10,000 in all their centers. We have statistics for their first two years in Fort Wayne. During that time, the number of abortions in Allen County dropped by 20 percent. So there is an exciting weekend for you, and I will see you all in two weeks.
A mountaintop church in Colombia is shown in this photo.

Customs, traditions in the celebration of the Mass

BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

FORT WAYNE — One beautiful aspect of the Catholic faith is how Mass is universal. You can travel anywhere in the world and find comfort in the familiar. In my opinion, however, there are a few nuances in other traditions and cultures that add to the beauty of the Mass.

In September, I traveled to France with my grandmother for leisure. While there, I was both a spectator and participant in the Mass. As a biased observer, I noticed a few differences between the American and French celebration of the Eucharist.

Perhaps most striking was the seating arrangement. People were seated all around the church, both in front and behind the altar. It reminded me of pre-Vatican II when the priest’s back faced the congregation. Furthermore, the altar and curia were astounding. There were half a dozen or more — as opposed to our traditional two or three.

Additionally, children were more active celebrants in the Mass. The priest invited them up to the altar to receive Communion. It was touching to see a few dozen French children actively engaged in the word of God.

The abundance of incense was refreshing. Even in the massive cathedrals of Europe, you can detect the sweet smell of the substance. I also noted how the collection was brought up with the bread and wine, as if to signify it, too, was a sacrifice.

As I walked out of Mass nearly an hour and a half later (yes, another difference), I was thankful. It was absorbing to see a few dozen French children actively engaged in the celebration of the Mass.

Today’s Catholic contributor Lauren Caggiano, is shown in France in front of the Cathedral of Reims.

Cardinal Dulles dies at 90; Jesuit theologian made a cardinal in ‘01

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal Avery Dulles, a Jesuit theologian who was made a cardinal in 2001, died Dec. 12 at the Jesuit infirmary in New York, Murray-Weigel Hall. A cause of death was not released but he had been in poor health. He was 90 years old.

Cardinal Dulles had been the oldest living U.S. cardinal. His death was announced by the New York-based Jesuit provincial’s office.

Cardinal Dulles gave what was described as a farewell address in April, delivering the Laurence J. McKinley Sacred Art Lecture at Fordham University. In the presenation Cardinal Dulles reconfirmed his faith, his spirituality and his commitment to the Society of Jesus. He also offered a final word against the materialism, relativism, subjectivism, hedonism, scientism and superficial anti-intellectualism he sees in modern society. Later that month he had a pri- vate meeting with Pope Benedict XVI to convey the pontiff’s visit to New York.

“It was a lovely meeting,” said Dominican Sister Anne-Marie Kimmern, his spiritual assistant for the past 20 years. “The pope literally bounded into the room with the ‘pull’ of freedom from respon- sibilities is drawing the nation into immorality.”

Once freedom operates in a moral vacuum, it becomes mean- ingless,” he said. The United States has proven successful at overthrowing tyrannical regimes, Cardinal Dulles said, but seems unable to create anything more than a “moral vacuum, which is painfully filled by demonstrations of fraud, drugs and violence.”

He said, for example, in post-Taliban Afghanistan, soci- eties “too many citizens begin to hanker for a return of the ousted Taliban, which was just a fraud, a min- imum of order and security.”

In another 2004 talk Cardinal Dulles called for “a rebirth of apologists,” the defense of Christian faith by reason, because “the time is ripe, the need is urgent.”

But he called for an apologists centered on “the living testimony of believers” rather than the tradi- tional arguments from philosophy and political science, one focused not on the traditional question of “how can we get America,” but “how can God comes to us.”

“The apologists of personal testimony is particularly suited to the postmodern era,” he said. “Such testimony invites us not only to individual conversion but community conversion of the whole body of believers.”

At an 80th birthday Mass in his honor in 1998, then-Father Dulles told the assembly, “My own adult life has constantly revolved about faith. … Even in my days as an undergraduate student, my interest was absorbed in the search for faith.”

Cardinal Dulles died in 1941 while a student at Harvard Law School. He served in the Navy in World War II, then entered the Jesuits after his dis- charge in 1946. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1956.

Cardinal Dulles had been the Laurence J. McKinley professor of religious and society at Fordham since 1988. He also had taught at Washington in the former Woodstock College, now folded into Georgetown University, from 1960-74, and The Catholic University of America, 1974-88.

He also had been a visiting profes- sor at Catholic, Protestant and sec- ular colleges and universities. Past president of both the Catholic Theological Society of America and the American Theological Association, Cardinal Dulles served on the International Theological Commission and as a member of the U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue. He also served as a consultant to the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Doctrine.

His awards include the Croix de Guerre, the Cardinal Spellman Award for distinguished achieve- ment in theology, the Boston College Presidential Bicentennial Award, the Christus Magnus Medal from the University of Portland, the Religious Education Forum Award from the National Catholic Educational Association, American Churchwoman Award, the F. Sadlier Dinger Award for contributions to cate- chetical ministry, the Cardinal Gibbons Award from Catholic University, the John Carroll Society Medal, the Jerome Award from the Roman Catholic Library Association of America, Fordham’s Founders Award, and more than 30 honorary doctorates.

Cardinal Dulles had two other relatives who served as secretary of state: great-grandfather John W. Foster and great-uncle Robert Lansing.

The cardinal was a frequent lecturer on religious and church matters well into his 80s.

In a 2005 lecture, Cardinal Dulles said, “The true spirit of the (Second Vatican) Council is to be found, and not apart from, the letter” of the council texts. “When rightly interpreted, the documents of Vatican II can still be a power- ful source of renewal for the church.”

Also in 2005, he said the 1551 teaching of the Council of Trent on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist remains “practice and not merely theory.”

The council described the presence with three adverbs — “truly, really and sub- stantially” — that are “the keys that open the door to Catholic teaching and exclude contrary views,” he said.
An illustration depicts a human fetus in a womb. The new Vatican document "Dignitas Personae" ("The Dignity of a Person") warns that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to "take the place of his Creator."

Vatican document warns certain new research violates moral principles

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A new Vatican document warned that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to "take the place of his Creator."

The latest advances raise serious questions of moral complicity for researchers and other biotech professionals, who have a duty to refuse to use biological material obtained by unethical means, the document said.

The 32-page instruction, titled "Dignitas Personae" ("The Dignity of a Person"), was issued Dec. 12 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Benedict XVI personally approved the text and ordered its publication.

The document represented an updating of the congregation’s 1987 instruction, "Dominum Vitae" ("The Gift of Life"), which rejected in vitro fertilization, human cloning, surrogate motherhood and nontherapeutic experiments with human embryos.

The new instruction expanded on those teachings or presented new ones in the following areas:

• Stem-cell research.
• The morning-after pill and other contraceptive methods.
• Gene therapy.
• The implantation of an embryo that may have been conceived, and who therefore requests or permits its implantation in the uterine wall to continue its development after fertilization of the egg, and is gravely immoral; when there is certainty that an abortion has resulted, there also are serious canon law penalties, it said.
• Gene therapy. It said genetic engineering that aims to correct genetic defects by intervening on nonreproductive cells, a process called somatic-cell gene therapy, is in principle morally acceptable. The effects in this case are limited to a single person.
• The morning-after pill and other anti-implantation methods. The document said an embryo is constituted after fertilization of the egg, and drugs and techniques that prevent its implantation in the uterine wall are morally illicit because they intend to cause an abortion — even if they don’t actually cause an abortion every time they are used.

Anyone who seeks to prevent the implantation of an embryo that may have been conceived, and who therefore requests or prescribes such a drug, generally intends abortion, it said. The use of such anti-implantation methods "falls within the sin of abortion" and is gravely immoral; when there is certainty that an abortion has resulted, there also are serious canon law penalties, it said.
• Gene therapy. It said genetic engineering that aims to correct genetic defects by intervening on nonreproductive cells, a process called somatic-cell gene therapy, is in principle morally acceptable. The effects in this case are limited to a single person.

But it is not permissible to make genetic modifications that seek to transmit the effects to the subject’s offspring, called germ-line cell therapy, because of potential harm to the progeny, the document said. It said that “in the present state of research” germ-line cell therapy in all its forms is morally illicit.

• Embryo manipulation and “adoption.” The document repeated earlier condemnations of the in vitro creation of human embryos, a technique often used in fertility treatment, first because it separates procreation from the conjugal act in marriage, and second because in practice unused embryos are often discarded, thus violating the principle that “the human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception.”

Frozzen such embryos is itself a violation of ethics, because it exposes them to a serious risk of death or harm, the document said. Most of such embryos remain “orphans,” it said. Despite the good intentions of people who have suggested a form of “prenatal adoption” to allow unused frozen embryos to be born, such a proposal would be subject to medical, psychological and legal problems, it said.

• Freezing of human eggs. The freezing of oocytes, immature human egg cells, has been introduced as part of an in vitro fertilization technique, in which only those eggs to be transferred to the mother’s body are fertilized. The document said the freezing of oocytes for this purpose is morally unacceptable.

• Human-animal hybrid cloning. The document rejected as immoral recent efforts to use animal eggs to reprogram human cells in order to extract embryonic stem cells from the resulting embryos. These efforts represent a grave offense against human dignity by mixing animal and human genetic elements capable of “disrupting the specific identity of man,” it said.

In addition, use of the resulting stem cells would expose humans to unacceptable risks, it said.

In a section titled “The use of human ‘biological material’ of illicit origin,” the document examined the ethical questions posed for people who, in research or the production of vaccines or other products, deal with cell lines that are the result of a procedure the church considers immoral.

In cases in which there is a direct connection, such as embryonic experimentation that inevitably involves the killing of the human embryos, such acts “always constitute a grave moral disorder,” it said.

The document said the situation was more complex when a researcher works with cell lines produced apart from his research center or obtained commercially. The document rejected the “criterion of independency,” as formulated by some ethicists, which argues that using such biological material would be ethically permissible as long as there is a clear separation between those causing the death of embryos, for example, and those doing the research.

The document said it was necessary to distance oneself in one’s ordinary professional activities from the injustice perpetrated by others, even when immoral actions are legal, in order not to give the impression of “tacit acceptance of actions which are gravely unjust.”

Therefore, it needs to be stated that there is a duty to refuse to use such “biological material” even when there is no close connection between the researcher and the actions of those who performed the artificial fertilization or the aborting, or when there was not prior agreement with the centers in which the artificial fertilization took place,” it said.

In the wider framework, it added, there are differing degrees of responsibility, and grave reasons may impel some to justify the use of such “biological material.” For example, it said, the danger to the health of children or patients could permit parents to legitimately use a vaccine that was developed using cell lines derived from aborted fetuses.

Then, it noted, the parents have no voice in the decision over how the vaccines are made. At the same time, it said, everyone should ask if their health care system to make other types of vaccines available.

The document closed with an appeal to view the church’s teachings not as a series of “nos” but as an effort to protect society’s weakest and most defenseless against forms of unjust discrimination and oppression.

The editors declined to comment on this page's content.
Bishop John M. D’Arcy celebrated Mass Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Diocesan Shrine in Warsaw. He joined parishioners Sunday, Dec. 14, at St. Patrick Church, Fort Wayne, to celebrate the festivities associated with Our Lady of Guadalupe.

**MARY**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

new location behind the altar. At the end of the Mass, he also took a moment to present to the faithful the wife and daughter of departed Warsaw resident Jerry Kralis, who were present at the Mass. Kralis donated the land on which the parish was constructed after long years of searching and raising money for a site.

“He made a sacrifice for you, and for me,” Bishop D’Arcy said.

A guest choir and band of mariachi musicians took over musical responsibilities for the Mass while the usual choir members and musicians instead donned traditional Aztec clothing, notably including ankle bracelets of bells, and performed a traditional Aztec dance after the offertory.

Participants filled the downstairs hall afterward for dinner, yet dozens more stayed upstairs to pray before Mary’s image next to the sanctuary or to honor her with the gift of their roses.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, Bishop D’Arcy celebrated the noon Mass at St. Patrick Church in Fort Wayne as part of the weekend festivities of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

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Christmas decorations a reminder of new life from Christ, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The traditional decorations of Christmas are reminders that the light and love of Jesus Christ bring new life to all who wait in darkness, Pope Benedict XVI said. The pope spoke about Christmas trees as symbols of new life Dec. 12 when he met a delegation from Austria, which donated the Christmas tree in St. Peter’s Square, and he spoke about Nativity scenes as reminders of God’s love for humanity when he blessed figures of the baby Jesus Dec. 14 before reciting the Angelus. “Before the Nativity scene, we experience Christian joy, contemplating in the face of the newborn Jesus the face of the God who drew near to us out of love,” the pope said during his Angelus address. The day’s reading from St. Paul, he said, called on Christians to rejoice because the Lord is near. Although the Catholic Church believes in the second coming of Christ, there is no need for “alarmism,” he said. “The nearness of God is not a question of space or time, but a question of love: Love is drawing near.”

Planned Parenthood gift certificates for holidays called ‘offensive’

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — A holiday gift-certificate campaign by Planned Parenthood of Indiana “is offensive because of the celebration of human life,” said the director of the pro-life ministry office of the Indianapolis Archdiocese. Sister Diane Carollo made the comments in a nationally televised interview Dec. 3 on ABC’s “Evening News.” The Planned Parenthood gift certificates are being offered as “tax deductible gift health,” and can be redeemed for “services or the recipient’s choice of birth control method,” according to the organization’s press release, which has generated local, state and national media coverage. Planned Parenthood is the nation’s largest abortion provider. In a Dec. 4 interview with the Servants of the Holy Family archdiocesan newspaper, Sister Diane called it “outrageous” that Planned Parenthood would have the audacity to offer lethal gift certificates for the Christmas holiday. “A member of the Servants of the Sacred Heart, she heads the pro-life ministry for nine years.”

Cincinnati welcomes its new coadjutor, Archbishop Schnurr

CINCINNATI (CNS) — The appointment of Coadjutor Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr to Cincinnati is a testament to his XVI’s way of “expressing the love of the Lord for this portion of his people,” the pope said. Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk told the congregation at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Champs Dec. 7 for a Mass of welcome. More than 170 priests, 11 archbishops and bishops, and a capacity crowd of layly filled the church to welcome the new coadjutor archbishop, who was bishop of Duluth, Minn., when he was appointed to his new job Oct. 17. The liturgy was more special by the presence of 24 members of Archbishop Schnurr’s family, who traveled from Iowa, Nebraska and Pennsylvania to be with him as he concluded his first week in Cincinnati. In his homily, Archbishop Pilarczyk noted that the day’s readings shared a theme: an admonition that people pay attention. “We all need to hear this message from time to time simply because it’s so easy not to pay attention to the Lord Jesus,” he said. “We live in a world that is really good at keeping us distracted.”

Diocese reaches out to workers and families affected by GM closure

MADISON, Wis. (CNS) — The Catholic Church in Wisconsin is reaching out to offer solidarity and hope to the more than 5,000 families who will be affected by the impending closure of a General Motors plant in Janesville and layoffs by other area employers. More than 1,200 hourly GM workers are to be laid off effective Jan. 2 after their holiday vacation. The GM plant is scheduled to stop production Dec. 23. Many other area businesses have announced layoffs; they include Woodbridge Group of Brodhead, affecting 70 workers, and Allied Automotive Group of Janesville, affecting 117 employees. The GM situation also will affect other related businesses, such as day care providers and area merchants. Madison Bishop Robert C. Morlino was scheduled to preside and preach at a special 12 Mass in Janesville for the unemployed and underemployed and their families. Several area pastors who planned the liturgy were to be the concelebrants.

Former Cleveland diocesan CFO to spend year and a day in prison

CLEVELAND (CNS) — The former financial and legal secretary of the Cleveland Diocese will spend a year and a day in federal prison for failing to report income he claimed was additional compensation in an off-the-books arrangement with diocesan officials. U.S. District Court Judge Ann Aldrich ordered Joseph H. Smith, 52, to report Jan. 1 to a still unnamed federal prison. A jury in July found Smith guilty of six tax-related charges after a seven-week trial. Aldrich announced the sentence to a silent Smith Dec. 11 in U.S. District Court. She said she settled on the sentence to allow Smith, an accountant and an attorney, to qualify for at least 56 days of good behavior credit and allow him to serve in time to a federal institution rather than a local jail. As part of the sentence, Aldrich ordered Smith to make restitution between $200,000 and $400,000. She said the exact amount will be determined at a later date. Philip Kuszner, Smith’s attorney, said the amount owed is only $48,000.

Spokesman: Church opposes considering homosexuality a crime

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Vatican spokesman said the Catholic Church is clearly against considering homosexuality a crime, but is wary of international declarations that use the issue to promote a political agenda based on sexual orientation. The spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, made the comment Dec. 11 in response to questions at a Vatican press conference. In early December, a leading Vatican diplomat drew criticism from gay-rights groups when he said the Vatican opposed a proposed U.N. declaration to endorse the universal decriminalization of homosexuality. The diplomat, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican’s apostolic nuncio to the United Nations, said such a declaration might be used to put pressure on or discriminate against countries that do not recognize same-sex marriage. Father Lombardi, in his latest comments to reporters, said the Vatican was not conducting a battle against the United Nations or weakening its opposition to discrimination against homosexuals, which is clearly stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Holy sites need legal protection, say speakers at Rome conference

ROME (CNS) — Every Friday afternoon in Jerusalem’s Old City, thousands of Muslims walk to the Aqsa Mosque to pray, thousands of Jews walk to the Western Wall to pray and thousands of Christians carry a cross in procession along the Via Dolorosa, recalling the Way of the Cross. Daniel Seidemann, an Israeli lawyer, said the Friday afternoon scene “is not touchy-feely, it’s not fuzzy warm and when the people glance at each other, more often than not it is a glance of disdain or contempt, but the ... thing works.”

Wife’s love gave Austrian martyr strength

ROME (CNS) — Blessed Franz Jagerstatter, an Austrian farmer besieged for refusing to serve in the Nazi army, had the strength to follow his conscience because of his wife, Franziska, said Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna. With the 95-year-old widow and the couple’s three daughters present in the front row, Cardinal Schönborn participated in the Dec. 9 presentation of a new biography, “How Can One Be Christ or Hitler? The Life of Blessed Franz Jagerstatter.” The book launch was held in Rome’s St. Bartholomew Church, which Pope John Paul II designated as a shrine to martyrs of the 20th century. The cardinal praised the spirituality of Blessed Jagerstatter’s “spiritual testament” is on a side altar in the church, along with letters and objects owned by other victims of Nazism and communism in Europe and of dictators in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

UN receives petitions for and against abortion as ‘universal right’

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — On the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Dec. 10, petitions for and against declaring abortion as a “universal right” were presented to U.N. members. More than a year ago, Marie Stopes International, a London-based abortion advocacy group, initiated a petition drive calling for “women’s rights to control reproduction” to be “protected and supported through reformed laws and policies at all levels of government” and their signatures during a U.N. General Assembly session marking the anniversary of the 1948 U.N. declaration. The group’s Web site, www.globalsafeabortion.org/calltoaction.html, noted that 651 people from 198 countries signed the “Global Call to Action for Women’s Access to Safe Abortion.” In December 10. The Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute of New York launched a petition of its own in October called the “U.N. Petition for the Unborn Child and the Family.” The petition, posted online at www.c-fam.org/publica- tioniskozyfaxkap.html, had gathered more than 367,000 signatures, including 165,000 from English-speaking countries, by Dec. 10.

Seidemann, who describes himself as a Zionist committed to ensuring Jerusalem remains a city where Jews, Christians and Muslims coexist, spoke in Rome Dec. 9 in a conference held in preparation for an international conference on different legal and religious approaches to the status of holy places and religious institutions. The conference was sponsored by the interreligious program in law and religion at Catholic University of the Sacred Heart School of Law in Washington. Marshall J. Breger, a professor at that law school, told Catholic News Service, “We believe the political issues — as difficult as they are in places like Palestine and Israel — cannot be resolved without recognizing the religious issues involved.”

People walk in the rain in front of the Christmas tree in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Dec. 13.
AROUND THE DIOCESE

Bishop Dwenger to offer SAT prep course

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Dwenger High School will offer an SAT prep course on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7:30 p.m. running Jan. 20 through March 5 and will include diagnostic testing, six verbal and six math sessions. The $170 fee includes the course text. The class will address all areas of the SAT, and is open to any high school student in the Fort Wayne, Allen County area. For more information or to register call (260) 496-4700 or visit www.bishopdwenger.com.

Ancilla College receives Lilly grant

DONALDSON — Ancilla College has been awarded a matching continuation grant from the Lilly Foundation in the amount of $375,000, the college announced. The grant is a continuation of a previous five-year, $750,000 grant made by Lilly in 2004. As per the terms of the agreement, Ancilla College will continue many of the programs developed under the initial grant in 2004 while establishing new programs that will benefit its students. Ancilla College will also match the grant with $375,000 of its own.

Current programs established under the earlier grant enabled Ancilla College to increase the number of articulation agreements with four-year colleges and establish internship opportunities and academic skills programs for its students.

Programs to be established under the new grant will provide a $15,000 matching grant for iStan technology, fund continued support of articulation agreement programs, provide supplemental instruction for students in the nursing and science programs, support a collaboration with the Gallup organization to provide a career assessment program (StrengthsQuest), and foster partnerships with local high schools.

‘We Believe in You’ takes shape

DONALDSON — Ancilla College is experiencing a record number of adults registering for classes under the “We Believe in You” program, according to Erin Alonso, director of admissions. The “We Believe in You” program is designed for prospective students 21- or older who have never attended college. “We Believe in You” allows a student to take up to three credit hours free of charge. In addition, all students in the program will have an academic advisor to assist them with all aspects of attending college for the first time, including the registration process, filing a financial aid application, determining their education opportunities and more.

Classes are scheduled to begin Jan. 12, 2009, and will be held on site at the Donaldson-based campus. Upon completion of a course, students will have access to their transcripts.

“We challenge students to take advantage of this opportunity to go to college for free,” said Alonso. “Earning a college degree gives people hope for a brighter future. Ancilla is here to give the people in our local communities the opportunity to begin their college education.”

For more information on “We Believe in You,” contact the Ancilla College Admissions Office at (574) 936-8898.

Craft show serves needy

NOTRE DAME — Saint Mary’s College’s Office for Civic and Social Engagement (OCSE) hosted a unique craft show on Dec. 12 that raised money to buy Christmas gifts for those who can’t afford them this year. The craft show featured the original works of over 35 local artisan in LeMans Hall and was part of the fifth annual “Twelve Days of Christmas Project,” sponsored by OCSE.

As part of ‘Twelve Days, students, faculty and staff participat ed in special events, service projects and fundraisers to purchase food, clothing and gifts for Michiana families in need this Christmas season. The college is supporting 15 families through the Salvation Army, Grandparents as Parents (GAP) and Title 1 Schools in South Bend — Coquillard, Lincoln, and Warren Primary Centers — where Saint Mary’s students tutor children, and 15 individuals through REAL Services and Mental Health America.

STUDENTS HOST ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER

The eighth-grade class of St. Anthony de Padua School hosted their annual spaghetti dinner on Nov. 14. The dinner is the major fundraiser for the class, and a tradition that the entire parish supports. Profits earned pay for the class trip to Chicago, in addition to the eighth-grade retreat. Dedicated parents and students transformed the gym into “Antonio’s” for the evening, while Papa Vino’s provided the main course. Over 800 diners were served.

Bishop Luers events

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School has announced the following upcoming events:

• Bishop Luers High School will host a Trivia Knight party to benefit LuersKnight. This event will take place on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Parish on Fairfield Ave. Tables of 10 consisting of friends, coworkers, family members, etc. (adults only please) will be organized to play trivia against other tables. Snacks and soft drinks will be provided. Beer, wine and margaritas will be available for purchase. To register a table of 10 in advance, call Pat Landon at (260) 747-6110 or table of 10 consisting of friends, coworkers, family members, etc. (adults only please) will be organized to play trivia against other tables. Snacks and soft drinks will be provided. Beer, wine and margaritas will be available for purchase. To register a table of 10 in advance, call Pat Landon at (260) 747-6110 or Dierdre Fazio at (260) 456-9853.

• A financial aid information meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 12, at 6:30 p.m. in the school library. Parents interested in information regarding Bishop Luers High School financial aid for the 2009-2010 school year should attend an information meeting. All financial and scholarship information will be shared and all questions will be answered. This is a general meeting and financial aid applications will be available at a registration.

GIRL SCOUTS HELP NURSING HOME, WOMEN’S CARE CENTER

The St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne, Girl Scout Troop No. 650 fifth-grade juniors recently held a service oriented meeting where they filled bags with candy for Miller’s Merry Manor, a nursing and rehabilitation center. They also made blankets, shown above, for the Women’s Care Center in Fort Wayne. The center is an organization whose mission is to assist young women in pregnancy crisis — giving them an alternative to abortion.
Where do you find your strength?

There is a line in one of my favorite hymns that goes something like this: “O Lord, you are the center of my life. I will always praise you. I will always love you. I will always keep you in my sight.” It is good for each of us, no matter what our age, to reflect on what or who is the center of our lives. Where do we get the primary strength to live our lives? What keeps us going? The answer to this question has a huge impact on the way we live. For some it is accumulating material things and the latest gadgets. Riches and making lots of money are very important to them. They act as though the accumulation of wealth and goods will solve all their problems. These are the same people who often despair when they lose their jobs. Then there are those people who find their strength in success. The desire to get ahead who find their strength in success. The desire to get ahead who find their strength in success. The desire to get ahead who find their strength in success.

President George W. Bush stands with Holy Cross Father Timothy R. Scully, a professor at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, after presenting him with the Presidential Citizens Medal at the White House Dec. 10. Father Scully was among 24 people who were honored for their good works.

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For us Christians, hopefully the answer to this question has a primary strength to live our lives no matter what our age, to reflect on what or who is the center of our lives. True strength comes from our relationship with him. Jesus spoke of this throughout his public life. He made it very clear when he declared, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” We believe that it is our intimate connection with him that enables us to live as we taught. Our faith and hope in God gives us the strength we need to face pain and suffering we see all around us. It is our relationship with God and his grace that enables us to live through hard times and difficult situations without becoming hopeless or giving in to despair. We know and believe in a faithful God who will take care of all he made. Knowing that God truly loves us and cares about our well-being and that of all creation is the source of our inner strength.

To make God the center of our lives doesn’t just happen. We must cooperate with God’s grace and strive to consciously be aware of his presence in our lives and in the world. This comes from cultivating a life of prayer and loving service, trying to live as he taught. Here are a few questions to help us see how well we are doing. Is God usually the first one we call upon when we need something or is he the last resort? Do we call upon the Lord frequently or only when we have problems? Do we ask God for guidance when we have to make major decisions or does God not even factor into the process? Do we go to Mass because we have to or because we want to give God praise? Do we make room in our busy day for prayer? What would our lives be like if we didn’t believe in God? Spiritual growth doesn’t just happen automatically. It takes a conscious decision and ongoing effort to bring God from the fringes of our lives to the center. Perhaps during this coming year we can strive to make God more and more a regular part of our lives and not just when we need something.

Sister Margie Lavoin, CSC, a former campus minister and vocation director, works for the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Notre Dame.

Special Christmas Day Programming

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President George W. Bush stands with Holy Cross Father Timothy R. Scully, a professor at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, after presenting him with the Presidential Citizens Medal at the White House Dec. 10. Father Scully was among 24 people who were honored for their good works.

Father Scully receives Presidential Citizens Medal

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross Father Timothy R. Scully, professor of political science and director of the Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) at the University of Notre Dame, received a 2008 Presidential Citizens Medal in an oval office ceremony held Dec. 10.

One of the highest honors the president can confer upon a civilian — second only to the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the Presidential Citizens Medal recognizes U.S. citizens who have performed exemplary deeds of service for the nation.

Since its establishment by executive order in 1969, some 100 people have received the award. One of 24 recipients of this year’s medal, Father Scully was honored for “committing his life to strengthening communities through faith-based education that prepares individuals for a lifetime of achievement, service and compassion,” according to a White House statement.

“Through his leadership at the University of Notre Dame, he has developed innovative ways to support under-resourced schools. The United States honors Father Scully for demonstrating that every human being has boundless potential,” the statement concluded.

The co-founder of Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program and a fellow of the university’s Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Father Scully focuses his research on comparative political institutions, especially political parties and democratic governability.

He oversees the work of the university’s Center for Research on Educational Opportunity and ACE, Notre Dame’s signature program that provides hundreds of Catholic schoolteachers to under-served communities across the nation.

Father Scully served as Notre Dame’s executive vice president from 2000 to 2003, and as vice president and senior associate provost from 1994 to 2000. He serves as a fellow and trustee of the university.

Ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1981, Father Scully was graduated from Notre Dame in 1976 and earned master’s and doctoral degrees in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a member of the Trinity Foundation Board in Dublin, Ireland; the Woodrow Wilson Center Board; and the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, D.C., as well as the New York Council on Foreign Relations. He serves as a trustee of the University of Notre Dame, Australia.

Established in 1994, the ACE program provides college graduates an opportunity to earn master of education degrees while serving as teachers in under-staffed Catholic schools nationwide. In exchange for a modest stipend and a tuition-free graduate program, the ACE participants make a two-year commitment to teach in these schools.

More than 85 recent college graduates from a wide variety of educational disciplines enter ACE each year. They take courses and participate in teacher training projects at Notre Dame during their two summers in the program and are assigned to full-time teaching positions at schools in some 30 cities and 14 states during the academic year. After two years, the students graduate with a master’s degree, and about 75 percent elect to remain in education.
Solving a problem with Maria: The power of friendship

Growing up six miles from a cousin who was born six weeks after you offers a fertile foundation for friendship. Ours didn’t disappoint.

Maria and I attached quickly, and we publicly broadcast that bond with matching attire. Identical sun dresses. Duplicate necklaces. And twin magenta visors that Grandma decorated with puff paint. Even our names had a similar ring: Maria Louise, Christina Marie.

In spite of those saintly selections, we wanted to be bad; we saved our coins to buy candy cigarettes, flicking them in slow, dramatic puffs.

We wanted to be brave, but when we camped out in a backyard tent, a strange sound paralyzed us in fright. We screamed bloody murder and nearly sent my aunt into cardiac arrest.

Above all, we wanted to be together. That, we were.

Our parents didn’t let us watch “Grease,” but we adored the “Sound of Music,” and our viewing approaches were in sync. We fast forwarded through “Climb Every Mountain” and rewound “The Sound of Music” again, replaying the gazebo kiss a third time for good measure. Oh, to be 16!

Our cousins were all younger, which gave us license to be a bit bossy. Under our expert tutelage, the Capecchi cousins re-enacted Mary’s life-changing news, we were meant to pursue. And today, we are kneeling at the entrance, inhaling deeply and thanking God.

When Maria told me she was engaged to John, we rejoiced. It was, like so many moments before, a Visitation our own, joy shared so swiftly and fully it causes the Christ within to leap, the Holy Spirit sparking an electric current.

“For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears,” Elizabeth told Mary, her heart leapt for joy.

This month when we remember Mary’s life-changing news, we celebrate friendship, the bonds that keep us warm when it’s cold outside.

I will stand beside Maria, the bride, and smile: We may not be perfect, but we’re two for three: brave and together.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christinacakap@gmail.com.
BY SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

SOUTH BEND — Jake Teitgen, who now lives and works in Chicago, has a special relationship with the Sisters of the Holy Cross. So much so that he wanted them involved when he returned to Saint Mary’s to propose to his future wife, Alicen Miller.

A whole new world opened to Jake when he signed up for Notre Dame Professor Ed Kelly’s freshmen composition class that included a community service component. “He took us on a tour of several different service sites in South Bend, but our first stop was Saint Mary’s Convent. I thought I was just there to meet people and have a look, but you try saying no to a group of Holy Cross Sisters!” said Teitgen.

“Lee Ann Moore, the activities and volunteer director, had me signed up for a weekly trip with the Circle K, a community service club at Notre Dame. ‘It would be an understatement to say that Circle K and Saint Mary’s Convent really hit it off. Within three years we started to visit three times a week and involved hundreds of volunteers who spent time with the sisters,’” he said.

Besides their visits to Queen of Peace Convent, the Circle K sponsored events for all the retired sisters in all the different convents at Saint Mary’s. “I spent three years making Lee Ann’s hair turn gray by planning all sorts of fun and unique activities.”

These included a Mardi Gras parade, a tailgate party for 100 students and 100 sisters, Wii video games, a Mexican fiesta and a circus. “We also spent the entire 2007 fall semester practicing with the Queen of Peace sisters for a hand bell choir concert for the rest of the convent.”

Alicen was instrumental in getting the Circle K club at Saint Mary’s College rejuvenated. One of its priorities was to get to know and spend time with the Sisters of the Holy Cross who founded the school. After just a few trips to the convent, she similarly fell in love with the sisters and their warm hospitality. She set up weekly trips for volunteers as well, and committed her club to give small gifts to the sisters on most holidays.

“Even if it was just a piece of candy with a note, Alicen made sure the sisters knew they were loved and remembered throughout the year,” he said.

Both grew very close to the sisters and they were a significant part of both their lives. The convent had always been a place of love, faith and perspective for them. So Jake decided he wanted them present when he formally asked Alicen to be his wife. But he wanted it to be a surprise. On Sept. 25 Alicen received a message from one of her professors that said there was an emergency at the convent and she needed to see someone named Lee Ann. She hurried over and

Sister Odile, member of Queen of Peace, proposes a toast for Jake and Alicen.

Lee Ann led her to the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, attached to Saint Mary’s Convent where Jake was waiting along with the sisters from Queen of Peace and several friends from both campuses.

“I thought it was important to ask her in God’s house, as he will certainly be the determining factor in how our relationship lives,” Jake said.

After the proposal, the Queen of Peace sisters threw them an engagement party with decorations, refreshments, gifts and a lot of love. Sister Odile got up, called them by name and gave a toast saying, “May you have as much love and happiness as you brought to us.”

Commenting on his relationship with the sisters, Jake said, “Calling trips to the convent ‘service projects’ or ‘volunteering’ has always been a stretch for me. I keep insisting that these wonderful women of God who live and work at Saint Mary’s Convent are just loving friends. I could no sooner stop coming to visit them than I would stop keeping in touch with my best friends my own age. Coming to spend time with my friends at the convent is fun, relaxing and often adventurous. But more than that, these women who have dedicated their lives to God are an example of what real service, honest faith and true love are really about.”

Peace and Thanksgiving at Christmas...

At a time when gifts and joy represent the holiday scene, the real Christmas spirit, that of the Holy Family and the first Christmas is of the poor, of uncertainty, of faith and charity.

It is in that spirit that Bishop John M. D’Arcy and the Board of Directors and the staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities wish to express appreciation to those who have come forward to provide food, furniture, clothing, money and their time for someone they do not know... for someone in need.

This is what that Christmas Child did... he gave his love... he gave his life, that we may have the greatest gift, peace of mind and the promise of eternal life. Thank you for helping others!

Catholic Charities
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
**Christmas — past and present**

A las, we have entered the world of Barbie, Hannah Montana and High School Musical at the Johnson home. I guess I never really thought that my kindergartner would be excited about Hannah Montana and High School Musical. Our satellite television family package doesn’t include the Disney Channel, so I didn’t think my daughter knew that they even existed.

Now I knew Heather liked Barbie and my now-antique Big Jim action figures, which she inappropriately calls “Daddy’s Barbies,” littering all the machismo away. Big Jim is a rugged camper who likes to fish, play basketball and travel in a RV. Unfortunately, Big Jim is a dwarf when compared to Barbie — who looks like “Amazon woman” when placed next to him — and uses most of the spare leg space in Big Jim’s RV.

Heather does not really ask for much, but she is very proud of what she can do when confronted with a problem. For example, when we were building a room addition on our house (across from South Side High School), she worked as an estimator in building construction. She helped a lot of assistants in getting the bell choir off the ground. She and the administrator at St. Paul’s were not sure how well the choir would catch on at first, Robinett said, so funding was not available initially to purchase bells. Grace United Methodist Church came to the rescue by loaning its bells to the group for the first few months, Robinett said, and in the last two months has learned eight more for Christmas, doubling its repertoire. Depending on what works best for each choir member — four of whom are in their 90s — Robinett marks each person’s sheet music either with colors or with circles around words to indicate rings and stops, so choir members can participate well, even if they can’t read music.

“Then they’re learning something new and realizing that whatever stage of life they’re in, they can learn something new and enjoy sharing it with other people,” Robinett said.

“‘They’re very proud of what they do, and they should be,’” she continued. “‘They’re very dedicated; they work very hard. It takes a lot of practice and concentration.’”

It also takes a good music director, and choir members appreciate Robinett greatly. Choir member Mary Ellen Handwerk, who plays piano by ear but does not read music, explained their success by saying that Robinett is a “wonderful teacher.”

The St. Paul’s handbell choir has been invited to perform at several churches this year. Robinett said that most people find the bells to be very uplifting, and the church congregations have made choir members feel very welcome, supported and valued. She added that the handbell choir would welcome invitations to perform at area churches. Robinett may be reached at (574) 290-2250.

The St. Paul’s handbell choir will perform Saturday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. at University Park Mall in Mishawaka. On Tuesday, Dec. 23, the handbell choir will join St. Paul’s singing choir for performances at St. Paul’s at 2 and 7 p.m. The performances are free and open to the public.

**Many Hats**

**BY TIM JOHNSON**

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One year old, the bell choir has never have played a musical instrument before, and many can’t read music, but 20 senior citizens at Sanctuary at St. Paul’s retirement community are making beautiful music together in St. Paul’s handbell choir. Just barely one year old, the bell choir has received so many requests for performances this month, that some invitations had to be turned down.

St. Paul’s activity coordinator, Cindy Robinett, left, started the bell choir and is the choir’s director and accompanist.

**BY ANN CAREY**

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SOUTH BEND — When Charles Dickens wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” he could have been writing about the world today. Blessings abound in new technologies and medicines that save countless lives. Sorrow exists in struggles to meet bills, illness and loss. But despite this coexistence, the warmth of human kindness can often melt the coldness of distress.

It was on a cold and snowy day in South Bend when two families that had never met shared their joys and challenges together. On Dec. 13, Joan, a member of the South Bend Christ Child Society, her daughters and their families, arrived with wrapped presents to give to Crystal and her six children for the society’s annual Christmas gift program.

Originally called “Adopt a Family,” the program first began in 1951, according to Vicky, Christ Child society’s annual Christmas gift program. Forty volunteers are adopting families this year; some adopting multiple families, for a total of 45 families. Christmas Gift Baskets, provided by Joan’s family, arrive with wrapped gifts to give to Crystal and her family. She had been waiting all year for this event.

“This year, we have strengthened our collaboration with the South Bend Chamber of Commerce,” says Vicky. “Their assistance has been invaluable.”

Crystal’s family is shown in this photo. Crystal and her husband, Ed, have four children. Crystal eagerly anticipates getting three new packages of toys. Joan’s family purchased clothes, such as sweat pants, hats, mittens and underwear. It has also been a tradition for her family to bring candy canes and cookies. Joan remembers one year when she smelled cookies baking while delivering gifts to a family’s home. The family received the gifts told Joan the cookies were for her family. Joan’s first instinct was to let the family keep the cookies for themselves. But her husband interceded and thanked the family for their generosity. When Joan and her husband Ed got in the car he told her, “The cookies were all they could give you, you can’t say no.” The kids ate the cookies on their way home and Joan never forgot her husband’s words, or the kindness of the adopted family.

In 1951, according to Vicky, the program first began. Forty volunteers purchase, wrap and deliver gifts to their assigned family prior to Christmas.

“Tis the season to be jolly. The warmth of giving during the season is the greatest gift of all. The Christ Child truly is the reason for the season, as they say. I see of no better way to honor our mission than by sharing our time, talent and treasures with those struggling families living in our midst.”

Joan embraces Davyon.
For National Guard couples, faith is the key

By Lauren Caggiano

PORT WAYNE — True love knows no boundaries for the wives of Army National Guard soldiers deployed overseas.

Two local Catholic couples, the Hilgers and the Tippmanns, have found that faith in God is key to getting through challenging times.

Paul Hilger and Joe Tippmann were among several hundred local soldiers in the 293rd infantry bound for Iraq. Hilger and Tippmann returned alive and well Nov. 25 to their spouses and families.

The couples shared their stories of faith, love and loyalty to country.

Kaitlin (Cox) Hilger, 23, and Paul Hilger, 30, were engaged only six days when Paul found out he was to be deployed a second time to Iraq. They had talked about getting married in March of 2008, but decided to push it up due to Paul’s active duty. The couple was married in November 2007, and Paul left in December for training in Georgia.

Soon the newlyweds were thousands of miles away, however, they maintained contact through letters, phone calls and e-mails.

As Kaitlin said, it was “nerve-wracking” not to hear from her husband regularly, but yet she was “spoiled by technology” with the advantage of the Internet.

But they both agree it’s faith that has sustained their relationship.

“If helped me a lot more than I thought,” Kaitlin said. “I’m closer to God and prayed more than I ever have.”

Kaitlin added talking to God daily helped her overcome her feeling of helplessness.

On Paul’s end, it was making an effort to attend Mass regularly that helped him though these trying times.

“Praying is a large part,” he said.

Additionally, the Hilgers agree staying close to friends and family was key to sustaining their marriage.

“Just try to maintain a normal life,” Kaitlin advises other women in her position.

Paul’s deployment meant Kaitlin had to make some major decisions about the household.

In hindsight, Heather said Joe’s deployment was a part of divine intervention.

“We knew God had a plan for us, and it was very hard to understand at that time,” she said. “It allowed me to find deeper meaning to sharing a soul with my spouse. Through many prayers, tears, and ultimately leaving it in God’s hands, I’ve learned that even though he is not physically around, he will always be a part of me and our children.”

Echoing Kaitlin’s comments, Heather said the comfort of loved ones was vital to maintaining a positive mindset. Though, ultimately, the situation was in God’s hands and she knew she wasn’t alone.

“I think in a situation like this, it brought our family closer and has allowed our children to grow more compassion for one another,” she said.

And their children are amazing in their own right, she said.

“Remember when Joe returned to Iraq after leave, I was really having a hard time with it and Ava said to me, ‘Don’t worry, Mommy, Daddy wants us to keep our happy face on,’ ” Heather recalled.

“He trusted me because I most-pickled it out on my own,” she said.

Now that Paul is back, they are enjoying some much-needed time together. A cruise is planned for January. Meanwhile, Paul has returned to his civilian work at Glenbrook Dodge as a mechanic.

And there is talk of starting a family.

“More than anything, Paul said it’s genuine support for the cause and the troops that kept him going,” she said.

“It’s nice to hear that (civilians) appreciate you, but you must support the troops and the war,” he said.

It was an equally emotional time for the Tippmann family: Heather, 23; Joe, 30; Ava, 3; Joseph Jr., 2 and Cody, 4 months.

Heather, found out she was pregnant with her third child the same day her husband Joe, was informed of his deployment.

“When I first found out, I couldn’t even begin to fathom how I would live day to day through a yealong deployment without him by my side,” Heather said in an e-mail interview.

Many women might feel helpless in this situation, but Heather maintained her steadfast faith.

“It was a very emotional time for the entire family, and we remained hopeful,” Joe said.

Heather reflected. “Knowing the unlikelihood of that happening, we pray for a healthy baby and for a quick return for Joe. We were so blessed that he was actually able to get leave for Cody’s birth on Aug. 7.”

Perhaps the most critical was buying a house in Paul’s absence.

“He trusted me because I most-picked it out on my own,” she said.

“Just try to maintain a normal life,” Kaitlin said.

Perhaps the most critical was buying a house in Paul’s absence.

“He trusted me because I mostly picked it out on my own,” she said.

“Just try to maintain a normal life,” Kaitlin advised other women in her position.

Joe and Heather Tippmann are shown with their children Cody, Ava and Joe Jr.

In hindsight, Heather said Joe’s deployment meant “just enjoying the presence of each other one day at a time.”

There are many service members that don’t return and she will never take for granted that he was able to come home safely, she noted.

“We are so incredibly blessed to hold him again.”

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“We are so incredibly blessed to hold him again.”

December 21, 2008
Christmas Mass Schedule
Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, 2008
“Christmas Day Mass” – 4:00 pm
Vigil Mass - 6:00 pm
Sacred Concert - 11:30 pm
Midnight Mass - 12:00 am

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 2008
Christmas Day Mass - 9:00 am & 11:00 am
Mary, Mother of God
New Year’s Eve: Wednesday, December 31, 2008
4:00 pm Vigil Mass
New Year’s Day, Thursday, January 1, 2009
9:00 am & 11:00 am
Christ the King Parish
52473 S. R. 933 - South Bend

Holy Cross and St. Stanislaus Parish
Holiday Schedule
Christmas Eve: December 24
4:00 pm - Holy Cross Church (Family Mass)
5:00 pm - St. Stanislaus Church
Midnight Mass 12:00 am - Holy Cross Church

Christmas Day: December 25
9:30 am - St. Stanislaus 11:00 am - Holy Cross
Mary, Mother of God Vigil (New Year’s Eve)
5:30 pm - Holy Cross Church
Mary, Mother of God - January 1, 2009
9:30 am - St. Stanislaus Church

Come, Let Us Adore Him! CHRISTMAS MASSES
December 24, 4:00 p.m. with Children’s Choir
6:30 p.m. with Contemporary Choir
12:00 a.m. Midnight with Adult Choir
December 25, 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
10700 Aboite Center Road, Fort Wayne
432-0268

Christmas Eve Masses:
5:00 PM (Children’s Mass)
Midnight Mass
(Music begins at 11:15 PM)
Christmas Morning Masses
8:00 & 11:30 AM
Saturday, December 27 - 5:00 PM
Sunday, December 28
7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM 5:00 PM
New Year’s Eve 5:00 PM
New Year’s Day
9:00 AM and 11:00 AM

Visit the Cathedral during this Season of Grace.

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
1100 South Calhoun Street - Fort Wayne

Christmas Eve Masses:
5:00 PM (Children’s Mass)
Midnight Mass
(Music begins at 11:15 PM)
Christmas Morning Masses
8:00 & 11:30 AM
Saturday, December 27 - 5:00 PM
Sunday, December 28
7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM 5:00 PM
New Year’s Eve 5:00 PM
New Year’s Day
9:00 AM and 11:00 AM

Visit the Cathedral during this Season of Grace.
Smile and say, ‘Merry Christmas’

A Christmas draws near, the secular and commercial aspects of the holiday surround us. Especially this year, with the country’s economy in difficulty, we may be caught up in that commercial spirit and be tempted to dwell on what we don’t have.

Rather than looking at a tight budget as a negative, however, try considering it as an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, which Pope Benedict cited in his Angelus message on the second Sunday of Advent.

The pope emphasized the hopeful messages in the Advent readings and noted that Christ’s birth, death and resurrection made possible “the passage from the kingdom of evil to the kingdom of God, from the domination of sin and death to that of love and life.” For our part, the pope said, we must commit ourselves to building God’s kingdom of justice and peace.

 Appropriately, it is our commitment to building God’s kingdom that ultimately leads to our own happiness, recent studies have confirmed. We shouldn’t be surprised by the study that found that happiness is contagious, and just smiling at another person — even a total stranger — increases that person’s happiness. And we shouldn’t be surprised to learn that giving our time, talent and treasure to others makes us happier ourselves. In turn, happy people are more inclined to act morally, which results in a more just and peaceful society.

This is very much the same message in one of the most popular Christmas movies of all time: Frank Capra’s 1946 classic, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” which in drama form is playing in our diocese this month at Amish Acres in Nappanee.

In that movie and play, the main character, George Bailey, is contemplating suicide at Christmastime because of his financial difficulties. He wishes as hard as he can to jump from a bridge into the river, he sees a man struggling in the icy river. George forgets about himself and jumps in to save the man. This act also saves George’s own life, for he discovers that the half-drowned man is an angel sent by God to help George realize that life is worth living.

The angel helps George rediscover that one’s value is not measured by how much money you have made, or how big your country’s economy is in difficulty. Regardless of your financial situation, try reevaluating all that you do have and how you can use your gifts and talents.
Surviving the holidays

Griving the loss of a loved one is never an easy task. And the holidays, which were planned for so long, can become even more daunting as the holidays approach, with the anticipation of wonderful celebrations without a loved one almost paralyzing to some.

I faced my first Christmas without my husband, who brought cheer in a big way to every holiday, with a heavy heart and a cascade of emotions. As I walked numbly through the motions of established holiday traditions, my two young daughters were just as confused as I. We stumbled through the gatherings, crying all the way, that first year. And I am not ashamed to admit that I think that I may have relieved when the often bemoaned January doldrums once again took over our days.

The second holiday season found me more prepared as I began to understand my grief and reestablished myself as “two.” Many of our traditions and gatherings continued to bring us a sense of the love and hope I sought. I learned that we had the ability — and the need — to establish new traditions and build a new world for us. The girls and I began to take quiet times away from the hustle-bustle of Christmas to read or cry or just remember their father. The expression of our shared grief lifted the burden just a bit.

Our favorite holiday tradition even now, 18 years later, is to light a candle for Trent and watch home videos of his antics. We connect with him in our laughter and our gratitude.

We gave ourselves permission to do what we needed to do to survive. And we tried to surround ourselves with those who understood our need to remember and just “be.”

For those who are newly bereaved and are facing the deep longing of your loss, I’d like to share a few tips for holiday survival that I have learned along my journey of grief:

• Plan ahead. Be aware of the feelings, from reluctance to glee, that may rise up and how you and others will respond. Have an action plan to take care of yourself.
• Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself permission to take a break from the activities and festivities. Find a quiet place to “just be.” Rest your body periodically to maintain your work levels.
• Give yourself and others permission to talk about your loved one. Family and friends may be reluctant to speak about your loss, but when you break the ice, they will most likely join in. If some choose not to remember, each grief journey is unique and worthy of honoring.
• Don’t feel obligated to attend any function you are uncomfortable with. However, be mindful to resist isolating yourself during this special time of celebrating family and friends.
• Following regular traditions may be needed. Honor your loved one. It’s okay to eliminate any activities for a time and to establish a new tradition or two, if you like.
• Allow yourself to feel all the feelings, from sorrow to joy, that come with anticipating a holiday. Find healthy ways to express them.
• As you recognize your feelings of grief, please be gentle with yourself. Allow yourself to feel all the feelings and express them.

Hoping in the mourning

KAY COZAD

Hope, Page 16

Jesus’ coming fulfills God’s promises

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

4th Sunday of Advent Lk 1:26-38

The first reading for this Sunday is from the Second Book of Samuel. Once the two Books of Samuel were a single volume. Translations and editions over the centuries divided this one volume into two.

David is the principal figure in these books. The ancient Hebrews looked upon David much more than a king. Beyond all else, he was God’s chosen representative of the kingdom, and had within its borders a great array of ideas and religions, Christianity among them.

In this weekend’s reading, as often elsewhere, Paul asserts his own vocation as an apostle. His vocation from God came so that “all the Gentiles” might believe in, and obey, God, “who alone is wise.”

For the final reading this weekend, the church proclaims a beautiful part of St. Luke’s Gospel, of Luke’s infancy narrative. It is the story of the announcement, the event when Gabriel, the angel, came into the presence of Mary, a young Jewish woman, in Nazareth in Galilee, to inform her that she would be the mother of the long-awaited Redeemer.

The reading abounds with meaning. Luke makes clear that Mary was a virgin, and that the conception of the Redeemer would not be the result of any human relationship. Behind this fact is the reality that God, as creator and the provider of order to the universe, can do anything. He is almighty. The Redeemer will be the Son of God. He will be David’s successor. The Redeemer’s coming will fulfill God’s promises, spoken by the prophets throughout the ages, to bring life and salvation to the people. The birth of this Redeemer will be the ultimate satisfaction of the ancient Covenant.

Vital to the message of this Sunday’s reading, “I am the Lord’s servant. It let be done to me as you say.”

Reflection

In each of these readings, speaking through the Scriptures, the church makes a very important point. God reaches out to us. This outreach is not vague or impossible to see. Indeed, it is in the persons of individuals with whom we can relate, David, Paul and Jesus.

The outreach occurs in the face of our own inadequacy and limitations, and also in the fact that God is almighty. However, God’s supreme power over all creation is not the most consoling point here. Rather, the most reassuring factor is that God’s great love for us prompts the dispatch of teachers such as David, Paul and Jesus, to guide us to union with God and therefore to peace in our hearts and life in eternity.

The church approaches Christmas with a message of love. God loves us. He does not leave us helpless in our own powerlessness. He reaches to us to draw us to the divine presence itself.

It now is up to us to respond. Do we accept God’s gift? Do we turn God away? It is that simple.

READINGS

Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b, 12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29, Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38

Monday: 1 Sm 12:24-28 Ps 1 Sm 21:4-8a Ps 80:4-5a, 14a

Tuesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4b, 5a, 10-11, 14a, 15 Lk 1:57-66

Wednesday: 2 Sm 5:7, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-5, 27-29 Lk 1:67-79


Friday: Acts 68:10-59:9 Ps 31:3-4, 6-8, 17-21 Mt 17:10-22

Saturday: 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5, 6, 11-12 Jn 202-8

CATEQUIZEM

By DominiC CampiLLo

Many regions of the U.S. are covered in snow at this time of year, even in the desert states, but we do not associate snow with the Holy Land. As this quiz will show, the Israelis were actually very familiar with snow.

1. Proverbs 26 tells us that this is like snow in summer: a. Cheese cooked with meat b. Honor for a fool c. Make up on a Jewess

2. Although Joshua 3 does not mention the cause, historians believe snow melt is the reason that a. The river Jordan overflowed its banks during the entire season of the harvest. b. Moses was able to float to safety in a reed basket. c. The waters of the Dead Sea were pure and cool.

3. In Job 6, Job compares his brethren to people covered in ice and snow. What does he mean? a. They are pure as snow and cool as ice. b. They melt away when he needs them. c. They are white as opposed to the tanned Edomites.

4. In Job 9, Job discusses using snow for this purpose: a. Skiing away from his enemies b. Preserving food c. Washing himself

5. Isaiah 1 contrasts the purity of white snow with this color caused by sin a. purple b. red c. puce

6. The apolyt named book of Lamentations in chapter 4 describes how the princes of the Israelites were once brighter than snow but have become a. blacker than soot b. redder than purple (a shellfish dye) c. yellower than saffron

7. On an optimistic note, Isaiah 55 says the word of the Lord is like snow because both a. dazzle the eyes. b. provide sustenance (snow watering the earth). c. are white and symbolically pure.

8. Proverbs 31 lists the attributes of a good wife. Amongst them are that she does not fear that snow will harm her household; because she has taken this precaution: a. She has lit fires inside each tent. b. She has double clothed her household. c. She has stored stones heated by the sun all day, to radiate heat all night.

9. Psalm 21 is a penitential prayer of David who wants to be washed “whiter than snow.” With whom had he sinned? a. Rebecca b. Rachel c. Bathsheba

10. According to Matthew 28, who did the women meet at the tomb of Jesus, “his clothing was white as snow?” a. the fuller or dyer for Herod b. an angel c. the risen Lord

11. The rather dramatic term “snow white Leprosy” as used in numbers 12 probably refers to a. snow leopard b. Snow White and the seven Moabites c. a temporary and not serious skin disease

12. Similarly in Exodus 4, this man’s hands were turned temporarily white as snow so God could demonstrate his power to make anything happen: a. Moses b. Job c. Paul

13. According to Daniel 3, Jewish youths praised the Lord in these chily terms, “Ice and snow, bless the Lord . . . ” but from this decidedly hot location a. the Negev Desert b. the palace of the sun disc (Aten) of Akenaten c. inside a furnace

14. Strach 43 includes this dramatic description of snow: a. Like swarms of locusts, its shining whiteness blinds the eyes, b. Like salt in the wounds, it afflicts the Egyptians c. Like the white cloak of the reaper, it cuts down the sinful

15. In Revelation 1 person is described as having white hair, not the commonest image we have of him: a. The Lamb (Christ) b. the pope c. Nero

ANSWERS:

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

December 21, 2008
Madonna of hope

Toward the end of his encyclical “Saved in Hope,” Pope Benedict XVI turns his and our attention to Mary. Using the title Star of the Sea, he notes how life is a journey in which we need stars to guide us on the route we should take. He then turns his attention to Mary — one who shines with her light and so guides us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her “yes,” she opened the world to God himself; she became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us.” — cf. Jn 1:14.

Defending human dignity

Before tackling “Dignitas Personae” (“The Dignity of a Person”), the recent instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on contemporary bioethical questions, I’d like to re-read the first chapter of Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World.” Huxley was a great visionary, a literary prophet, “The Portal of the Mystery of Hope.” He sees hope as central to “The Portal of the Mystery of Hope.” He sees hope as central to

In her visionary words, Mary is describing the beginnings of the fulfillment. A new kingdom of justice, love and peace. As we know, we are a long way from achieving this kingdom. But her vision and in our image Christ’s blessing of her sentiments compels us to work for this goal.

In my unassuming study with Mary toward Bethlehem, two incidents occurred that might explain why we have not made better progress to Christ’s earthly desire. The first would lead us to the inn keeper who failed to offer hospitality. Such was a sacred tradition in biblical times. For whatever reason, perhaps busy- ness, he did not welcome Mary and Joseph into his house and into his heart. From him we learn that we must never fail to reach out in hospitality to those who are in need. For ourselves, they represent Christ in disguise, “as long as you do it to the least of these.”

Secondly, in quiet meditation, we might pause before the traditional crèche scene. The image of the baby is always appealing. It enfolds so much; innocence, joy, etc. Then we realize that the child is utterly dependent upon us. The truth is that Christ still remains depend- ent upon us to bring his good news to our world.

Msgr. Thomas McDonnell is a retired priest from the Archdiocese of Boston. He has dedicated his life to the urban poor and disabled. A cancer survivor, he is the author of “Walking in the Dark Valley: When Cancer is a Constant Companion.”

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for December 21, 2008
Luke 1:26-38

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle B, the visit by the angel to Mary of Nazareth. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

HOPE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and work to express them, consider seeking support from others. Talk with your family and friends or join a support group and ask for what you need.

• give yourself permission to have fun during the holidays even in your grief. Connect with your loved one through your joy.

• remember your loved one in a special way for the holidays. Light a candle at a family gathering or make a special ornament or photo album, say a prayer or invite others to tell stories. Your loved one can be forever part of your holiday experience, just in a different way.

• Discover what you are truly grateful for. Write your blessings down or tell a special friend or family member. Acknowledge gratitude, especially for your loved one, warms the heart.

Sandy Goeck, author of “Love Never Dies: A Mother’s Journey from Loss to Love,” wrote this wish for Christmas. “My wish for you is this: That you find a quiet moment during the sometimes magical but often horrible sometimes magical but often horrible Christmas season upon us and relax. Sometimes magical but often horrible Christmas season upon us and relax. Sometimes magical but often horrible Christmas season upon us and relax. Sometimes magical but often horrible Christmas season upon us and relax. Sometimes magical but often horrible Christmas season upon us and relax.

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

Wayne, were victorious in Gold from St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, were victorious in Gold League competition.

In a non-conference matchup, the eighth-grade Lady Cardinals from St. Charles downed St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, but the boys from Hessen Cassel topped Huntington in a Blue League game. In her first role as a varsity coach, Amy

Knape's goal is to build a program for the Squares of St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel who have been without a seventh-and-eighth-grade team for the past several seasons. With just three eighth graders and three seventh graders on the roster, Knape brought up three sixth graders to list a total of nine players.

"Although we are a young team and lack experience at the varsity level, we hope to be competitive in the Blue League this season," explained Knape.

Knape, who has directed a successful junior varsity program, feels her team's quickness and speed will benefit the efforts of the Squares. Maria Panselino and Tracy Sweezy are assisting Knape in her rookie season.

On the boys' side, Jim Knape may have lost four of his starters from a year ago, but a seasoned Wil Knape, three eighth graders who practiced all season against last year’s Blue League champions and 6-foot, 2-inch newcomer, Brian Teeters, are a strong lineup for St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel.

"This group really plays hard. We are a solid defensive team, have decent outside shooting and good ball handling," summarized Knape. The Squares have opened the CYO season with a 2-0 start in conference play and finished a strong third place at the Queen of Angels Thanksgiving Invitational.

Knape feels they have a good shot at defending their feeder school title over Christmas break and his team has a goal of adding a 2009 CYO championship to the record books. Assisting with the uptoempo game and man-to-man defense for the Squares are Jason Sweezy and Jim Bosler who serve as assistant coaches for Hessen Cassel.

**Boys**

St. John 40, St. Charles 33
T. Strawbridge, 10 points; Williamson 10 points; Shank 10 points
St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel 57, Huntington 23 — Knape 19 points; Pike 10 points.

**Girls**

St. John 30, St. Joseph, Decatur 25 — A. Schultz 13 points; Hammock 18 points
St. Charles 39, Hessen Cassel 27 — Beckham 8 points; Gibson 17 points.

**Coaches**

E-mail your scores and highlights to Michelle Castleman at mmcastleman@aol.com.

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**ICCL adds St. Pius X gym to basketball action**

SOUTH BEND — In its second week of Inter-City Catholic League (ICCL) hardwood action Dec. 14, some boys basketball teams utilized a new venue, St. Pius X gymnasium in Granger.

In varsity games at Saint Joseph High School, Christ the King beat Holy Family by a slim margin, 35-34. Christ the King was paced by Connor Edmonds with 8 points. Dylan Kowalski tossed in 21 and Ryan Webbe 10 points for Holy Family.


St. Joseph, South Bend, defeated St. Anthony, 44-32, with Tommy Fortune pacing the winners with 17 points. Bredan Mischler had 15 points for St. Anthony — all on three pointers.

Action at the new St. Pius X gym included a win by St. Jude over St. John the Baptist, 47-15. St. Jude’s Neal Dowling tossed in 10 points.

Our Lady of Hungary defeated St. Michael, Plymouth, 32-27, with Tyran Otteridge leading the victors with 11 points. Davis Payne had 14 points for St. Michael’s.


In other games, St. Thomas, Elkhart, defeated St. Matthew, 29-22, and St. Pius defeated St. Monica, 28-19.


In the Boys Colors basketball action, Christ the King Blue beat Christ the King Gold, 33-23. The Gold’s Giotto Irons had 11 points.

St. Joseph, South Bend, Blue defeated St. Joseph, Mishawaka, Green, 31-22. St. Joe’s Blue team was led by Josh Kucharz with 10 points in the win.

Bremen Krutsch of St. Pius X Green tossed in 12 points to lead his team for a win, 24-22, over Christ the King White.

In other games, St. Joseph, South Bend, Gold defeated St. Thomas Maroon, 28-21; and St. Pius X Gold beat St. Matthew Black, 42-16.
‘Doubt’ should resonate with Catholic viewers

BY HARRY FORBES

NEW YORK (CNS) — The New York and London Pulitzer Prize-winning stage hit “Doubt” (Miramax) makes an equally engrossing movie experience, and one that — despite the reminder of a dark chapter in the church’s recent history — should resonate with Catholic viewers.

The story is set in 1964 at a fictional Bronx parochial grammar school, St. Nicholas (modeled on the actual St. Anthony, whose exterior is used). Autocratic principal Sister Aloysius (Meryl Streep) comes to suspect a popular priest, Father Flynn (Philip Seymour Hoffman), of impropriety with 12-year-old Donald, the school’s first black student, a sensitive boy whom Father Flynn has treated compassionately.

Sister Aloysius, together with idealistic and kind young teacher Sister James (Amy Adams), sets out to confront him. Sister Aloysius has little proof, but rather a deep-seated conviction that she is right. When Sister James observes Father Flynn putting something in Donald’s school locker, and smells alcohol on the altar boy’s breath when he returns to the classroom after meeting with the priest, she suspects the worst, and gives Sister Aloysius the ammunition she needs.

Is he guilty or not? It’s natural for viewers to side with the feisty, not unlikable Sister Aloysius. But things may not be what they so readily seem, and this is writer-director John Patrick Shanley’s point.

Shanley has successfully adapted his drama, deftly recreating the Catholic milieu of the era through the small period details of the classrooms, the principal’s office, the rectory, the convent, etc., soon to change after the Second Vatican Council and the reforms and upheaval of the civil rights era.

Shanley, who won an Oscar for the screenplay of “Moonstruck,” and has not directed since 1990’s “Joe Versus the Volcano,” directs here with a sure hand, with telling close-ups and revealing silences. The pace never flags.

Cinematographer Roger Deakins uses the College of Mount Saint Vincent, founded by the Sisters of Charity (the order of nuns in the film), and other apt locations — many in the very neighborhood where Shanley grew up and set his story — to beautiful effect. There are several subtle touches that illuminate the strongly hierarchal structure of the church in that period, as exemplified in the contrast between the high-spirited, clubby affability of the priests’ dining table, and the austere formality of the sisters’ meals. And how, when summoned to Sister Aloysius’ office, Father Flynn assumes it’s his right to appropriate her seat behind the desk, while these two sisters ostensibly serve him tea, even as they are planning their acquiescent salvo.

Cherry Jones and Brian F. O’Byrne gave memorable performances on stage, but Streep and Hoffman are equally impressive. After a few seconds of adjusting to Streep’s iconic face in her period costume, one completely accepts her in the role, Bronx accent and all, as she deftly balances the formidable side of the old-school nun — even as she carries the heat of ballpoint pens — with flashes of sardonic humor.

Hoffman is equally convincing, as his Father Flynn delivers impassioned sermons from his pulpit or cheerfully bucks some of the old-school sternness to which Sister Aloysius still firmly adheres, and earning her enmity before she suspects him of anything worse. Their scenes together play like a fascinating chess match. Adams is ideal as the novice teacher. Her character is the only one known to be directly inspired by actual persons: Shanley’s first-grade teacher, Sister Margaret McEntee — a Sister of Charity who began religious life with the name Sister James. She served as a consultant on the film, which is dedicated to her.

Viola Davis is magnificent in her one big scene as the distraught mother of the putative victim who astonishes Sister Aloysius by her singularly unexpected reaction.

Though sexual misconduct is at the heart of the story, it is the balance between doubt and certainty, which Shanley has said, “allows for growth and change” and premature certainty, which only leads to a “dead end” — that forms the principal thematic subtext.

His metaphorical criticism is directed not at the church but at those who insist on absolutes in society at large.
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, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46856; or e-mail: fhogan@fw.diocecesfwv.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.

MISC. HAPPENINGS

Victory Noll plans La Posada
Huntington — “La Posada: Who is Knocking at the Door?” will be at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 21 in the Bishop Noll Memorial Chapel. No fee or registration is required. Call (260) 356-0628 for information.

Youth ministry plans Mass, dinner and talk by Cindy Black
New Haven — A youth Mass on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. at St. Louis Besancon Church will be followed by dinner and a teen level program on Pope John Paul II’s “Theology of the Body,” a beautiful teaching on sexuality.

Blood drive announced
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 614239 St. Joseph, the Worker will have an American Red Cross Blood Drive Sunday, Dec. 28, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Joseph School Cafeteria at the corner of Brooklyn and Hale Ave. Advance registration can be made at 1-800 GIVE LIFE or the St. Joseph Parish Office (260) 432-5113 Ext. 323. Walk ins are welcome.

High school leadership retreat
New Haven — St. John the Baptist Parish youth ministry will offer “Joy for the Journey” a high school leadership retreat Jan. 16-18. Early registration is $50 by Dec. 22. Call (260) 493-4553 ext. 308 for information.

Square dances planned
New Haven — St. Louis Academy HASA will have a square dance Saturday, Jan. 10, and Feb. 14, in St. Louis Besancon Hall. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. with dancing from 8-11 p.m. Tickets are $10 and include two beer tickets and snacks.

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

DONATIONS
Mandy Seed Furniture Bank can use your donations
Fort Wayne — The Mandy Seed Furniture Bank accepts donations of bedroom and living room furniture, tables, chairs, bed linens and towels. Items must be in working order and free of rips, tears, stains, burns and animal hair. Donations may be picked up by calling (260) 471-5802. The Mandy Seed is dedicated to providing household furnishings to those in need.

St. Vincent de Paul Store always in need of donations
Fort Wayne — Donations are always accepted for cars, trucks and vans. Donations are tax deductible. Call (260) 456-3561 for pick up or drop off at the store, 1600 S. Calhoun St.

VOLUNTEERS
Volunteers needed for Hospice Home Fort Wayne — Volunteers are needed to assist the agency in a variety of roles. Duties include patient support and clerical support. Garden volunteers are also needed to maintain the Seasons of Life permanent garden.

Volunteer training is being planned. Call Ann Blue at (260) 435-3235 or visit www.vnhi.org for information.

Erin’s House seeks good listeners
Fort Wayne — Erin’s House is seeking volunteers who are good listeners with a caring and compassionate heart for children and young adults ages 3 to 25. Call (260) 423-2466 for information.

Volunteer for St. Mary Soup Kitchen
Fort Wayne — St. Mary Parish is in need of regular volunteers for the soup kitchen on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Additional substitutes are needed for all days and shifts. Interested persons 16 and older should call Carolyn Ransom (260) 730-8373. Some lifting required.

TV Mass schedule for January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Feast Day</th>
<th>Fort Wayne 10:30 a.m.</th>
<th>South Bend 10:30 a.m.</th>
<th>WNDU-TV Ch. 16</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.4</td>
<td>Epiphany of the Lord</td>
<td>Father Dave Ruppert</td>
<td>Father David Scheidler</td>
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<td>St. Therese</td>
<td>St. Adalbert</td>
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<td>Fort Wayne</td>
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<td>Jan.11</td>
<td>Baptism of the Lord</td>
<td>Father Dominique</td>
<td>Father Neil Wack</td>
<td>Father Neil Wack</td>
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<td>Carboneau</td>
<td>St. Adalbert</td>
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<td>St. Aloysius, Yoder</td>
<td>Christ the King</td>
<td>St. Adalbert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.18</td>
<td>Second Sunday of Ordinary Time</td>
<td>Father Robert Schulte</td>
<td>Father James Kendzieski</td>
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<td>Cathedral</td>
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<td>Granger</td>
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REST IN PEACE

Arcola Edward J. Strack, 73, St. Patrick
Decatur Kay R. Heller, 64, St. Mary of the Assumption
Elkhart Heidi Lynn Mueller, 34, St.Thomas the Apostle
Fort Wayne Elizabeth M. Furge, 84, St. Charles Borromeo
Mark J. Offerle, 41, Most Precious Blood
Francis E. Schindler, 78, Most Precious Blood
Donald L. Plummer, 74, Sacred Heart
Terrance L. Weigand, 55, St. Vincent de Paul
Mary A. Bickel, 50, St. John the Baptist
Notre Dame
Sister Marie Helen Finer, 88, Our Lady of Loretto
Mary Monica Shaffer, 83, Our Lady of Good Hope
Jean A. Fitzgerald, 67, Our Lady of Good Hope
South Bend Louis A. Doczy, 92, Our Lady of Hungary
Virginia M. Lucky, 84, Our Lady of Hungary
Marian M. Kluszczynski, 82, Holy Cross
Ernest S. Kovatch, 81, St. Matthew Cathedral
Norbert M. Weis, 84, St. Matthew Cathedral
Irene T. Egry, 81, Our Lady of Hungary
Margaret B. Mossman, 91, Holy Family
Bonnie M. Niemer, 68, Holy Family
Irene D. Horning, 81, Christ the King
Deanne G. Schmuhl, 89, St. Anthony de Padua
She searches for hope and trust... and the comfort that comes from a warm home, regular meals and clean clothes.

Please search your heart and give a gift of love by using the Catholic Charities envelope found with your collection envelopes.

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