Students encouraged to dedicate lives to God

South Bend area all-schools Mass draws 5,000 Catholic students

BY JUDY BRADFORD

NOTRE DAME — “How does our faith grow?” The question was put to 5,000 area Catholic school children last week at the annual all-schools Mass, held in the Joyce Center at the University of Notre Dame.

Bishop John M. D’Arcy, who celebrated the Mass with parish priests, called several students up to the podium for their answers.

“All of them were right, but that last one really rang a bell with the bishop, who then called up several religious who have dedicated their lives to God,” said Deacon McCoy. “The search for truth in all subjects is tangible. Believing in God is the same way,” said Deacon McCoy. “We can study things that are abstract and often intangible. Believing in God is the same way,” said Deacon McCoy. “The search for truth in all subjects is

‘Sing to the Lord: Music in Worship’ examined, discussed

BY BONNIE ELBERSON

WARSAW — Music directors and ministers from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend gathered Saturday at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Warsaw for Liturgy Day 2009. The event was sponsored by the diocesan Office of Divine Worship.

The subject for discussion was a document released last year by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship,” which examines and clarifies the evolving role of music in today’s Catholic liturgy.

Presenter for the day was Paul French, music composer and director of the William Ferris Chorale and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Chicago. French won acclaim recently when his arrangement of “Holy God We Praise Thy Name” was selected to be used during Pope Benedict XVI’s entrance procession at the April 17, 2008 papal Mass in Washington, D.C.

“God is present with us when we sing,” said French. “Music is a sign of God’s love for us and our love for him. It is a gift from God to be used in praising him and a powerful expression of our faith. The document affirms his belief when it says, “Of all the
Parishes should be a clearing-house to assist the unemployed

Every day a new story

It seems that no day goes by that one does not hear a personal story that relates to the deep economic downturn, which is engulfing our nation. Our diocese has not been left out. We are told in the press that the unemployment rate in Elkhart County is 15.3 percent. Elkhart, as we all know, is an industrial county, and the large component of the unemployment is in manufactured homes, and also the so-called leisure vehicles or RV’s (recreational vehicles). Employment there is always cyclical, but I do not ever remember it being this severe. Indeed, Father Bill Sullivan, the deeply engaged and much beloved pastor of St. Thomas, Elkhart, tells me that he believes it is closer to 20 percent.

There is also double-digit unemployment in Kosciusko County and LaGrange County.

Some of our Hispanic Catholics are returning to Mexico and other Central American countries. Almost every day, I receive a note, or letter, or meet someone who is suddenly unemployed, or whose employment has been reduced to part-time.

What is to be done

In such a situation, the parish has a special obligation, and so does each individual. Across the country, parishes are coming together to see what must be done. Some parishes are establishing food pantries. Other parishes are strengthening the activities of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. I shall be consulting our pastors to see what new efforts should be employed.

Certainly, every parish should reach out in prayer, both liturgically and individually. But, we must do more. There is a possibility of using the parish as a clearinghouse — a place where the unemployed can come together for prayer, conversation and communion, and also for exchanging news about new employment possibilities.

Many parishes have food pantries; and these have expanded, and established in new parishes.

I hope to consult our priests to see what more should be done, and also the director of Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Christ Child Society and other Catholic agencies.

The parish is especially well positioned to be a place of consultation, prayer and assistance.

One thing is certain: we cannot stand idly by without reaching out to those in need. It is an obligation that comes to us from the Scriptures and more recently, from “Deus Caritas Est,” of Pope Benedict XVI.

A visit to Our Lady of Guadalupe

It is always special to turn onto Route 15 in Warsaw, and see standing up on the side of the hill the beautiful Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. It is only a few years old, and is packed every Sunday morning with our beloved Hispanic Catholics. It would have never have been built without the generosity of the diocese and the Legacy of Faith Campaign, and also Jerry and Savina Krals and their family. Jerry lived to see the groundbreaking, and his family saw the dedication. They donated the land — provided the only condition we build a church for our Hispanic Catholics.

We need to make it more and more a shrine for our Lady of Guadalupe, a place visited by other parishes throughout the diocese. It is already becoming a place for meetings, and there was a special one this week.

What a joy to enter and see the church nearly filled with music directors and directors of liturgy from all over the diocese. How wonderful, also, to hear them singing Mass will never be a performance. It draws people toward God and the words, which are often the inspired words of Scripture, must be heard and savored. We have a long road to go in this area, but this day represented a fresh beginning. Many thanks to Brian MacMichael, a graduate of the theology department at Notre Dame — and to his staff.

The parish is especially well positioned to be a place of consultation, prayer and assistance.

BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

In a recent issue of TODAY’s Catholic, our bishop for 34 years, Father Joe Kozinski, wrote the final words of today’s column.

34 years

On Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, I will be a bishop for 34 years. February, indeed, is a special month; the month of my ordination as a priest and a bishop, and also the month, when in God’s plan, I was assigned to this diocese 24 years ago. I was able this week to set aside a few days of prayer to give thanks to God for so much.

A wonderful visit this week with Father Bernie Galic and his finance council of Holy Family Parish. A few years ago, they had a great debt on their hands, a significant part from the building of their beautiful church. Working closely with the diocese, much progress has been made, and it was a joy, along with Joe Ryan — our chief financial officer, to visit with Father Bernie and his financial advisors and hear this good news.

Alas, the pitchers and catchers report this week. How wonderful. The crack of the bat will be heard again in the land — and the celebrated student umpire has returned to St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend.

I look forward to seeing you all next week.
Bishop celebrates Latin Mass in Fort Wayne

BY BONNIE ELBERSON

FORT WAYNE — Bishop John M. D’Arcy was celebrant last Sunday at Sacred Heart Church in southeast Fort Wayne on the special occasion of his annual visit to offer that parish’s Latin Mass. His pleasure on seeing a full house of parishioners and guests was evident as he exclaimed, “It gives me great joy to offer this Eucharist with all of you.”

The Latin Mass is not new to Fort Wayne. Now known as the extraordinary form of the Roman Missal, the Latin Mass has been celebrated at Sacred Heart with the permission of Bishop D’Arcy since 1990, in response to Pope John Paul II’s “Ecclesia Dei” asking bishops worldwide to be generous in allowing the faithful who prefer the Latin rite to have access to it.

At first, the Latin Mass was offered two Sundays a month with then-parish Father James Seculoff the celebrant. Then, as it gained popularity and support that first year, Bishop D’Arcy gave permission for its celebration each Sunday and Holy day. For more than a decade other priests from the diocese helped out to ensure that each Father celebrated a Mass.

Since 1990, Bishop D’Arcy has always been a strong proponent of the extraordinary form of the Mass to worship there each week. Upon Father Gabet’s arrival last March, the bishop established the St. Mother Theodore Guérin Latin Mass Community at Sacred Heart and named the young priest as its chaplain. He reaffirmed that decision Sunday by expressing his gratitude to FSSP for assigning Father Gabet and “making it possible for those who treasure this extraordinary form” of the Mass to worship there each week.

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The Latin Missa
Obama orders faith-based office reworked, scope expanded

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Barack Obama created his new President’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, comprised of 25 leaders of religious and community organizations, including Father Larry Snyder, director of the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio, who served on Obama’s Senate staff in a similar capacity.

Dubois, 26, is a graduate of Boston University and Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs who at 18 began serving as an associate pastor at a Pentecostal church in Cambridge, Mass.

At the National Prayer Breakfast earlier the same day, Obama said the goal of the office “will not be to favor one religious group over another — or even religious groups over secular groups. It will simply be to work on behalf of those organizations that want to work on behalf of our communities, and to do so without blurring the line between our founders wisely drew between church and state.”

He said such work is important because “few are closer to what’s happening on our streets and in our neighborhoods than these organizations. People trust them. Communities rely on them. And we will help them.”

The president said the advisory council would be used “to foster a more productive and peaceful dialogue on faith. I don’t expect divisions to disappear overnight, nor do I believe that long-term shared values and conflicts will suddenly vanish.”

“But I do believe that if we can talk to one another openly and honestly, then perhaps old rifts will start to mend and new partnerships will begin to emerge,” he said. “In a world that grows smaller by the day, perhaps we can build bridging those destructive forces of zealotry and make room for the healing power of understanding.”

Chavez told Catholic News Service that his background in community organizing before he joined the Mexican American Cultural Center was a factor in his invitation to join the advisory council.

As he waited for a flight back to San Antonio after the private ceremony where the executive order was signed, Chavez said the council priority closest to his heart would be helping poor youths and young adults.

“We need to reach young people with meaningful access to education and jobs,” he said. “Even assistance as basic as helping parents more effectively maneuver the educational system can make a dramatic difference in communities like those where he worked as an organizer, he said.

Father Snyder, also reached by CNS on his way to the airport after the White House event, commented on the mandate for the faith-based office to work with the National Security Council to foster interfaith dialogue. He said it is an acknowledgment that better understanding of the religious motivations of the players in global problems “can only increase our national security.”

He said in meeting with the first 15 people named to the council Feb. 5, Obama laid out his philosophies about the faith community’s role in the work of government.

Father Snyder said that in the Bush administration’s approach to faith-based programs “what we had was an ally, an advocate” in easing the path for organizations such as Catholic Charities to work with the federal government.

Regarding Obama’s approach, he said that “by establishing this council it seems to bring it to the next level,” where advice and guidance from people with expertise in an issue, such as poverty, for example, are being actively sought by the administration.

The new council’s structure and ways it will function were still being worked out, said Father Snyder. The executive order calls for it to have a total of 25 members who will serve one-year terms, which can be renewed.

Father Snyder said the one-year term is because Obama wants to keep fresh voices on the council. Members were told to expect the first meeting to take place in about three months and that they would meet about four times a year.

The first 15 members represent a wide range of religions and political philosophies.

Besides Chavez and Father Snyder, they include: Judith N. Vrندburgh, president and CEO, Big Brothers/Bigs Sisters of America; Philadelphia; David N. Saperstein, director and counsel, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Washington; Frank S. Page, president emeritus, Southern Baptist Convention, Taylor, S.C.; the Rev. Otis Moss Jr., pastor emeritus, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Cleveland; Eboo S. Patel, founder and executive director, Interfaith Youth Corps of Chicago; and the Rev. Dr. William J. Shaw, president, National Baptist Convention, USA, Philadelphia; Melissa Rogers, director, Wake Forest School of Divinity, director, Operation for Religious and Public Affairs, Winston-Salem, N.C.; the Rev. Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor, Northland Community, Lakeland, Fla.; the Rev. Jim Wallis, president and executive director of Sojourners, Washington; Bishop W. Michael McKee, presiding bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church’s 13th district, Knoxville, Tenn.; Diane Baillargue, president and CEO, New York-based Secedo, a secular organization that works on policies and programs to help low-income communities.

The 15 also include: William J. Ford, president, Black College President’s Council; the Rev. Bob J. Fitch, president, Hope College, Holland, Mich.; the Rev. Thomas J. Lawler, president, Multicultural Baptist, London; the Rev. Jerry Falwell Jr., president and CEO, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va.; and the Rev. Dr. Richard F. Myers, president, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

The council would advise the White House and federal agencies on a range of topics, from hiring policies for private agencies that accept federal funds to how national security issues are affected by religious beliefs.

The president also named as head of the office Joshua Dubois, who ran Obama’s religious outreach team.

BY PATRICIA ZAPOR

FEBRUARY 15, 2009

WHO ran Obama's religious outreach team, the office's top priority, according to the White House release, will be “making community groups an integral part of our economic recovery and poverty a burden fewer have to bear when recovery is complete.”

It also will focus on reducing demand for abortions, encouraging fathers to stand by their families and working with the National Security Council to “foster interfaith dialogue with leaders and scholars around the world.”

In the same order, Obama created a new President’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, comprised of 25 leaders of religious and community organizations, including Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, and Arturo Chavez, president of the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio, formerly known as the Mexican American Cultural Center.

The council will advise the White House and federal agencies on a range of topics, from hiring policies for private agencies that accept federal funds to how national security issues are affected by religious beliefs.

The president also named as head of the office Joshua Dubois, who ran Obama’s religious outreach team.

FOCA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

tions bills are already at risk, including the long-standing Hyde amendment, which has prohibited the use of taxpayer funds for most abortions, and the Hyde/Weldon amendment preventing government discrimination against health care providers who do not perform or refer for abortions,” she added.

Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, expressed similar concerns in a Feb. 5 letter urging members of Congress to retain pro-life provisions in the appropriations bills they must approve to keep the government funded past March 5.

“While an extreme proposal like FOCA would overturn hundreds of pro-life laws at once, we are equally concerned that such laws may be overturned one at a time during Congress’ appropriations process,” he wrote.

Among the specific provisions he cited were:

• The Hyde amendment to the bill funding the departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, as well as parallel provisions barring taxpayer funding of abortions in military hospitals, federal employees’ health benefits, foreign assistance and other circumstances.

• The Dickey/Wicker amendment to the Labor/HHS appropriations bill, which bars federal funding of research involving the creation or destruction of human embryos or harm to them.

• The Hyde/Weldon amendment guaranteeing the conscience rights of physicians and nurses who choose not to participate in abortions and hospitals that do not offer them.

• The Stupak/Kasten amendment to the State/Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which prohibits U.S. funding of organizations that promote coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization overseas.

“At a time when more Americans than ever may require lifelong assistance from the government for their basic needs, efforts to force Americans to subsidize the denial and destruction of life would be especially tragic,” Cardinal Rigali wrote.

“Such efforts would radically divide our nation and increase distrust of Congress among millions of Americans, at a time when we need unite in solidarity to serve the urgent needs of all,” he added.

FOCA has not yet been introduced in the 111th Congress.
News that founder fathered child causes Legionaries pain

BY CINDY WOODEN

ROME (CNS) — The Legionaries of Christ only recently found out that their founder had fathered a child, knowledge that has caused the members great suffering, but has not destroyed the gratitude they owe him, said a spokesman for the religious order.

Father Paolo Scarafoni, spokesman at the Legionaries’ headquarters in Rome, told Catholic News Service Feb. 4 that, despite the failures and flaws of the late Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, members of the order are grateful to him for having founded the order and its various ministries.

“We found this out only recently,” Father Scarafoni said, referring to the fact that Father Maciel had a daughter.

 Asked how the Legionaries came to know about her, Father Scarafoni said, “Frankly, I cannot say and it is not opportune to discuss this further, also because there are people involved who deserve privacy.

In the past, Father Maciel had been accused of sexually abusing young seminarians in the order, accusations that Father Scarafoni said “have never been proven definitively.”

Because the Holy See decided against conducting a canonical trial to investigate the allegations, but rather ordered the then-elderly Father Maciel to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance in May 2006, “we do not know what allegations were made and examined at that time,” Father Scarafoni said.

Father Maciel died Jan. 30, 2008, at the age of 87.

“The pain the Legionaries are experiencing now “is so great precisely because this is something we did not know before,” Father Scarafoni said.

However, he said, “We are serene. Certainly, it is a time of great trial for us and in the face of this there is great suffering.”

Father Scarafoni had told the Mexican news agency Notimex that the Legionaries were living through “a process of purification.”

He told CNS, “When you are faced with such great pain, it means that you must grow, you must be purified spiritually because you must continue to move forward motivated by even higher ideals. This is especially true when you are faced with the unexpected.”

At the same time, he said, “there is much gratitude. Our gratitude to him remains very strong because we have received so much that is good from him. This is something we cannot and will not deny.”

The priest said the Legionaries of Christ and the lay members of Regnum Christi are dealing with the news “as a family. With prudence and charity we are informing our members and trying to help each other overcome this situation. What is important is not to renounce the great mission that we have.”

“The priority is the life and the holiness of each of our members,” he said.

Father Alvaro Corcuera, director general of the Legionaries and Regnum Christi, acknowledged that the order is “living a time of pain and suffering.”

In an undated letter to the 65,000 predominantly lay members of Regnum Christi, Father Corcuera did not specifically identify the actions of the Legionaries’ founder, but wrote that “these things that have hurt and surprised us — and I don’t believe we can explain with our reason alone — have already been judged by God.”

“It is true that we are going through much suffering and a great deal of pain. As in a family, these pains draw us together and lead us to suffer and rejoice as one body. This circumstance we are living invites us to look at everything with much faith, humility and charity. Thus we place it in the hands of God, who teaches us the way of infinite mercy,” the letter said.

A spokesman for the Legionaries of Christ in the United States acknowledged that some aspects of Father Maciel’s life “were not appropriate for a Catholic priest.”

“We have learned some things about our founder’s life that are surprising and hard to understand,” Jim Fair, the order’s U.S. spokesman, said Feb. 4 in a prepared statement.

Fair declined further comment on the activities of Father Maciel, saying only that Father Maciel now “stands before God’s judgment and mercy.”

Fair denied rumors that the Legionaries would renounce Father Maciel, saying he will always be considered the order’s founder.

“It’s one of the mysteries of our faith, that someone can have tremendous flaws but yet the Holy Spirit can work through them,” he told CNS in a telephone interview from Chicago.

Despite the unsettling news, Fair said, the order will continue its ministries.

Father Maciel lived the last years of his life under a Vatican order not to practice his priestly ministry in public.

The accusations that Father Maciel sexually abused seminarians first became public in 1997 in a report in The Hartford (Conn.) Courant daily newspaper. In a letter to the paper, Father Maciel denied the allegations, saying “In all cases they are defamations and falsities with no foundation whatsoever.”

Father Maciel founded the Legionaries of Christ in his native Mexico in 1941. Father Scarafoni said the Legionaries have 3,250 male members, of whom 850 are priests; about 1,000 consecrated women; and about 60,000 members of Regnum Christi, the lay branch.

Contributing to this story was Dennis Sadowski in Washington.

Lenten Parish Mission

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
943 Powers St., New Haven, Indiana • 493-4553
February 22, 23, 24, 25

Evening Presentations: 7:00 p.m. in church
(Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25 Presentation during 7:00 pm Mass)
Monday and Tuesday:
10:00 a.m. presentation in church
(For Seniors or those not able to make the evening sessions)
Fr. David Wilton, C.P.M.

Father David is a native of Natural Bridge, New York. He became a member of the Congregation of the Fathers of Mercy in 1985 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1993. He is a 1989 graduate of Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia where he studied philosophy. He studied theology at Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut.

The congregation of the Fathers of Mercy was founded in 1808, originally under the title of “The Missionaries of France.” The community was founded for the purpose of re-evangelizing the French people after the Catholic Faith had been subjected to years of attacks and persecution during the French Revolution. It is now exclusively an American community located in South Union, Kentucky. The primary apostolate of the Fathers of Mercy is to conduct parish missions and retreats throughout the country.

During the mission, Father David will encourage and challenge the parish community to make a stronger, deeper personal commitment to Christ and to His Church.

(The Parish Mission is sponsored by the Holy Name Society of St. Johns)
Vatican: Bishop’s Holocaust statements ‘strongly rejected’ by pope

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican said a traditionalist bishop who has minimized the full extent of the Holocaust must disavow his positions before he will be accepted into full communion with the church.

A Vatican statement Feb. 4 said Pope Benedict XVI did not know about the controversial statements by Bishop Richard Williamson when he lifted the excommunication of him and three other traditionalist bishops ordained illicitly in 1988.

“The positions of Bishop Williamson on the Holocaust are absolutely unacceptable and are strongly rejected by the Holy Father,” the statement said.

In order to function as a bishop, Bishop Williamson must disavow himself from his previous statements in “an unequivocal and public manner,” the Vatican said.

In a statement meant to deflect the increasing public outcry over the papal decree lifting the excommunication, the Vatican said the decree did not change the judicial status of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X, which still has no canonical recognition in the Catholic Church.

The society was founded by French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who also incurred automatic excommunication when he ordained the four bishops against papal orders. The society has not accepted the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council and its concepts of religious freedom and ecumenism.

The statement from the Secretariat of State said the society would have to recognize the teachings of Vatican II and of post-conciliar popes to be in full communion.

It said the four bishops at present do not have a canonical function in the church and “do not licitly exercise a ministry in the Church.”

The Vatican has emphasized that even after the removal of the excommunications remaining problems need to be resolved before full communion can be established with the society’s leadership and members.

The Secretariat of State statement — like a statement the previous day from the Vatican press spokesperson, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi — reiterates the German-borne pope’s remarks in his Jan. 28 audience, in which he recalled the suffering of Jews during World War II and said the Holocaust should stand as “a warning to everyone against forgetting, denying or minimizing evil.”

Father Lombardi said the pope’s words at the general audience were “unequivocal.”

The spokesman said the pope had spoken about the horror of the Holocaust in his 2005 visit to a German synagogue and in his 2006 visit to the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. He said the papal statement at the Jan. 28 audience “could not have been clearer, and from the context it is apparent that it referred to the positions of Bishop Williamson and to all similar positions.”

“On the same occasion, the pope also clearly expressed the reason for preserving the excommunication, which has nothing to do with legitimizing positions denying the Holocaust — positions which were clearly condemned by the pope,” the spokesman said.

Father Lombardi’s statement was made by the Vatican press office late the same day that German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the pope and the Vatican needed to make clear there could be no denial of the Holocaust.

At a news conference in Berlin Feb. 3, Merkel said she noted the pope’s comment on church matters “but we are talking about fundamental questions.”

“This is not just a matter, in my opinion, for the Christian, Catholic and Jewish communities in Germany, but the pope and the church should clearly unambiguously say that there can be no denial of the Holocaust, she said.

On Jan. 21, the same day the pope mentioned the controversy, a Swedish television station aired a November interview with Bishop Williamson in which he rejected the position that the Holocaust had been exaggerated.

The papal decree lifting the excommunication was made public Jan. 24 and Jewish groups, especially in Germany, the U.S. and Israel — expressed shock that the Vatican would lift the excommunication against Bishop Williamson even after his comments had been televised.

German Cardinal Walter Kasper, who coordinates the Vatican’s dialogue with the Jews, said the controversy was fueled in part by a lack of communication within the Vatican and by “management errors in the Curia.”

Cardinal Kasper said he has been following the unfolding controversy “with great concern.”

He said the pope wanted to open the discussion because he “wanted unity inside and outside.”

But the cardinal said he “would have also liked to see more communication in advance.”

Pope, German chancellor discuss Holocaust-denying bishop

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI and German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke to each other on the telephone about the recent controversy surrounding a traditionalist bishop who has denied the Holocaust.

“It was a cordial and constructive conversation, marked by a common and profound agreement that the Shoah is a perpetually relevant event that the church must avoid,” said a statement released Feb. 8 by the spokesman for the pope and for Merkel.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, papal spokesman, said the phone conversation was marked by “a climate of great respect” and included mention of Pope Benedict’s Jan. 28 statement about the importance of “management errors in the church. But the cardinal said he “would have also liked to see more communication in advance.”

The controversy began in late January when a television station in Germany aired a November interview with Argentine Bishop Richard Williamson on the Holocaust.

Father Christian Bouchacourt, the president of the Argentine newspaper La Reja, said the rector of the seminary of the Society of St. Pius X in La Reja, where Bishop Williamson had been head of the seminary of the Society of St. Pius X in La Reja for the past five years.

The Argentine newspaper La Nacion reported Feb. 8 that Bishop Williamson had been removed as the rector of the seminary.

In an e-mail to the newspaper, Father Christian Bouchacourt, the society’s South American district director, said Father Williamson had been removed from his duties, and he repeated the society’s position that “the affirmations of Bishop Williamson do not reflect in any way the position of our congregation.”

In the meantime, Father Davide Pagliarani, superior of the society’s Italian district, issued a statement Feb. 6 saying that another Holocaust denier, Father Floriano Abrahamowicz, had been expelled from the Society of St. Pius X.

As the controversy surrounding Bishop Williamson grew in late January and early February, Father Abrahamowicz gave several interviews in which he, too, denied the Holocaust and in which he claimed that the Nazi gas chambers were used to disinfect inmates upon arrival at Nazi concentration camps.

The Society of St. Pius X was founded in 1969 by Archbishop Lefebvre. It does not accept the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council and its concepts of religious freedom and ecumenism.

Pope Benedict was scheduled to meet Feb. 12 with more than 60 U.S. Jewish leaders, members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

A Vatican official told Catholic News Service Feb. 9 that the group had requested the papal audience before the Bishop Williamson controversy erupted, but that obviously the German-born pope would use the occasion to reaffirm his respect for the Jews and his position that the Holocaust was real and that it was a horrific proof of the existence of evil.

Top officers of the World Jewish Congress met at the Vatican Feb. 9 with Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews.

Ronald S. Lauder, president of the congress, said in a statement that he and the other officers told Cardinal Kasper that the Vatican’s insistence that Bishop Williamson retract “was a welcome first step,” but that concrete actions must be taken to emphasize that the Catholic Church itself will not tolerate “accommodating anti-Semites.”

Lauder said the pope would be able to make his planned May visit to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

“We are looking forward to the pope’s visit to the Holy Land,” he said. “This will be an opportunity for the pope to reaffirm the Vatican’s commitment to dialogue with Jews.”

Our Lady of the Redeemer Church and seminary run by the Society of St. Pius X are seen in La Reja, Argentina, Jan. 25. The Argentine newspaper La Nacion reported Feb. 8 that Bishop Richard Williamson has been removed as the rector of the seminary.
Wendy Summers: Forging a spiritual journey for herself and others

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

In part 1 of this two part series, Wendy Summers’ Catholic ancestors were explored. This week’s article will delve into people who have been influential in Wendy’s spiritual journey, and Wendy’s impact on the lives of others in her faith community.

GRANGER — Wendy Summers knew from an early age the importance of the Catholic faith from her parents and grandparents. As she grew to adulthood, that faith deepened through her marriage to her husband James and other events that would challenge and strengthen her relationship with God.

She was born on May 6, 1954 as Wildemar Therese Bates. Wendy remembers a legend that her grandfather, John Hayze Brown, was in Europe during the early 1900s and liked the German name Wilhemar, which was a male name that he wanted for his firstborn. When Wendy’s aunt was born, he and his wife decided to name her Wildemar anyway, and Wendy and her daughter have also carried on the family name.

One of Wendy’s earliest recollections of her grandfather was that he was one of the only Catholics she knew that openly read the Bible. She also remembered fondness stories about faith that her grandfather passed on to her. “I loved when he described Jesus as having been a man of color, hair of wool, and feet like fine brass,” she recalls.

Wendy adds, “He also told me that mankind began on the continent of Africa. These were things I didn’t learn in school.”

Wendy’s grandmother Irene Evelyn LeGras Brown, who was a descendent of maternal American ancestor Marie Thereze Coincoin, was proud of her grandchildren. “She had made so many rolls so that everyone had one. It was spiritually moving to break bread and pray as a family,” Wendy says.

Rose Marie Brown Bates, Wendy’s mother, shared her Catholic faith with her family with daily devotional prayers. Wendy reminisces with sadness and joy of her mother’s passing on All Saints Day in 1993. “For my mother’s passing, I that would have loved to break bread and pray as a family.”

Wendy’s family gathered and ate Thanksgiving rolls and froze them in anticipation of the Thanksgiving holiday. Her grandmother had made dinner for her grandmother. “She had made so many rolls so that everyone had one. It was spiritually moving to break bread and pray as a family,” Wendy says.

Wendy’s grandmother Irene Evelyn LeGras Brown.

One day her scent was gone and was replaced with feeling of peace and calm.”

One of the most influential people on Wendy’s spiritual journey has been her husband James. Married on July 12, 1975, she and James have two children, Wildemar Irene and James Malcolm III. Wendy cites that respect, trust and the ability to express emotions with each other as a cornerstone to her marriage’s longevity. Wendy adds, “We share the view that marriage takes constant attention and work. But most importantly, we cherish our sacred marriage vows and our promises to God and each other.”

When her husband James attended St. Pius X Parish weekend in August 2006, Wendy was skeptical of the benefits of the retreat. But when Wendy attended in August 2007, she felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and her life became more enriched through prayer and Bible study.

“Since CRHP I just can’t get enough of God’s word. I read different versions of the Bible and am so excited to learn more about the word of God,” Wendy exclaims.

St. Pius X parishioner and CRHP sister Tanya Martinez describes Wendy’s influence in her life. “The way she dives into the word of God for guidance and understanding of God’s will is truly amazing. She can find motivation and comfort for us in God’s word for any situation in our lives and sends us his message,” Tanya explains.

Wendy and her husband James were recently chosen as godparents for Tanya and her husband Jorge’s daughter, Racquel. “I admire her fervor to serve God in anything he calls her to. That is why my husband and I chose her for godmother of our child,” Tanya says. “We know that she will help us raise this child in God’s love and guidance.”

“This year Wendy is a sponsor for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) candidate Tamara Griffin-Byrne.

Tamie recalls that at the beginning of RCIA she told Wendy she had difficulty staying focused when she prayed and Wendy offered a solution. “Wendy pointed out that maybe I simply wasn’t opening myself up to listen to what God was trying to tell me. I never thought about praying that way before. Now, before I say my prayers, I try to listen first,” Tamie says.

With an eye towards the future, Wendy looks forward to enriching her spiritual journey by passing on to her granddaughter, Kamyah a strong faith foundation just as her ancestors did for her.

Wendy sums up that belief by quoting Matthew 7:25:

“And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.”

Wendy’s impact on the lives of others in her faith community.

GRANGER — Wendy Summers: Forging a spiritual journey for herself and others

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Poll shows disapproval of Obama’s Mexico City policy reversal

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Although a majority of Americans support many of President Barack Obama’s pro-family actions, only about a third back his decision to allow funding for overseas family planning groups that provide abortions, according to a new poll by USA Today/Gallup. The results of the survey conducted Jan. 30-Feb. 1 show that “this is no time to divide our nation with policies that offend the pro-life values of most Americans,” said Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications for the U.S. bishops’ Office of Pro-Life Activities, in a Feb. 3 statement. Asked about seven actions taken by Obama as president, the majority said they approved of his moves to: name special envys for the Middle East and for Afghanistan and Pakistan (76 percent); tighten ethics rules for administration officials (76 percent); limit interrogation techniques used on prisoners (74 percent); institute higher fuel efficiency standards (74 percent); and make it easier for workers to sue for pay discrimination (66 percent). But only 44 percent said they supported Obama’s decision to order that the Guantanamo Bay prison be closed and only 35 percent were in favor of his decision to reverse the Mexico City policy, a ban on federal funding of abortion-providing groups abroad that was first instituted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

Vigils, rallies nationwide focus on immigrants, immigration reform

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Immigrant advocates from faith groups and Congress have been organizing two types of events to take place in dozens of cities around the country in coming weeks. The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is providing how-to guides for organizing a prayer vigil or other event and gathering information about activities planned around the country as they are announced. As of Feb. 4, Patty Kupfer, of the immigration reform advocacy organization America’s Voice, said about 80 prayer vigils and other faith-based events already had been organized for Feb. 13-22. The goals of all the events are to raise awareness about individuals whose lives are affected by problems with the U.S. immigration system and to build up support for comprehensive immigration reform. Meanwhile, Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., was spearheading a five-week national tour of rallies, intended to “document the harm caused to citizens across our nation in the absence of comprehensive immigration reform,” as a press release from his office put it. Information about some prayer events was posted on the site www.interfaithimmigration.org.

Obama calls SCHIP bill ‘first step’ toward health coverage for all

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Joined by representatives of Catholic Charities USA and the Catholic Health Association, President Barack Obama signed into law Feb. 4 legislation reauthorizing and expanding the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP. Obama called the $32.8 billion bill — one of the first signed during his presidency — “only a first step” and a “down payment on my commitment to cover every single American.” Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, who attended the signing ceremony in the East Room of the White House, praised Congress and Obama “for acting so swiftly on this vital law.” He added in a statement, “Without SCHIP, vulnerable children of low-income families would not receive the care they need to be strong and healthy citizens and productive individuals in our society.” Kathleen Curran, CHA’s senior director for public policy, represented CHA at the signing ceremony.

Scranton bishop announces final decisions on parish restructuring

SCRANTON, Pa. (CNS) — Citing population shifts, dwindling finances, overworked priests and the fact that many Catholics “are not actively practicing their faith,” Scranton’s bishop announced a major parish restructuring plan that will close some parishes and merge others. In a recorded message played at all Masses the weekend of Jan. 31-Feb. 1, Bishop Joseph F. Martino announced his final decisions in a process that began more than a year ago. Every parish in the 11-county diocese is affected in some way. At the start of the process, the diocese had 224 parishes. William R. Genello, the diocese’s executive director of communications, said the number of parishes that will remain open will not be known for at least two years as the communities begin to close, merge or partner in sharing ministries. Implementation of the plan will begin in July. Bishop Martino said that some people would probably prefer to leave well enough alone but he explained that was not feasible. “Unfortunately,” he said, “many of our institutions and not well enough.” Our society and our diocese are experiencing changes. Populations are shifting. Financial resources are diminishing. Many Catholics are not actively practicing their faith or supporting the church. Our priests are serving too many parishes at one time.

Pope appeals for improved protection, support for sick children

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Countless sick and suffering children are in urgent need of help and protection, Pope Benedict XVI said in his message for the Feb. 11 celebration of World Day of the Sick, the pope urged Catholics to not be indifferent to the suffering of these “weakest and most defenseless creatures” and to recognize a “pressing duty to intervene.” World Day of the Sick is marked each year on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Vatican released the pope’s message Feb. 7. The pope dedicated this year’s message to children. He called attention to those who are struck by crippling diseases or are battling illnesses that are still incurable, despite great medical advancements. He underlined the plight of children “wounded in body and soul as a consequence of conflict and war and other innocent victims of the senseless hatred of adults.”

Phoenix vicar for derg named bishop of Gallup

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has named Father James S. Wall, vicar for clergy in the Diocese of Phoenix, as bishop of Gallup, N.M. The appointment was announced Feb. 5 in Washington by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States. Bishop-designate Wall succeeds Bishop Donald E. Pelotte, who resigned in April 2008, nine months after being injured in a fall at his home. Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted had been serving as apostolic administrator of the Gallup Diocese since January 2008. At 44 he will be the second youngest U.S. Catholic bishop but the youngest one to head a U.S. diocese. The youngest U.S. bishop, 42-year-old Bishop Oscar Cantu, is an auxiliary of San Antonio. The son of Joan L. Wall and the late James A. Wall was born Oct. 11, 1964, in Ganado, Arizona, and became a Catholic along with the rest of his family.

Blair urges new global alliances to address economic, security issues

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J. (CNS) — Today’s global economic, environmental and security challenges can be addressed successfully only if developed and developing nations form unconventional alliances based on shared values and use justice as a force to bring people together, according to Tony Blair. The former prime minister of the U.K. spoke Feb. 1 at the World Leaders Forum of the John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Catholic-run Seton Hall University in South Orange. Blair told an audience of 2,000 students, faculty, alumni and guests that commitment to justice, freedom and democracy is reflected in “not just what you say, but the motivation with which you say it and act on it.” These values are not only right in themselves, he said, but are the practical key to effective action. Blair, prime minister of the U.K. from 1997 to 2007, is currently the special envoy to the Middle East on behalf of the Quartet, a group comprised of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia. In 2008, he established the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, dedicated to promoting understanding across faiths and of the role of faith in the modern world.
The Office of Worship offers ministry training programs

The Office of Worship is offering training programs for extraordinary ministers of holy Communion,, sacristans, proclaimers of the word and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick. Retreat opportunities for lay ministers and those in RCIA programs will also be offered.

These programs assist parish in providing the required training for lay ministers:

- Lector training will be in Fort Wayne on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish with instructor Joe Dorgan.
- Extraordinary ministers’ training will be held in Fort Wayne on Sunday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bishop Dwenger Catholic Center with instructor Stacie Gupton.
- Extraordinary ministers to the sick training will be held in Fort Wayne on Sunday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the St. Patrick Catholic Center with instructor Dan Zellers.
- Extraordinary ministers to the sick training will be held in Fort Wayne on Saturday, March 7, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bishop Dwenger Catholic Center with instructor Gervaise Bastian.

The Fort Wayne Council of Catholic Women met at St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne to stuff new pairs of socks with toiletries, candy and other items and delivered them to Charis House, a division of the Fort Wayne Rescue Mission for Women and Children. Pictured are Bea Hoevel, Marie Reicheit, Margaret Freiburger, Julie Karst, Theresa Oberley, Dorothy Cuellar, Betty Howard and Phyllis Murphy. The National Council of Catholic Women responds with Gospel values to the needs of the church and is open to all Catholic women. For more information contact: www.nccw.org.

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Father Schooler honored with national NCEA Award

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

GRANGER — The moment he enters the school building, St. Pius X Catholic School students spot him. With their faces aglow and hands outstretched to greet him, a quiet chorus of “Father Bill, Father Bill!” fills the air.

The “Father Bill” the students speak of is Father Bill Schooler, pastor of St. Pius X Parish and school in Granger. In January of this year Father Schooler was selected as one of 13 pastors nationwide to receive the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Distinguished Pastor Award.

According to Elaine Holmes, principal of St. Pius X School, a nomination packet was sent to the NCEA highlighting Father Schooler’s achievements. Included in the nomination packet were letters from St. Pius X teacher Sue Williams, school board president A.J. Bellia and parishioner at St. Pius for 26 years, Julian Velasco. One area receiving a great deal of focus was Father Schooler’s leadership in the idea of a parish education center (PEC) at St. Pius.

Williams, who has also been a parishioner at St. Pius for 26 years, recalls there had always been talk of building a school. “However, the parish was always divided on the issue. Father Bill was the first one to take on this monumental project,” says Williams, adding, “He somehow managed to get the funding and the support of the parish behind him.”

Bellia stresses it was Father Schooler’s philosophy of Catholic education that was central to the implementation of the PEC. “Catholic elementary education is but one outreach of the overall educational mission of the parish,” Bellia says. “(Father Schooler’s) plan has not been to build a parish around a successful school; it has been, rather, to build a school within a successful parish.”

Parishioner and school parent Julian Velasco was at first skeptical of the PEC concept. “At first, the idea of a ‘Parish Education Center’ seemed somewhat gimmicky, and the promise to be considerate of other Catholic schools in the area seemed like lip service,” Velasco remembers. “But (Father Schooler) has been true to his word. Not only is there a new parochial school, but the religious education program has been improved, and the parish has embarked on a very ambitious adult education program — all at the same time!”

Both Bellia and Velasco have children that attend St. Pius School and find Father Schooler’s character to be a major influence in molding their children’s spiritual lives. Bellia observes that Father Schooler brings to the school the same passion for stewardship and fidelity to Catholic tradition that he brings to the parish as a whole. “He has written to school parents about the unqualified need for each of them to be good stewards of time, talent and treasure in their parish lives. He has led the focus of parental involvement in the school toward stewardship activities...”

Velasco’s three-year-old daughter Graciela is enrolled in the school’s preschool program. Velasco notes St. Pius School provides his daughter with the combined concepts of religion and community that secular preschools cannot. “Graciela looks forward to seeing (Father Schooler) after Mass every Sunday. But now, she sees the church as more than a place we go on Sundays,” Velasco continues. “She goes to ‘Pius’ regularly. And there is continuity: she sees her classmates at Mass on Sunday and Father Bill at school during the week.”

And what does Father Schooler think of these accolades? “My only reaction is that of humility. When actors are awarded the Oscar, they usually approach the podium and go on and on about their supporting cast.” Father Schooler credits the team work behind the school’s success. “It is really the cast of many generous and hard-working people at St. Pius who made this award possible — most of them working completely behind the scenes to realize our dream of an Education Center designed to serve the educational needs of our parish from cradle to grave.”

The 2009 NCEA Convention will be held on April 14-16 at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, Calif. Father Schooler will be presented the award on April 14.
Jeff Samardzija and Mike Scioscia advocate champions of faith

BY DIANE FREEBY

NOTRE DAME — Stories of faith, family and fastballs entertained a crowd last Thursday at the Eighth Annual Notre Dame Baseball Dinner. Mike Scioscia, former Dodger great and current manager of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim joined Irish and Chicago Cubs favorite, Jeff Samardzija as guest speakers.

Scioscia says his Catholic faith is a big part of who he is, both on and off the field.

“My faith has helped me all through my life and career,” said Scioscia. “That faith is more evident when times are tough.”

Scioscia is featured along with other Catholic athletes on the DVD, “Champions of Faith.” Produced by Catholic Exchange, the DVD profiles some of Major League baseball’s biggest stars as they share how their faith guides and sustains them.

Scioscia, whose son Matt is currently a sophomore on the Irish baseball team, shared the advice his mother gave him as she reluctantly let him sign a major league contract instead of going to college.

“If you want to be a leader, the first person you have to lead is yourself.”

Scioscia took those words to heart and made sure he turned to his faith first so he could be that leader. After a successful career with the Los Angeles Dodgers, Scioscia led the Angels to a World Series championship in 2002. The Angels are 803-655 in his faith first so he could be that leader. After a successful career with the Los Angeles Dodgers, Scioscia led the Angels to a World Series championship in 2002. The Angels are 803-655 in nine seasons under Scioscia. The Angels were baseball’s only 100-game winners in 2008, then were eliminated by the Boston Red Sox in the division series for the second consecutive year. Scioscia joked about the pressures of managing a World Champion team.

“The Lord’s very demanding. When he names a team the Angels, he expects a lot!”

Samardzija, who excelled at baseball and football while in college, is getting ready to pitch for the Cubs. During his rookie season, the right-hander appeared in 26 games and compiled a 2.26 ERA. It wasn’t that long ago that the Valparaiso star struggled as he made his way to the University of Notre Dame, suffering the loss of his mother during his last year of high school.

“I really turned to the things I knew,” recalled Samardzija. “I come from a really close-knit family, and I reached out to the people and games around me. I tried to keep a smile on my face during his last year of high school.

“I really turned to the things I knew,” recalled Samardzija. “I come from a really close-knit family, and I reached out to the people and games around me. I tried to keep a smile on my face and remember the good things she left me with.”

Memories of what his mother meant to him motivated Samardzija to create the Debra Samardzija Memorial Scholarship, which will be awarded each year to a student who has suffered the loss of a loved one while continuing to strive for academic excellence.

“Obviously, Notre Dame is a pretty expensive school to attend, so we’ll do anything we can to help out,” Samardzija said. “I feel like the best way for me to give back is by taking my experiences to help others. I tried to take my ideals with family and piece it together with Notre Dame and help kids out, especially someone who went through a tough time losing a parent.”

Both Scioscia and Samardzija said they were excited to be back at Notre Dame, and before the dinner got underway, they spent about an hour meeting with fans of all ages and signing autographs.

During the question and answer segment, 11-year-old Lucas Mazurkiewicz from St. Anthony School in South Bend asked Samardzija what his most memorable games were while at Notre Dame. In addition to the baseball regional game against Arizona his freshman year, the Shark said he’ll never forget the 2005 showdown against USC at Notre Dame Stadium, when the Trojans eeked out a 34-31 victory.

“Any one game that should have ended in a tie, this was it!”

Samardzija grinned. “A lot of talent was on the field ... Reggie Bush and Matt Leinart were at the height of their game. We had some pretty good guys, too. Unfortunately, it didn’t turn out our way, but it was one amazing game to be a part of!”

Notre Dame’s baseball team, lead by head coach Dave Schrage, begins their season Feb. 20 with a game in Tampa against Ohio State. The Fighting Irish open the season at home March 17 against Ball State. A game can be heard in South Bend and adjoining counties on Harvest 103.1 WHME, and worldwide on the Web at www.umd.com.

Mike Scioscia, manager for the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, joins former Irish football and baseball star Jeff Samardzija for the Eighth Annual Notre Dame Baseball Dinner. Samardzija made baseball his career choice and enters his second season with the Chicago Cubs.

CATHOLIC STUDENTS COMPETE IN ALLEN COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Jeff Samardzija made baseball his career choice and enters his second season with the Chicago Cubs.

Saint Mary’s College named to presidential honor roll for community service

NOTRE DAME — The Corporation for National and Community Service announced today that Saint Mary’s College is on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to America’s communities. It’s the third year the organization has recognized the college and the work of the Office for Civic and Social Engagement (OCSE).

“This recognition affirms the spirit of service that is prevalent throughout the college. In the past four years community service opportunities have flourished here with the advent of additional and enhanced programming,” said Carrie Call, director of OCSE. “Receiving the news about the award always thrills me because it reminds me of how far we’ve come. Yet, I am also reminded of how much more needs to be done to help a hurting world.”

Among the community programs OCSE operates is the College Academy of Tutoring (CAT). Through CAT, Saint Mary’s students work with local Title I schools, offering services that include English, reading and mathematics tutoring; teacher assistance in the classrooms (including ELL skills building and special education); a Read-to-a-Child program; and the innovative Pen Pals program where fourth-grade girls are paired with Saint Mary’s students for a semester to share letters. Also through OCSE, dozens of students, faculty and staff participate in Rebuilding Together in South Bend every spring, helping to spruce up and repair people’s homes.

Launched in 2006, the Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its commitment to service-learning and civic engagement. Honorees for the award were chosen based on a series of selection factors including scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses.

St. Jude Paul Kiser, a seventh grader, and sixth-grader Jake Castelman from St. Louis Academy, shown here, were among 69 contestants who competed in the 55th Annual Allen County Spelling Bee at South Side High School on Saturday, Feb. 7. Other students from the Fort Wayne Diocese area Catholic Schools included: Hailie Workman from Most Precious Blood, Nancy McNamara from St. Joseph-St Elizabeth, Nicholas Steffen from St. John the Baptist, Cara Minick from St. Charles Borromeo, Esther Bell from Queen of Angels, Eric Trelf from St. John the Baptist-New Haven, and Josh Doehla representing St. Vincent de Paul School.
Indiana General Assembly considers expanding educational choice

By BRIGID CURTIS AYER

URING the Indiana General Assembly this year, a bill that would offer a 50 percent tax credit for donations to private schools passed by a voice vote. Bills on second reading are passed by a roll call vote. Bills on third reading receive a pass or fail vote.

The School Scholarship Tax Credit program is designed to provide a powerful incentive for charitable donations for education for lower-income children. Consider the following example: Example: The program’s $10 million statewide cap would allow for ... $20 million in total private contributions to participating SGOs. (20M donations x 50 percent credit = $10 program cap) $3,500 average per-student scholarships across all SGOs. Over 5,000 scholarships per year.

(Adapted from the ICIC’s new, online, public policy tool and join the ICC network go to the ICC Web page at www.indianacc.org and click “Legislative Action Center.”)

Tax Assistance Program now underway

NOTRE DAME — Local taxpayers can get help with the preparation of their federal and Indiana state income tax returns at nine area locations from now until April 15 through the University of Notre Dame’s Office of Alumni Affairs’ annual Volunteer Harrington Gray Tax Assistance Program (TAP). TAP, which began this weekend, enlists accountability students from Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College to provide free assistance to taxpayers whose 2008 earnings were at or below $38,000 or less. The program also offers free income tax preparation to unemployed taxpayers whose 2008 earnings were at or below $38,000 prior to collecting taxable unemployment benefits.

Taxpayers should bring copies of their federal and state income tax returns from last year and other relevant documents. Especially important for this filing season is information about the 2008 federal government’s economic stimulus payment received. For a complete list of TAP locations and hours of operation, visit http://taxtips.nd.edu on the Web or call (574) 631-7863.

What would this produce as far as scholarships?

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What would this produce as far as scholarships?
The consequences of avoidance

SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

The consequences of avoidance

I am great at avoiding mundane or difficult things. I hate to admit it, but I often act as if my secret motto is: Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow? I am very good at avoiding certain actions until the last hour. When I was in college I would often stay up half the night cramming for an exam or writing a paper due the next morning. My excuse then was, and unfortunately still is, that I work better under pressure. I tend to think a lot about what I have to do but usually wait until I am down to the wire to do it. It is a bad habit that I would like to shed.

Lately I have been reflecting on just how detrimental this weakness of procrastination can be. Many opportunities to do good can pass us by. How sad it is for me to go to a funeral and hear friends or family members share regrets that they hadn’t done or said something more pliable. It is easy to create a flattering portrait: life as a series of smiles cast under soft lighting. How we see ourselves depends upon the sophistication of our software. It has little to do with reality. We must be aware of these illusions, remembering God’s direction to Samuel as he searched Bethlehem for an anointed leader: “Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearances but the Lord looks into the heart.” The question is not the beauty of the body, as captured by the camera, but the beauty of the heart. St. Paul calls us to shift our focus to the un-photographed inner self. “We look not to what is seen but to what is unseen,” he instructs. “For what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.”

The unseen is the way we treat our neighbors when no one is watching. It’s the moral code we uphold when it isn’t convenient or conventional. It’s the daily effort to scrape bitterness from sticky corners in our hearts.

Let’s rise about the camera’s flash this February, saturated by the glitz of Valentine’s Day and the Academy Awards. Red roses and red carpet are far from reality. Our aim on earth is not to produce Hollywood glamour for the camera. We’ve been given a far nobler purpose, we read in Genesis this month: We were created in the image and likeness of God. The pictures we collect may seem to hold some weight, but they are fleeting, deleted as quickly as they are snapped.

What really matters is how God sees us. How do we look through the lens of the Lord? Without the benefit of the delete button and the aid of Photoshop?

That’s where we should apply our revisionary efforts, altering and adjusting each day.

Pope Benedict XVI recently reflected on the beauty of Christian living. Quoting Ephesians, he said, “Christ thus desires that we grow more beautiful each day through irreproachable moral conduct, without wrinkle or defect.”

So turn off the distractions: Set down the camera and log off Facebook. Stop chasing Kodak moments. Instead, chase grace, seek sacraments and pursue virtues. That kind of beauty is bigger than the camera. It can’t be contained in eight megapixels. It is only picked up by the lens of the Lord.

Christina Capechi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christina@readchristina.com.

The Cutting Edge

FEBRUARY 15, 2009 TODAY’S CATHOLIC 13

Say ‘cheese’: looking good to the supreme photographer

There are two types of people: those who don’t take pictures and those who do. Whichever category you occupy, you probably feel some uneasiness about your position, guilty of either neglect or obsession.

The first group muses, “I ought to take more pictures” — an obligation that’s akin to eating more cruciferous vegetables and writing software. It has little to do with reason or reality. The first group understands that charm a crowd and cinch a deal. They are the ones who abandon the camera, but the beauty of the heart. We must be aware of these lies, remembering God’s direction to Samuel as he searched Bethlehem for an anointed leader: “Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearances but the Lord looks into the heart.” The question is not the beauty of the body, as captured by the camera, but the beauty of the heart. St. Paul calls us to shift our focus to the un-photographed inner self. “We look not to what is seen but to what is unseen,” he instructs. “For what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.”

The unseen is the way we treat our neighbors when no one is watching. It’s the moral code we uphold when it isn’t convenient or conventional. It’s the daily effort to scrape bitterness from sticky corners in our hearts.

Let’s rise about the camera’s flash this February, saturated by the glitz of Valentine’s Day and the Academy Awards. Red roses and red carpet are far from reality. Our aim on earth is not to produce Hollywood glamour for the camera. We’ve been given a far nobler purpose, we read in Genesis this month: We were created in the image and likeness of God. The pictures we collect may seem to hold some weight, but they are fleeting, deleted as quickly as they are snapped.

What really matters is how God sees us. How do we look through the lens of the Lord? Without the benefit of the delete button and the aid of Photoshop?

That’s where we should apply our revisionary efforts, altering and adjusting each day.

Pope Benedict XVI recently reflected on the beauty of Christian living. Quoting Ephesians, he said, “Christ thus desires that we grow more beautiful each day through irreproachable moral conduct, without wrinkle or defect.”

So turn off the distractions: Set down the camera and log off Facebook. Stop chasing Kodak moments. Instead, chase grace, seek sacraments and pursue virtues. That kind of beauty is bigger than the camera. It can’t be contained in eight megapixels. It is only picked up by the lens of the Lord.

Christina Capechi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christina@readchristina.com.

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A Memorable Opportunity

Support the renovation of the MacDougal Chapel on Cathedral Square by purchasing a brick paver engraved with the name of your family or a loved one. The brick pavers will be used on the new outside ramp designed to be handicapped accessible. Each brick can be reserved for a $100 donation. (Up to 14 characters per line, and 3 line maximum)

For more information, call the Cathedral office in Fort Wayne at 424-1485

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EDITORIAL

Decline of marriage compromises children’s futures

The sad fact is that the institution of marriage is declining — not only in the United States, but throughout Western Europe and other developed countries. Sociological reasons for this decline stem from the 1960s, which saw the emergence of secular individualism along with the widespread introduction of legal and relatively reliable contraception and abortion. With sex severed from both marriage and children, adultery and divorce skyrocketed and children found themselves in the crosshairs of a sexual moral chaos.

This phenomenon has led to an increasing cultural disillusionment with marriage and acceptance of cohabitation. Forty years ago, cohabitation would have been widely considered among Americans as a deviant practice to be found at the margins of society. Forty years later, cohabitation has increased over 1,000 percent, with nearly one out of every 10 American couples living together unmarried. While such a move towards cohabitation is demonstrably a poor choice for the couples themselves as indicated by elevated levels of relational dysfunctions, unfortunately, what is often ignored or unrecognized is the terrible toll paid by the innocent children of these unions.

Approximately 2 out of every 5 children born in the United States today is born outside of wedlock. In the African-American community, it is approaching 4 out of 5. Even those born to cohabiting couples are likely to grow up with a lone parent, since cohabiting couples with children breakup at a rate more than 100 percent higher than married couples with children and those cohabiting couples that go on to marry divorce at a rate that is around 50 percent greater than those that did not cohabit prior to marriage.

In the United States, there are abundant studies showing numerous deleterious effects for the estimated 27 percent of American children who are now living in lone-parent families. However, unlike in other Western European or developed countries, these trends are not relatively homogenous, marriage is becoming referred to as a luxury to follow the family behavior of their parents. Increasingly, in lower socioeconomic classes, marriage is becoming referred to as a luxury associated with the wealthy. Ironically, stable marriages are one of the keys for rising out of poverty.

While religiosity has long been associated with significantly higher marriage rates, education levels are increasingly having an impact. According to a recent essay by David Popenoe of Rutgers, “Among those married in the early 1990s, for example, only 16.5 percent of college educated women were divorced within 10 years, compared to 46 percent for high school dropouts.” Popenoe expects that the marriage gap will continue to grow because of the tendency of children to follow the family behavior of their parents. Increasingly, in lower socioeconomic classes, marriage is becoming referred to as a luxury associated with the wealthy. Ironically, stable marriages are one of the keys for rising out of poverty.

What is to be done?

In Western Europe where cohabitation rates are two to three times what they are in the United States, almost half of Europeans think marriage in its policies and by not rewarding or recognizing alternatives. It is a sham what the media and the world. He was a great president who gave all his power to protect us from terrorism. He worked diligently with many admirable and people and conditions. It is a shame what they did to him. We all need more of this ethical exposure. Thank you sincerely for sharing the good news.

Marge Smithson

Disappointed with writer

I was saddened and disappointed with the letter of Ann Britzke, Today’s Catholic Commentary, Feb. 8, 2009 justifying her vote for Obama. She professed herself as a nation, as a whole and as individuals, that will enable all of us to use better discernment in standing for what is right and what is true. There’s a saying, “...The darker the storm, the brighter the sunshine.” Those of us who love God are bright stars shining in a dark and depraved world. Our lives shall be an encouragement to others that people will see Christ in our hearts and come to know and love him. Let us keep our eyes on Christ, our one and only true hope, in this life and in eternity.

Pete Freiburger

FEBRUARY 15, 2009

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

Today’s Catholic reserves the right to edit for clarity and length. Address letters to: Today’s Catholic • P.O. Box 11169 • Fort Wayne, IN • 46856-1169 or e-mail to: editor@fw dioceceso.org
Paperclips are useful: What about older, bent, rusty ones?

Paperclips are functional, especially when they’re new and not ruined from overuse. They’re also versatile. Besides being used to hold papers together, they’re used for lesser tasks: being a page marker or a pull on a zipper. You’ll see them on floors and parking lots, discarded as useless. Many are unduly bent and/or rusty. If you find such a one in your drawer, it’s not used. New ones are chosen.

Take another look. Besides their primary function and minor uses, could they be valuable in any other way? Consider one paperclip’s story.

“You know my obvious use: I hold things together, primarily paper but other things too. However, I never imagined that I could be used for greater things. I was considered being functional, and felt I was indispensable. At the office, I was often chosen over other paperclips because I was new, shiny and efficient. For some unknown reason, I began to be neglected. People reached beyond me for a different clip. Why, I wondered. Then, I realized. I was getting bent out of my original shape. How did that happen? When? I felt sad. Often I was passed over, rarely noticed. I was happy when chosen, if no others were handy, but that didn’t continue.

One day, I was sent to a supermarket holding some papers. Wow! I felt great. I had something important to do. A few weeks of scuffle among departments, and I was chosen to hold a bunch of checks together. My heart raced. I was off to a bank. My most important job in ages. I’d do my job well. They arrived safely; I was proud. At last, I was considered useful!

Again, as before, bent from use, no one paid attention to me. I hoped for something meaningful to do. I wanted a new purpose. I was sad. I was pushed around for weeks at the bank. Nobody wanted me. One day I was picked up. I was helpful now as I held an important paper clipped to an envelope of money and handed to someone at the drive-through window. It felt great! Then the shock! That person took the paper, tossed the envelope on the seat, looked at me, and tossed me from the car.

Jesus overcomes sin and death

The Book of Leviticus supplies the first reading for this weekend. As one of the first five books of the Bible, all attributed to Moses, Leviticus is part of the collection called, in Greek, Pentateuch, and in Hebrew, Torah. These five books, comprising the Torah, formed the basic theology and laws of conduct, for Jews at the time of Jesus, and even still today, the Torah is the basic religious document of Judaism. This reading is in the style of a report. God speaks to Moses and to Aaron, the brother of Moses. Leprosy is the issue. Both the Old and New Testaments, in many places, refer to persons suffering from leprosy.

Today’s medical historians cannot decide if this malady mentioned often in the Bible in fact was Hansen’s disease or some other illness. However, whatever the exact scientific nature of what the ancients called leprosy, the problem was chronic and severe. It was assumed to be contagious or communicable. For this reason, contacts with persons afflicted with leprosy, as it was called, were avoided at all costs. Indeed, social customs and even laws made contact difficult. Victims were outcasts. They suffered the psychological injury of being shunned, but they also most often virtually had to forage for food and search for any shelter they could find.

Ancient Jews would never blame God, regarded as good, loving and merciful, for the fact of such a serious malady. God was. In the minds of ancient Hebrews, human sin was ultimately the cause of all earthly misery. So, it was reasoned, sin must have caused leprosy. Victims themselves either sinned, or their plight was a consequence of their parents’ or ancestors’ sin.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. In this reading, the great apostle advises the Christian Corinthians never to offend either Jew or Gentile, in the process revealing the fact that Jews and Gentiles were within the Christian community in Corinth. This is not surprising. Corinth was a great city, with people from everywhere.

Paul says that he imitates Christ, and he urges that the Christians follow his example. The same attitude about leprosy, whatever this disease actually was, applied among Jews at the time of Jesus as it did among Jews at the time of Moses. When a leper approached Jesus, asking for a cure, the poor leper was in an awful condition, ostracized and hopeless. Jesus, “moved with pity,” cured the man. Then the Lord ordered the man to go to the priests. The man had been exiled from the community because of his illness. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him. The priests could reinstate him.

Reflection

These weeks after Christmas, the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, and the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the church continues through these Scriptural readings at Mass to introduce us to the person and ministry of Jesus. In the readings this weekend, the horror of leprosy, as it was seen among Jews long ago, is critical to understanding the readings. In particular, it is necessary to realize the connection in the ancient mind between sin and death. Sin indeed leads to death. Furthermore, it separates us from the one community of faith in the Lord. As outcasts, sinners are left to struggle in any way they can, their efforts never adequate.

Jesus, always moved by pity, curing us by forgiving our sins. Forgive, we enter again the family of God. Life, not death, is our destiny. The key is to have faith, to repent, and to live according to the Lord’s model, in every respect, as St. Paul lived.

READINGS


Monday: Gn 4:1-15, 25 Ps 50:1, 8, 16bc-17; 20-21 Mk 8:13-14, 21-23

Tuesday: Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10 Ps 29:1a, 2bc-4, 3b-9c 10 Mk 8:14-21

Wednesday: Gn 8:6-12, 20-22 Ps 116:12-15, 18-19 Mk 8:22-26

Thursday: Gn 9:1-13 Ps 102:16-18, 19-23, 29 Mk 8:27-33

Friday: Gn 11:9-9 Ps 33:10-15 Mk 8:34-9:1

Saturday: Hb 11:1-7 Ps 145:2-5, 10-11 Mk 9:2-13

CATEQUIZ’EM

On Feb. 11, we remember our Lady of Lourdes. In this quiz the correct answers should be easy to spot, they all begin with the letter L.

1. One of the most common titles for God in the Old and New Testament, occurring more than 500 times, is
   a. lawgiver
   b. Lord
   c. lamb

2. And this word used in the New Testament to refer to many, was actually a borrowing from the Roman army:
   a. lictor
   b. Lex Romana
   c. Legion

3. Two books of the Old Testament begin with the letter L. One is Leviticus, the other is
   a. Lamentations
   b. Levitathan
   c. Luke

4. The only Gospel writer with this letter in his name is
   a. Matthelus (Latin for Matthew)
   b. Luke
   c. John the Beloved

5. These men referred to in Acts, had certain civic and police functions under the Romans:
   a. Levites
   b. Lexicographers
   c. Lictors

6. And these man assisted Jewish priests
   a. Libertines
   b. Levites
   c. Lollards

7. This estate was an early gift to the church
   a. Lectern
   b. Lateran
   c. Lampedusa

8. This is a term used in both the east and west for certain Christian rituals
   a. Liturgy
   b. Lapidrey
   c. nugrbiity

9. This man was the second pope
   a. Linus
   b. Lucis
   c. Lemu

10. This, often thought of as the ancient church language, was actually fairly slow to be adopted by the Greek speaking church:
    a. Langue D’oc
    b. Latin
    c. Languedoc

11. This pope reportedly faced down Attila the Hun:
    a. Linus
    b. Leon
    c. Leo

12. The version of French used by the Crusaders as a common tongue gave us this phrase
    a. langue esperantao
    b. lingua communna
    c. lingua franca

13. That was a time of unity, but this Catholic eventually divided the church
    a. Unhearted (Richard I)
    b. Luther
    c. Leo III

14. In England these men sympathized with opponents of the church:
    a. Loserinos
    b. Lancastrians
    c. Lollards

15. The Teutonic Knights spread Christianity to this region, which is now known by the modern states names, Latvia and Estonia:
    a. Lusitania
    b. Lollards
    c. Lampedusa

ANSWERS

1. b, c
2. a, b
3. a, b
4. a
5. b
6. a
7. b
8. a
9. a
10. a
11. b
12. c
13. b
14. c
15. c
‘Afflicted’ with fertility?

What’s the biggest threat to the world’s prosperity and stability over the medium haul — say, between 2020 and 2050? The proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction? A continuing economic recession? Jihadism running afoot? The Detroit Lions ushering in the championship? (Just kidding.)

According to Neil Howe and Vladimir Putin’s plans for a new Russia will have fallen in the world’s highest fertility rates.” No, never did before?

Consider yourself invited


during our membership blitz that will be conducted nationwide. Someone will ask you to join our organization willing to face the challenges our church is facing today.

The INDIANA KNIGHTS

By Bob Hartenstein

Bob Hartenstein is the director of communications for the Indiana Knights of Columbus.

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

was and had no use for me. There I lay on the parking lot. Vehicles ran over me. I felt sad.

Besides being bent, I became rusty. I was hopeless. One day, a young boy cut through the lot. He spied me, picked me up, said, “Yeah!” He slapped me onto a page in the science book under his arm. “Just what I needed”!

Me! A bent, old, rusty paperclip! He wanted me! At home, he began his experiment dealing with magnets. He used me for his project to show that even bent, old, rusty paperclips had potential. He realized that I had a strong heart of steel, and was determined to illustrate what I could yet do. He attached my one end to a huge magnet full of an energy I never knew existed. It permeated me.

Then, he placed my other end into a pan of objects with hearts of steel. Power rushing through me, they too became magnets. He never did before?

Reflect

1. What does this parable mean to you at this time of life?

2. How can you remain attached to Christ in ways you never did before?

Sister Angelita Fenker has been involved in education for over 60 years. Her doctorate is in spiritual- ity with a focus on holistic family spirituality. She holds many post- doctoral certificates in the area of spirituality for maturing adults and gives seminars and retreats throughout the U.S. and Canada. Her book,’Grace-filled Transitions unto Transformation’, was published in 2004 and is available at Barnes and Noble.
ATHLETES SIGN WITH COLLEGES Three Dwenger senior athletes signed their national letters of intent Feb. 4 to continue their careers at the collegiate level. Tyler Eifert signed with the University of Notre Dame (football), Gina Killion signed with Murray State in Kentucky (soccer) and Sean Weigand signed with University of Saint Francis (soccer).

Junior Squires repeat titles

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — Both the boys’ and girls’ teams from St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel dominated the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) small school junior varsity league winning their 2009 tournaments.

The defending girls’ were victorious over St. Therese in their championship game, 29-11 after beating Huntington Catholic, 22-12, in the first round and Most Precious Blood, 25-8, in the semifinals. The Lady Squires were untouched during the season finishing with an impressive 23-0 record.

The 15-girl roster consisted of seven fourth graders, five fifth graders and three sixth graders and claimed three different tournament titles during their outstanding season. Rookie Coach Tracy Sweeney knew her young team may lack experience but concluded, “We had an extremely talented group. Their dedication, hard work and desire made the difference all year long.”

Hessen Cassel’s Aubrey Feipel led all scorers with 12 points while Angelica Navarro added six for St. Therese in the championship.

In the boys’ bracket, the Squires defeated Most Precious Blood in the opening round then got by St. Therese, 29-11 before facing the St. Louis-St. Rose Twins in the final game. Despite just a two-point lead at the half, the Squires pulled off a 37-29 victory to repeat as CYO small school junior varsity titlists.

With the varsity tourney just weeks away, CYO seventh and eighth-graders played a full weekend of contests at various sites. Coach Dave Westendorf reported that St. Jude downed conference foe, St. Joseph, Decatur, 39-22, to finish with a perfect record of 6-0 in league play and seal the top seed in the girls’ large school tournament. At St. Joseph Hessen Cassel, St. Charles, the first-place seeded Gold League team, fell to the Blue League powerhouse host Squires in a boys non-count matchup.

Wildcats eye tourney championship

BY ELMER J. DANCH

SOUTH BEND — The baske- teers of St. Joseph School, Mishawaka, are sharply focused on bagging a postseason championship tournament in the Inter-City Catholic League, which winds up this weekend.


In other semifinals, St. Pius X of Granger tipped Christ the King, 39-37. On Saturday, St. Pius X, Granger, edged Queen of Peace, Mishawaka, 38-35, despite Anthony Piraccini’s 12 points for the Pumas.


Dillon Hensley of Holy Family lead all individual scorers with 21 points. Greenan Sullivan of St. Pius X, Granger, was right behind with 19 points.

In other games played Feb. 7, Christ the King defeated St. Monica, 34-27. Connor Edmonds contributed 15 points in the win.

Our Lady of Hungary defeated Holy Cross, 54-30, with the winners led by Tyran Ontridge with 24 points and Dominique Sanders with 16 points. Mark Maden had 11 points for Holy Cross.


Holy Family edged St. Jude, 36-35. J.C. Obringer paced Holy Family with 18 points and Alex Stopczynski, with 10 points, led St. Jude.

St. Thomas the Apostle of Elkhart beat St. John the Baptist, 39-17.

The tournament championship will be Sunday at 2:45 p.m. at Marian High School.

Varsity Large School Girls Standings

St. Jude 6-0
St. Vincent 5-1
St. Charles 4-2
St. John, FW 3-3
Decatur 2-4
St. Joseph/St. Eliz. 1-5
New Haven 0-6

Varsity Large School Boys Standings

St. Charles 5-1
St. Jude 4-2
St. Joseph/St. Eliz. 4-2
New Haven 4-2
St. John, FW 3-3
St. Vincent 1-5
Decatur 0-6

Boys

St. Jude 30, St. Joseph, Decatur (8), 28
St. Aloysius, 23, St. Joseph/St. Elizabeth (8), 49 — Kaufman 12, Thiele 11
St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, 50; St. Charles (8), 31 — Knappke 20
St. John, Fort Wayne (7), 29;
St. Joseph, Decatur (7), 37 — Selton 14, Obrerly 11
St. Aloysius 17, St. Joseph/St. Elizabeth (7), 28 — Wampole/Sorg 4, Casaburo 12
St. Joseph, Decatur (8), 16; St. John, New Haven (8), 37 — Painter 22, Selking/Macklin 5

Girls

St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel 39, St. John, New Haven (8) 13
St. Jude (8) 39, St. Joseph, Decatur (8) 22 — Feipel 11, Brite 10
St. Charles (7) 38, St. John, Fort Wayne (7) 14 — Sordelet 8, Taylor 10
St. Aloysius 38, St. Joseph/St. Elizabeth (8) 22 — Reimbold 9, Zaremba 21
St. John, Fort Wayne (7) 23; St. John, New Haven (7) 28 — Hope 15, Taylor 11

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‘The Shack’ isn’t the end-all answer to understanding God

BY YORK YOUNG

T

here’s been a lot of chatter recently in the Christian book market about “The Shack,” a novel self-published by the author William P. Young (Windblown Media, $24.95), which has climbed into the top 10 on bestseller lists, and on a recent January day was No. 4 on Amazon.com.

A straightforward tale of one man’s abandonment of God after a tragedy quickly turns into an expos-ition “The Shack” implies is natural.

In addition, the writing is stilted, containing many uninspired, work-

manlike metaphors. And no matter how many times God/winks at Mack, it doesn’t enhance the alleg-ed attempts at humor they accompany.

Nevertheless, thousands of Christians and plenty of Catholics are caught up in the possibilities this book reveals. Perhaps we want to more readily accept that we can converse with God in a more human, and visibly direct, manner. This may account for much of the enthusiasm. But, God is unlikely to appear before most of us, and to believe otherwise is delusional.

Praying to God, being open to his prompting in prayer (perhaps even before the Blessed Sacrament), confessing ours sins to him, attending Mass (at least weekly) and receiving the Eucharist is how we help ourselves get closer to God. Even most of the saints never had the type of one-on-one conversation “The Shack” implies is natu-ral.
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: fthag@fw.diocecesfwbh.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.

FISH FRIES

Fish fry season begins
Fort Wayne — St. Therese Parish, across from Parkview Hospital, will have a fish fry Friday, Feb. 27, from 5-8 p.m. in the church basement. Adults $7, children 6-8 $5 and children under 5 eat free.

Fish fry and salad bar
South Bend — St. Adalbert Parish will have a fish fry and salad bar Friday, Feb. 27, from 3-7 p.m. in the Heritage Center. Adults and carry-out $7.50, children 5-12 $3 and children under 5 free.

DEVOTIONS

Day of reflection
Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent on Wednesday, Feb. 25, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “The Master Weaver.” Please bring a Bible. The cost of the day is $15 and includes lunch. Register by Friday, Feb. 20, to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at (574) 259-5427.

LITTLE FLOWER FISH FRY

Little Flower Holy Hour
Fort Wayne — Father Daryl Rybicki will celebrate the Little Flower Holy Hour, to pray for priests and vocations, at MacDougal Chapel on Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 7:15 p.m. Father Rybicki is pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Fort Wayne.

FUNDRAISERS

LuersKnight fundraiser
Fort Wayne — Bishop Luers High School will celebrate 50 years of quality education with LuersKnight, Friday, April 24, including dinner by Hall’s and entertainment by Bishop Luers Jazz Band and Minstrels. Preview night with silent auction is April 23 from 7-9 p.m.

St. Vincent de Paul Society holding Simple Living Raffle
South Bend — The St. Vincent de Paul Society will hold a Simple Living Raffle from Jan. 12 to Feb. 24. The tickets are $5 for one, $10 for three and $20 for seven. Prizes include one of four Martin’s gift certificates priced at $500, $750, $1,000, or a prize of $1500. The drawing will be at Fiddler’s Hearth Feb. 24 from 6-9 p.m. Participants need not be present to win. The evening will include musical entertainment by Kennedy’s Kitchen.

Knights plan spaghetti dinner
South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a spaghetti dinner on Friday, Feb. 20, from 5 to 7 p.m. Adults $7, children (5-12) $3. Carry-out available.

Eighth-grade chicken sale
Fort Wayne — The St. John the Baptist eighth-grade class will have a drive-through Nelson’s BBQ chicken sale Friday, Feb. 27, from 4-6:30 p.m. behind the school. Presale tickets only are $6. All proceeds to eighth grade.

MISC. HAPPENINGS

Glenbrook event gets people walking
Fort Wayne — The 3 Lap Health Day of reflection will be held on March 7 at Glenbrook Square Mall.

Participants will be offered indoor wellness activities, health information, “good choice” food samples, and a “scavenger lap” (more than 12 mall stores will be giving items to the first 300 participants during the “scavenger lap”). All proceeds keep IN MOTION free for Indiana schools. More than 35 school systems and 39 individual schools, including area Catholic schools, currently receive the IN MOTION newsletter. Visit www.citywalkinc.org.

Notre Dame smoker planned
Fort Wayne — St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel will have a Notre Dame smoker, Sunday, Feb. 22, from 12:30-5:30 p.m. in the activity center. Tickets are $15 at the door or in advance to become eligible to win Notre Dame home game tickets. Food and beverages provided. Call Gary at (260) 639-3259 for tickets or they may be purchased at Nine Velvet.

Music and dinner in Fort Wayne
Ft. Wayne — St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel will have a Notre Dame smoker, Sunday, Feb. 22, from 12:30-5:30 p.m. in the activity center. Tickets are $15 at the door or in advance to become eligible to win Notre Dame home game tickets. Food and beverages provided. Call Gary at (260) 639-3259 for tickets or they may be purchased at Nine Velvet.

High school winter retreat
The Office of Youth Ministry will have a winter retreat “Come Hungry” Friday, Feb. 20 through Sunday, Feb. 22, at Epworth Forest Retreat Center in North Webster. Go to www.dioceces-fwsh.org/youth or call the Office of Youth Ministry at (260) 422-4611 for more information.

Former Today’s Catholic writer/language Graciela Beecher dies
FORT WAYNE — Dr. Graciela F. Beecher, former writer/translator for Today’s Catholic newspaper, died Feb. 1 at the age of 82. Dr. Beecher was instrumental in developing the humanities department at Saint Francis University and assisting Msgr. J. William Lester in settling Cubans in Fort Wayne. During her time at Today’s Catholic, Beecher worked under editor Bill Cone as Spanish translator. Memorial Services at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception will be Feb. 21 at 5 p.m.

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The desire to offer God our praise will impel us to use our voices,” French pointed out, so the musical role of the congregation is especially important in today’s liturgical celebrations. The choir, the psalmist and the cantor also play important roles but “must not minimize the musical participation of the faithful,” according to the document.

The organist and other instrumentalists support and sustain the singing of the congregation and others. In fact, the organ is said to have “pride of place” because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large congregation and give resonance to the full range of human emotion. Finally, the importance of the attitude, style and bearing of the priest celebrant cannot be overstated, as he sings, chants and prays in the name of the assembled community.

A professional director of music ministries is considered by Catholic bishops to be vital in today’s church. That person should oversee the liturgical music program, promote active participation in it at all parish levels and receive adequate compensation for those responsibilities, noted French with wry humor.

French also drew laughter when he described the issues he has personally dealt with as a parish music director regarding musical selections for church functions such as weddings. It is important to distinguish between secular and sacred music, he pointed out, and those songs chosen for sacramental occasions must always be appropriate to the liturgy. “Wind Beneath My Wings,” though a popular favorite, has no place in a Catholic ceremony, he said. The document is clear on this point. “To admit to the liturgy the cheap, the trite or the musical cliché often found in secular popular songs is to cheapen the liturgy . . . .” Sacred music has three dimensions — ritual, spiritual and cultural. The ritual dimension of sacred music refers to the way it supports the liturgy and the rite. The spiritual dimension of sacred music refers to “its inner qualities that enable it to add greater depth to prayer, unity to the assembly or dignity to the ritual.” The cultural context refers to the setting in which the music is used, including the liturgy, horizontal and vertical background of the assembly. All three dimensions come into play when choosing appropriate music for any church function.

In preparing music for divine worship, the principle of progressive solemnity should be invoked, that is, the more solemn the occasion, the more parts of the rite should be sung. “Music should not provide pomp and circumstance for its own sake,” said French. Preference should be given to dialogues and acclamations, those parts sung by the celebrant with the assembly responding, or sung by priest and congregation together, because “they foster community between the priest and people,” he pointed out. Then antiphons and psalms follow in order of importance, then refrains and repeated responses, and finally, hymns.

There is even a place for “sacred silence” in the liturgy. French concluded the morning’s presentation by describing the importance of music in life’s journey and telling his listeners, “Sing, but continue on your journey.”

The second part of the day’s program was an exploration of the treasury of Gregorian chant, “uniquely the church’s own music.”

“Sing to the Lord” calls Gregorian chant “a living connection with our forebears in the faith, the traditional music of the Roman rite, a sign of communion with the universal church, a bond of unity across cultures, a means for diverse communities to participate together in song, and a summons to contemplative participation in the liturgy.” It is 1,100 years of musical expression, which is once again finding its place in today’s liturgy.